

2022

BFT Annual Service Plan



Service Development Department

Ben Franklin Transit

October 2022



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2022 Annual Service Plan

In January 2021, the Ben Franklin Transit (BFT) Board of Directors adopted the Annual Service Plan Policy in order to align service planning and delivery, development and adoption of the annual operating budget, and approval of annual labor requirements.

Since implementation of the 2017 Comprehensive Service Plan (CSP), Ben Franklin Transit (BFT) has been making incremental changes to its fixed route network with the goal of providing faster, more frequent, and more reliable service. As part of these ongoing efforts, BFT implemented two new high-frequency routes as part of the 2021 Modified Annual Service Plan. Metro routes 1 and 3 provide all-day, 15-minute service between major transit centers and along high-demand corridors from Monday to Saturday. BFT also implemented new local service in Kennewick to expand fixed-route service in under-served areas, and improved frequencies on local routes in Richland. Finally, BFT implemented Sunday Service on six fixed- routes, Dial-A-Ride, and CONNECT on August 29th, 2021.

The 2022 Annual Service Plan (ASP) focuses primarily on service efficiency, effectiveness, and reliability. The proposed level of service in the Draft 2022 ASP is below the level of service proposed in the 2022 operating budget. The proposed 2022 budget included an extension of Metro Route 3 service to the Southridge area with elimination of overlapping local route service. BFT's new Metro frequent service was implemented in June of 2021, and the two new routes now in operation account for nearly 30% of total weekday boardings. The extension of Metro Route 3 is expected to build on this success, but implementation will be deferred to 2023.

Fixed Route

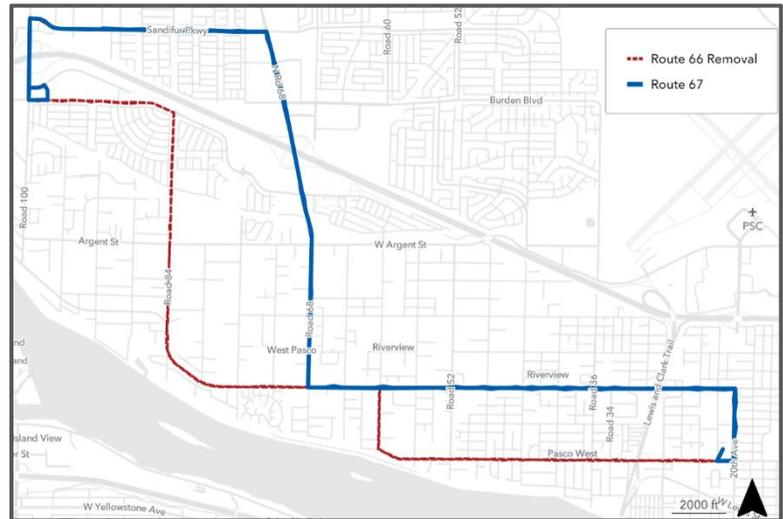
Overview

The 2022 Annual Service Plan proposes one route elimination, two major route alignment changes, one frequency improvement, and minor schedule adjustments to several routes.

Route Elimination

Route 66

As part of planned service enhancements to route 67, route 66 will be eliminated in its entirety due to low ridership and the availability of nearby alternatives. Currently, route 66 is operated on a fixed hourly frequency with one vehicle. Resources currently used to operate route 66 will be reallocated to provide enhanced, half-hourly service on route 67. 32 stops will be removed as a result of this service change. BFT will ensure that riders currently using route 66 will continue to have access to CONNECT on-demand service.



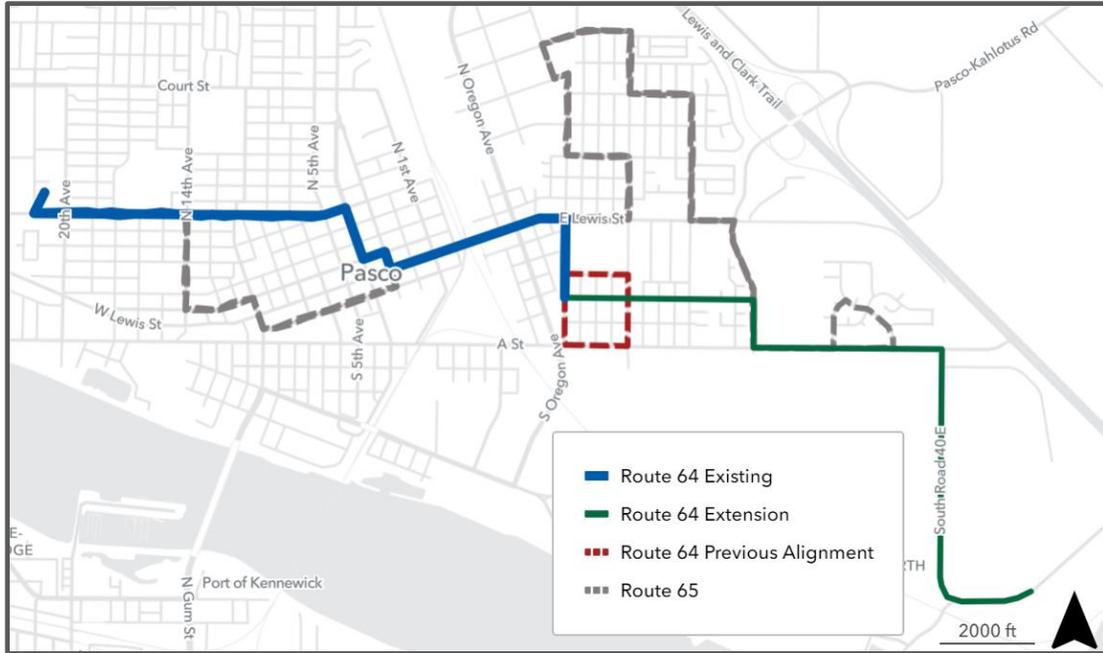
Alignment and Route Changes

Route 64

Route 64 will be realigned and extended eastward along A St. and Rd. 40; terminating at a designated layover facility on Sacajawea Park Rd. This extension will remove direct service along Alton St, Elm Ave, A. St and Wehe St. Service will be consolidated into a bi-directional alignment along Helena Ave. and Heritage Blvd. This extension is intended to provide fixed-route transit access to two large distribution facilities which will be operational in the Fall of 2022. Additionally, this extension will also provide new service to the Lakeview mobile home park.

This extension will remove six (6) stops on A St, Elm Ave, Alton St. and Wehe Ave. and will require one additional bus to operate route 64 during all regular service hours. New bi-directional stops will be added along Helena St. This change is anticipated to add approximately 3,200 revenue hours on an annual basis and will require the addition of one (1) vehicle for Sunday service.

Route 64	Operating Hours	Headway (Min)	Vehicles	Annual Revenue Hours (Current)	Annual Revenue Hours (Proposed)
Weekday	06:00 am-8:00 pm	30	2	3,560	6,190
Saturday	07:00 am – 8:00 pm	30	2	650	1,040
Sunday	08:00 am – 6:30 pm	30	2	520	760



Route 67

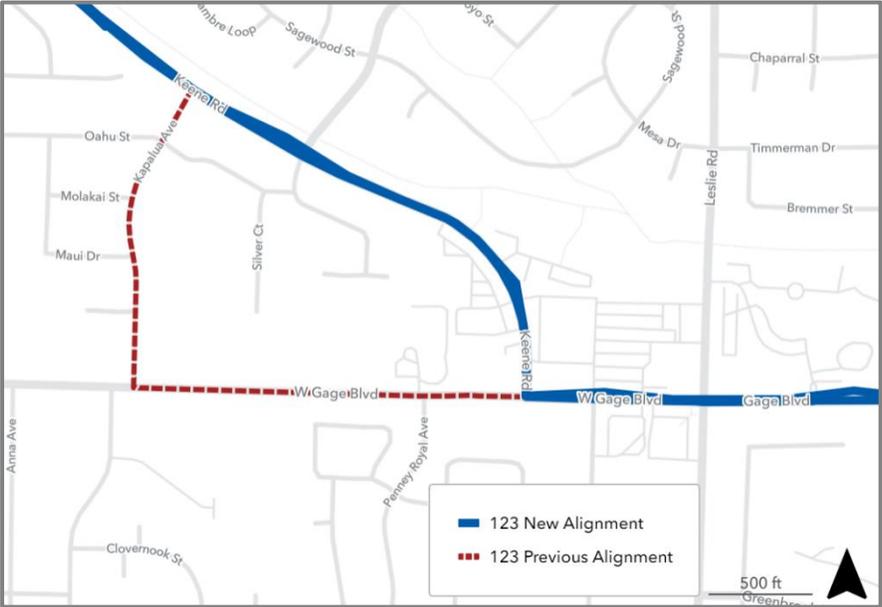
Route 67 will be enhanced to operate on a fixed half-hourly schedule, offering improved connections between 22nd Ave., Court St. and the Rd. 68 commercial area. Route 67 will follow its current alignment along 20th Ave., Court St., Rd. 68 and Sandifur Pkwy. in both directions. This route will be extended south along Broadmoor Blvd. crossing Interstate 182 and making a one-way clockwise loop along Saint Thomas Dr., Saint Francis Ln., and Chapel Hill Blvd. This extension will better serve existing and planned commercial and multifamily development, as well provide mid-route connections to Route 268. As part of this service increase, route 66 will be eliminated, and resources from that route will be reallocated to enhance route 67.

Route 67	Operating Hours	Headway (Min)	Vehicles	No Significant Revenue Hour Change
Weekday	06:00 am-9:00 pm	30	2	
Saturday	06:45 am – 9:00 pm	30	2	



Route 123

Route 123 southbound will be realigned to parallel the northbound alignment from Keene Rd to Gage Blvd. This change will remove fixed route service from Kapalua Ave and a portion of Gage Blvd. This alignment change will improve travel times and performance on the southbound 123 and is not anticipated to have any impact on revenue hours or miles.



Minor Route Changes

- Route 47/48 - Minor alignment change at Dayton Transfer Point to utilize a new section of Auburn St. connecting to 10th Ave.
- Route 123 – Minor alignment change along Keene and Gage Blvd. Removes service along Kapalua Ave.

Minor Schedule Changes

- Route 1 – Schedule adjustment to account for added vehicle block
- Route 26 – Schedule adjustment to better reflect observed travel time
- Route 170 – Schedule adjustment to better reflect observed travel times.

In addition, BFT may need to make minor schedule adjustments to other routes and add, modify, or eliminate overload and tripper services based on needs or demand.

CONNECT

An amended CONNECT service plan was developed as part of the 2022 ASP process. The amended CONNECT service plan outlines the restoration of service to the original service concept except that regular fares will apply. This change will modify CONNECT from a premium fare service (currently \$3.00) to a standard fare service (currently \$1.50). This change will allow BFT to reduce service hours or eliminate low ridership routes without a financial impact to riders that could cause a Title VI equity impact. CONNECT's operational costs are expected to be well within budget in 2022.

Via services begins 15 minutes before the scheduled start of BFT fixed route services, and end 15 minutes after the scheduled end of fixed route service.

For additional information on the CONNECT service plan, see Appendix B.

ADA / Dial-A-Ride

Overview

BFT's Dial-A-Ride service provides on-demand, point-to-point transit services for eligible riders. Eligible riders must book trips at least 24 hours in advance.

Service Changes

Dial-A-Ride service will be limited to journeys entirely within the PTBA. BFT will examine new fare and service structures for DAR trips beyond the boundaries of the PTBA.

Looking Ahead (2023-2025)

Queensgate Transit Center

Currently in the pre-construction phase, BFT's Queensgate Transit hub on Windmill Rd near Exit 3 of Interstate 182 will serve to enhance connectivity between Kennewick, West Richland, Downtown Richland and Prosser / Benton City. This facility will also enable future high-frequency service between Richland, the Queensgate area and Kennewick. The Queensgate facility is expected to be operational in Fall of 2023.

West Pasco Transit Center

BFT is in the early stages of developing a transit center in the Broadmoor area of West Pasco. This facility will serve as a transfer point between Pasco local routes and the future Metro Route 2 (Current 225) An exact location for this facility has yet to be fully determined. This facility is expected to be operational in late 2024 or early 2025.

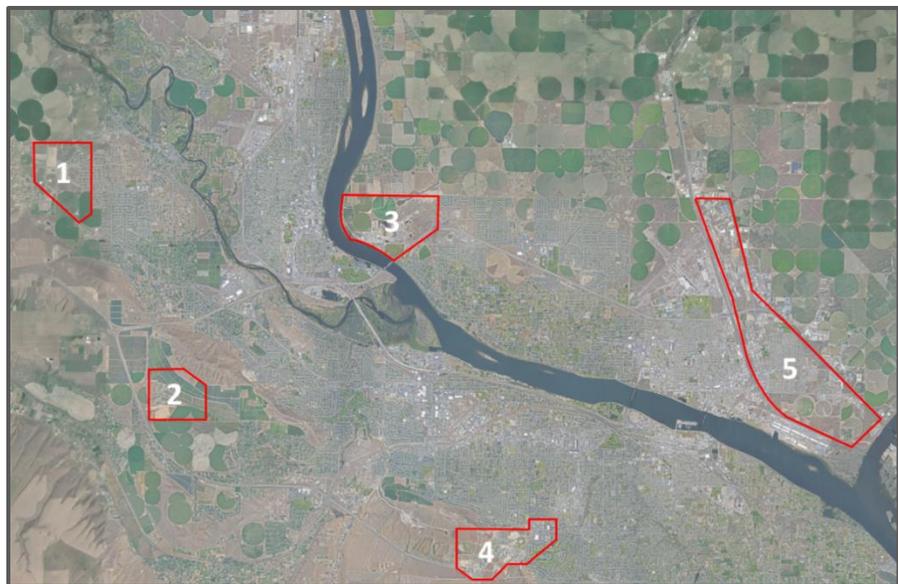
Development and Land Use

Overview

BFT aims to orient future service expansions around the evolving needs and travel patterns of the service area. BFT works closely with local planning officials and private developers to ensure that future growth and development is accessible with Dial-A-Ride, fixed route or on-demand service. However, the Tri-Cities and the surrounding communities within the PTBA have grown and expanded in a way that is not wholly conducive to operating accessible and efficient transit service.

BFT recognizes the challenges of planning transit services in this type of built environment, but also recognizes that these challenges can be overcome with the application of new technology, the encouragement of transit-oriented development on a jurisdictional and regional level, and a commitment to serve all those who wish to access our services. As part of the ASP process, Planning staff has identified areas in the PTBA that are rapidly growing and may require additional service.

This additional service will initially be met with CONNECT on-demand service until sufficient demand for fixed-route service is developed.



Identified areas of Growth within the Tri-Cities

1 -Route 224 Corridor – West Richland

Connecting Richland, West Richland and Benton City, The Route 224 corridor has seen substantial residential and commercial growth in recent years. To accommodate this growth, the city of West Richland and BFCOG have begun a complete streets project expected to be completed in mid- 2023. BFT has identified Route 224 as a possible alignment for future fixed-route service connecting Benton City, West Richland and downtown Richland. This option will be considered further pending the completion of ongoing planning efforts focused on Benton City and Prosser.

2 - Badger Mountain South - Richland

The Badger Mountain South development area is anticipated to include up to 5,000 residential units at full build-out. In addition, commercial and medical developments are planned for this area in coming years. At present, BFT has no plans to serve this area with fixed-route transit but will work to ensure the area is easily accessible via CONNECT on-demand service.

3 - Broadmoor – Pasco

The Broadmoor area of West Pasco has been subject to ongoing planning and development efforts by the City of Pasco, and significant residential and commercial growth is anticipated in this area in coming years. BFT has committed to developing a transit center in West Pasco within the Broadmoor development area. This facility will serve as a transfer point between local routes and the future Metro route 2 (currently route 225).

4 - Southridge - Kennewick

The Southridge area along Route 395 has developed into a major commercial and institutional center. Walmart, Trios Health and Southridge High School serve as substantial trip generators for BFT fixed-route and CONNECT on-demand service. Additional anticipated residential growth along Bob Olson Pkwy. and a planned expansion of the Trios health campus have created the need for enhanced BFT service in the Southridge area. BFT intends to expand fixed-route service to the Southridge area in coming years and is in the early stages of planning for a future transit hub to serve the area.

5 – East Pasco

The area east of downtown Pasco is anticipated to see strong growth in coming years. Most notably, the construction of two new distribution facilities south of A St. is anticipated to generate significant transit demand. To meet this demand, BFT will be extending and streamlining route 64 to provide fixed route coverage to these facilities. As part of this expansion BFT is working with private developers to construct a layover facility on Sacajawea Park Rd, which will enable future fixed-route opportunities for East Pasco. Additionally, BFT has committed to conducting an area study of East Pasco to identify service growth opportunities.

Title VI Service Equity Analysis

Background

As a direct recipient of federal funds via the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), Ben Franklin Transit (BFT) is obligated to operate its programs and services without regard to race, color and national origin in accordance with Title VI of The Civil Rights Act of 1964 and other applicable laws. To ensure compliance with federal policy, BFT is required to perform a Title VI analysis whenever any changes are made to the fixed-route network which would be classified as a major service change. BFT defines a major service change as any change in service on any individual route that would add or eliminate more than 20% of the route revenue miles or route revenue hours. Of the several changes outlined in the 2022 Annual Service Plan, the planned elimination of Route 66 and the services increases on routes 64 and 67 constitute as major service changes (See Table 1).

Based on the service equity analysis results pertaining to the Route 64 extension, Route 66 elimination, and Route 67 frequency increase and extension, BFT staff have concluded that no disparate impact or disproportionate burden will occur if these planned service changes are implemented. This conclusion

means that there will be no apparent adverse effects on minority or low-income populations caused by the recommended service changes outlined in the 2022 Annual Service Plan. If implemented, these service changes will result in a notable net gain of service to low-income and minority populations and will benefit all those who utilize BFT’s fixed route system (See Table 2).

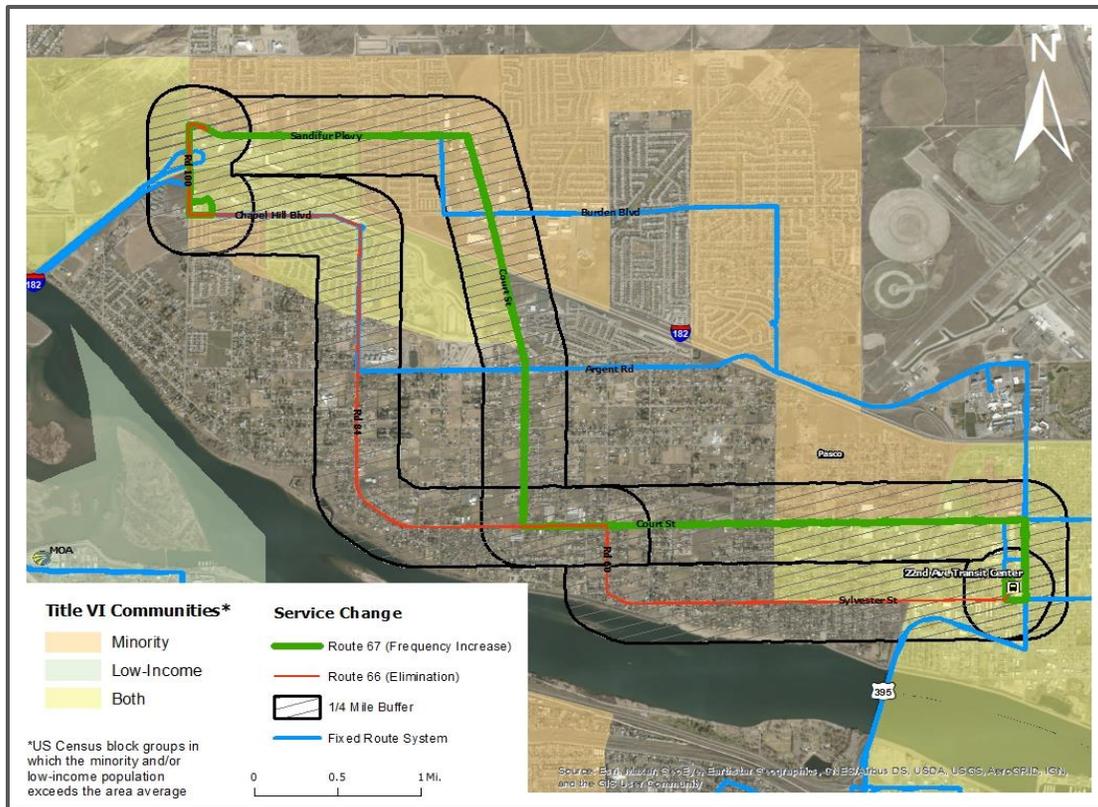
Table 1 - Disparate Impact & Disproportionate Burden Determination

Service Changes	Date Effective	Major Service Change	Disparate Impact	Disproportionate Burden
Route 47	6/20/22	No	No	No
Route 48	6/20/22	No	No	No
Route 64	8/29/22	Yes	No	No
Route 66	6/20/22	Yes	No (Mitigated)	No
Route 64	6/20/22	Yes	No	No
Route 123	6/20/22	No	No	No
Schedule Adjustments	6/20/22	No	No	No

Table 2 - Service Equity Analysis Results (No Adverse Effects Identified)

Route	People-Trips Difference			Low Income	Minorities
	People-Trips	Low Income	Minority		
64	23,967,728	5,930,914	20,985,456	24.7%	87.6%
66	-73,496,520	-13,355,375	-35,860,455	18.2%	48.8%
67	100,705,854	15,507,971	58,743,181	15.4%	58.3%
Results	51,177,062	8,083,510	43,868,182	15.8%	85.7%

	Low Income	Minority
Change Borne By	15.8%	85.7%
Area Average	13.3%	39.1%
Delta	2.5%	46.6%



Although no adverse effects are expected, BFT realizes that any reduction in coverage has repercussions on peoples’ daily lives and routines. With that in mind, BFT has identified several mitigation efforts that will help alleviate any potential transit accessibility issues that may arise with the elimination of Route 66. These mitigation efforts include:

- Retaining service on Route 268 to serve most productive segments of current Route 66
- Extending Route 67 to serve bus stops around the intersection of Rd 100 and Chapel Hill Blvd
- Leveraging BFT’s on-demand CONNECT service to provide rideshare opportunities to and from BFT’s bus stops and transit centers in West Pasco
- Reducing CONNECT fare to be comparable with fixed route fare
- Providing overload/tripper buses to accommodate for loads exceeding a 1.25 load factor along Route 268 during peak hours, if needed

BFT Staff has concluded that these mitigation efforts will reduce the potential for any inequities to occur if the service changes outlined in the 2022 Annual Service Plan are approved.

Budget Impact

Revenue Hours

The 2022 ASP is anticipated to increase annual revenue hours by approximately 6,200. This equates to approximately \$701,000 in annual budget impact given an average cost per revenue hour of \$113.05. This increase accounts for the addition of two (2) vehicles. One (1) vehicle will be added to Route 1 at peak

times during weekday service, and One (1) vehicle will be added to Route 64 during all service hours to allow for expansion of service.

- Route 1: 3,000 added annual vehicle revenue hours
- Route 64: 3,200 added annual vehicle revenue hours

Total projected annual revenue hours under the 2022 ASP are **200,200**, well below the budgeted figure of 214,000

2022 Prorated Revenue Hours

- Route 1: 3,000 added annual vehicle revenue hours
- Route 64: 1,300 added annual vehicle revenue hours

Total prorated revenue hours for 2022 are **198,300**.

No significant change to revenue hours is expected with Route 66/67 or Route 123.

Labor

Implementation of the 2022 ASP will require 5 additional operators for fixed route service. Two (2) operators for a 7th bus on Route 1, and two (2) operators for the route 64 extension, plus an additional overflow driver.

Public Outreach

Outreach Initiatives.

The 2022 ASP public outreach process began with board approval for public release and lasted five (5) weeks). The public outreach period involved direct engagement with the community at two (2) public meetings held virtually on Tuesday, November 2nd at 6PM and Thursday, November 4th at 6PM. These meetings were consistently advertised on the BFT website as well as agency social media. These meetings were hosted by planning staff and overseen by marketing staff.

Additionally, a comment forum was created on the BFT website, and advertised throughout the public comment period. This forum allowed members of the public to view an interactive map of proposed service changes and provide named or anonymous feedback. No comments were received on this forum.

One (1) member of the public attended these meetings to give feedback on the 2022 ASP.

Public Feedback

One (1) member of the public commented that he was supportive of the proposed 2022 changes. He also noted that he would like to see more service between Three Rivers Transit Center and the Southridge area in the future.