



BEN FRANKLIN
TRANSIT

2025

Annual Service Plan

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2024 Annual Service Plan

In January 2021, the Ben Franklin Transit (BFT) Board of Directors adopted the *Annual Service Plan (ASP) Policy*, establishing a framework to align service planning and delivery. This policy serves as a crucial tool in guiding budget decisions and managing annual labor requirements. The ASP is meticulously crafted through a collaborative effort incorporating input from both the community and BFT staff. During the ASP process, BFT systematically examines service data to uncover avenues for enhancing services and improving operational efficiencies. This rigorous analysis ensures that our transit services remain responsive to the evolving needs of our ridership all while maximizing the allocation of resources.

The 2024 ASP focused primarily on service efficiency, effectiveness, and reliability. Service change recommendations included the following:

- ☑ Removal of Route 110 due to areas of low ridership
- ☑ Creation of Routes 10 and 50 to cover productive portions of former Route 110
- ☑ Extension of Route 67 to increase connectivity to Chiawana HS and McLoughlin MS
- ☑ Implementation of Queensgate Transit Center connecting:
 - Route 170 – 60-minute peak service. No longer connecting with Knight Street Transit Center
 - Route 10 – 30-minute peak service
 - Route 123 – Additional bus on Sundays to extend the route and help with on-time performance. (Excluded direct service to the mall except on Sundays)
- ☑ Route 25 adjusted to capture missed sections on Wellsian Way due to Route 170 at Queensgate
- ☑ Proposed elimination of 123s with recommendations to continue service to further evaluate

BFT Board of Directors requested further analysis of Route 123s and additional marketing outreach efforts. During the school year, an extra loop by the schools was incorporated into the route to enhance service, accompanied by a focused marketing campaign. Despite these efforts, Figure 1 illustrates that the route did not experience an uptick in ridership.

Additional changes were incorporated in Fall 2024 in response to Route 123 overcrowding. Ridership on Route 123s saw a significant increase (+81%), almost doubling compared to the Aug.-Nov. timeframe from the year prior (Figure 2). The tripper will continue to be evaluated to provide potential relief for Route 123 and may also see additional changes since much of the ridership

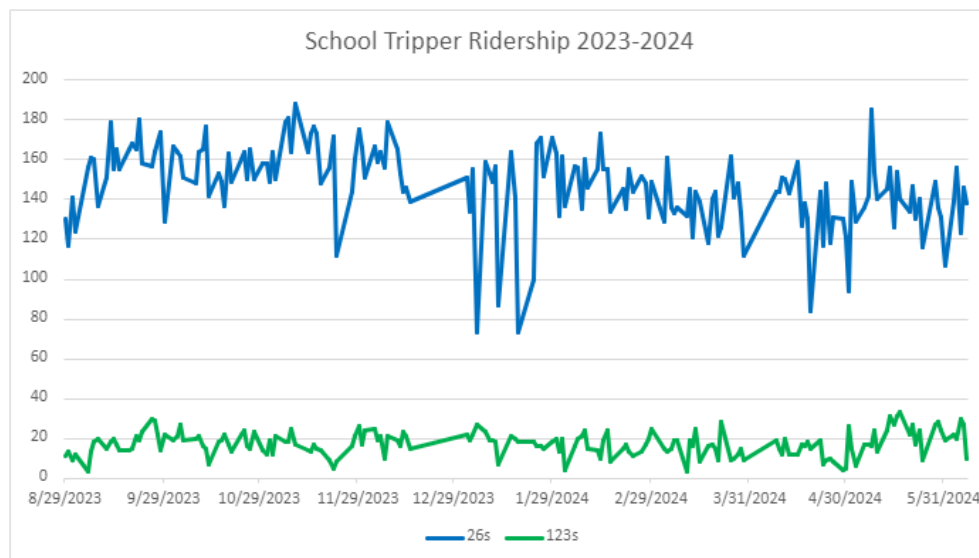
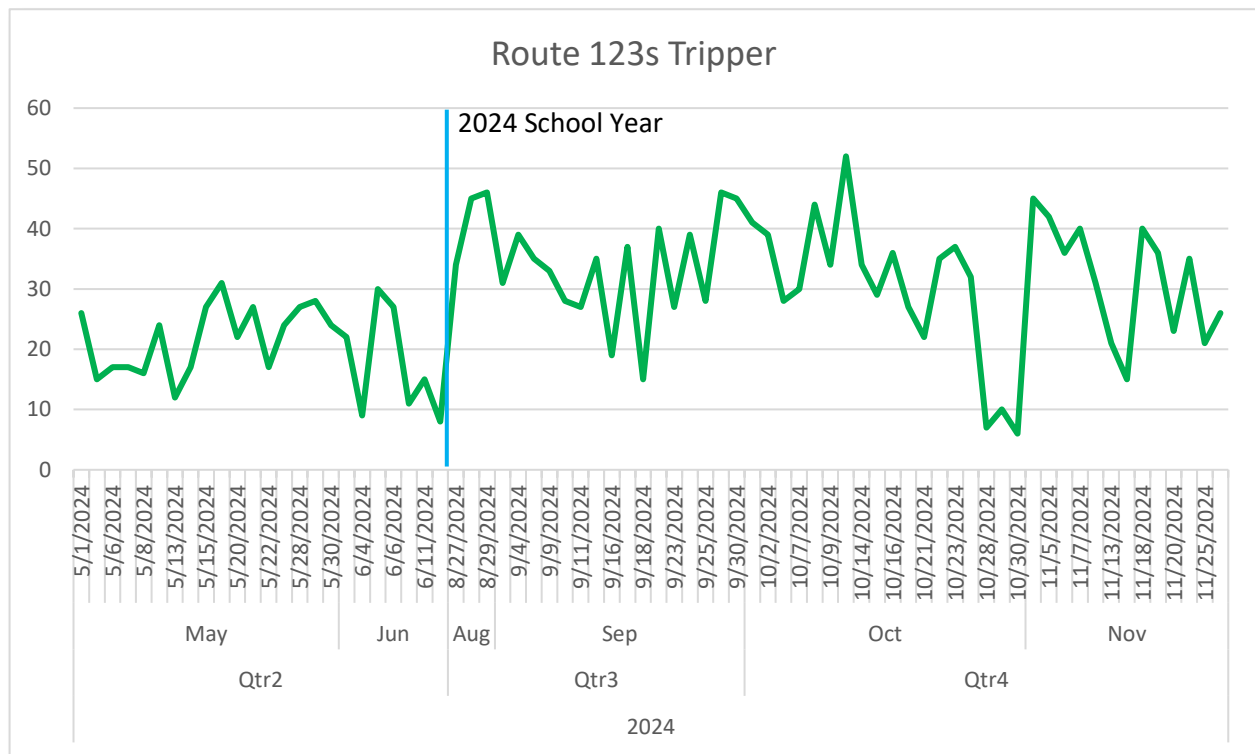


Figure 1: School Tripper Ridership

generated was specific to Route 123 overflow versus the South Richland ridership that the tripper was originally intended.

Figure 2: Route 123s School Tripper Ridership



The rollout of the 2024 ASP was delayed until August 2024 due to construction delays at Queensgate Transit Center. Further requests for efficiency from the BFT Board of Directors ahead of potential funding constraints from a November 2024 ballot measure, Initiative 2117, resulted in additional reductions to the planned rollout.

- ☑ Route 50 – 30-minute service on Saturday versus 15-minute service.
- ☑ Route 10 – Elimination of 30-minute peak service. 60-minute service all day instead.
- ☑ Route 67 – No extension

Considering I-2117 did not pass, BFT staff has worked to put together service recommendations that would account for a minimal increase in resources and address the service gaps that were not addressed when ~60% of planned service outlined in the 2024 ASP was not implemented.

Similar to the 2024 ASP, 2025 ASP recommendations align with a continued emphasis on efficiency, aligning with the BFT Board of Directors' directive to enhance the cost-effectiveness of system-wide services. Reducing travel time by providing more limited-stop, cross-town trips is also an intended outcome of the 2025 ASP service recommendations.

BFT has been utilizing HASTUS scheduling software provided through CSched for the past few years, and recently, the BFT Board approved CSched to review fixed route schedules to enhance on-time performance, schedule efficiency, and transit center connections. Once CSched completes its evaluation,

BFT staff will review the specific recommendations to ensure their practical applicability in the real world by implementing a slow rollout with a few routes starting in December 2024.

Additionally, all modes of service for BFT will be subject to a fare change in 2025. Plans are underway to implement a mobile ticketing solution as well. Mobile ticketing will provide a more expedited and tech-

friendly way of purchasing BFT transit passes. Currently, implementation of the new fare structure is being reassessed. BFT may need to make minor schedule adjustments to other routes and add, modify, or eliminate overload and tripper services based on demand.

Fixed Route

In the development of the 2025 ASP, BFT staff rigorously gathered and analyzed data concerning ridership, demographics, and PTBA growth. Engaging both internal and external stakeholders was integral to ensuring rider/operator perspectives guided route optimization efforts. The overarching goal goes beyond mere efficiency prioritizing equity. Additionally, staff conducted thorough cost-benefit analyses to uphold quality while remaining financially prudent. Accessibility and inclusivity remained focal points, with staff advocating for initiatives benefiting all passengers. These efforts culminate in transparent communication of findings, aiming for an enhanced transit system serving the community at large. As part of the 2025 plan, staff have identified and are proposing the following changes:



Recommended Service Change Key

For 2025, the recommended service changes are identified in red, green, and gray (Figure 3) throughout tables in this document to reflect the decrease and increase in service.

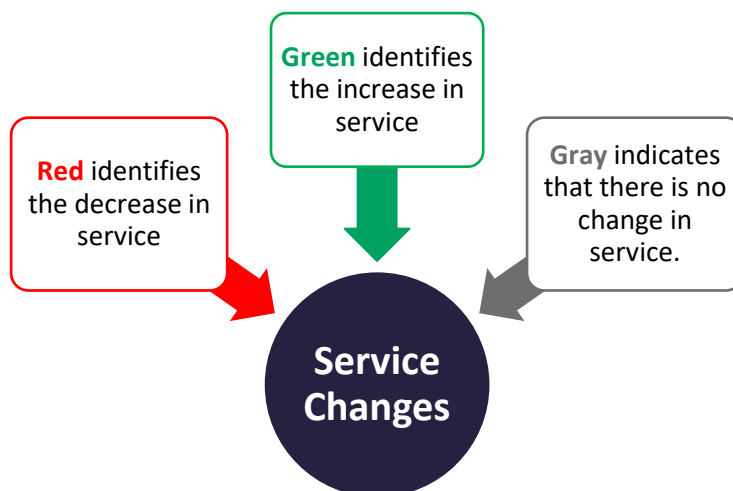


Figure 3: Service Change Key

Express & Limited-Stop Service

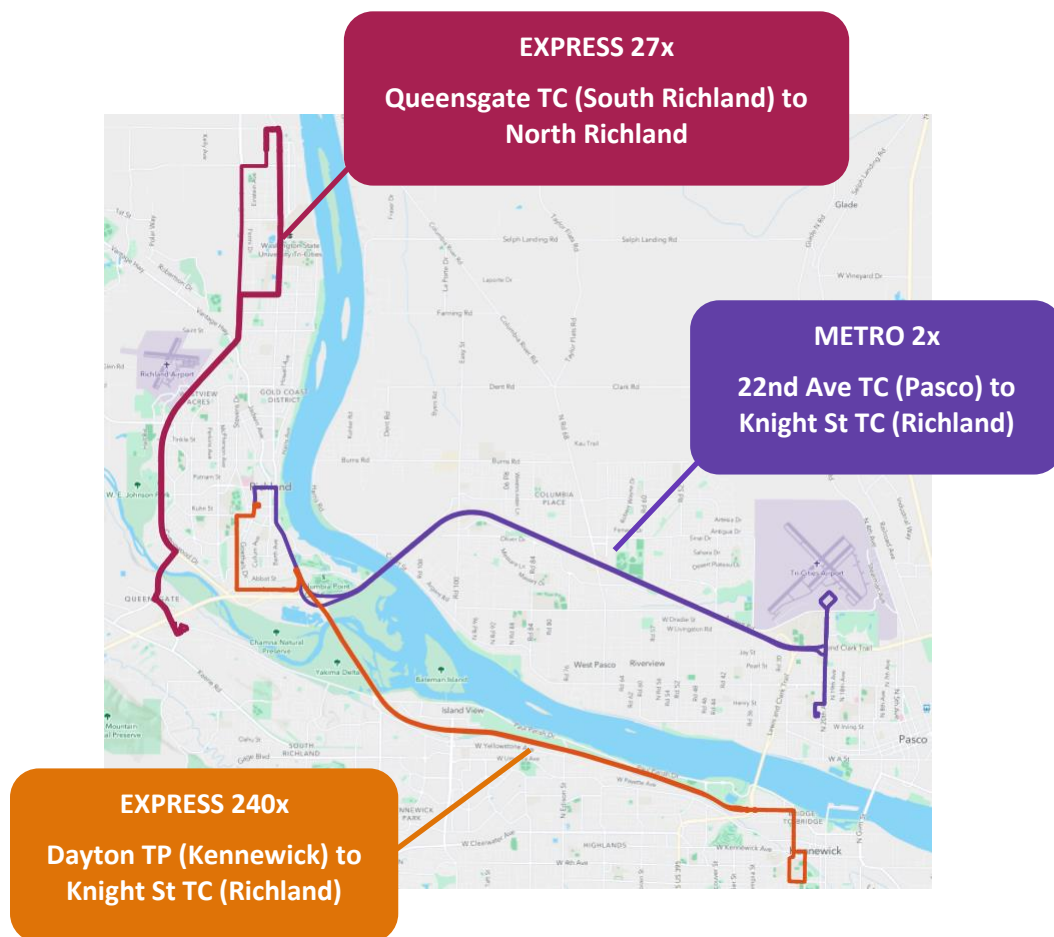
With the ongoing growth in the Tri-Cities area, the 2025 ASP focuses on improving METRO routes by introducing express service and establishing limited-stop routes to better connect cities and reduce travel time across the region. In March 2024, BFT applied for a grant through WSDOT's Regional Mobility Grant Program, which supports efforts to improve connectivity between counties, enhance access to regional population centers, and reduce transportation delays.

As part of these improvements, three new express routes will be introduced, with further details provided later in this document. Express service has been a long-standing request from the public. The grant and adjustments to other routes have allowed for these enhancements while maintaining a nearly neutral impact on revenue hours.

Please note the express route naming conventions may change prior to implementation. Additionally, Express Route [27x](#) is contingent upon grant [funding](#), expected to be awarded in May, with implementation planned for August 2025 [along with Metro 2x.](#)

Limited-stop service, where an express bus follows the same route as a local bus but stops only at designated locations, will be implemented for the Express routes. Discussions are also underway to extend this feature to METRO routes. This service enhancement improves the user experience by significantly reducing travel times.

Map 1: Proposed Express Routes



METRO 2x

METRO 2x aims to provide a more direct connection between Richland and Pasco via the Knight Street Transit Center. It will include direct service to the Tri-Cities Airport and limited-stop service along the 20th Avenue corridor, serving key destinations such as Columbia Basin College and Safeway. The route's eastern terminus will be the 22nd Avenue Transit Center, offering 15-minute peak service on weekdays, with no service on Saturdays or Sundays. The name reflects its 15-minute METRO service and limited-stop express design.

METRO 2x will replace portions of Route 268, which will be discussed in detail later in this document. It will also maintain the current service levels between the Knight Street Transit Center and the 22nd Avenue Transit Center on weekdays.

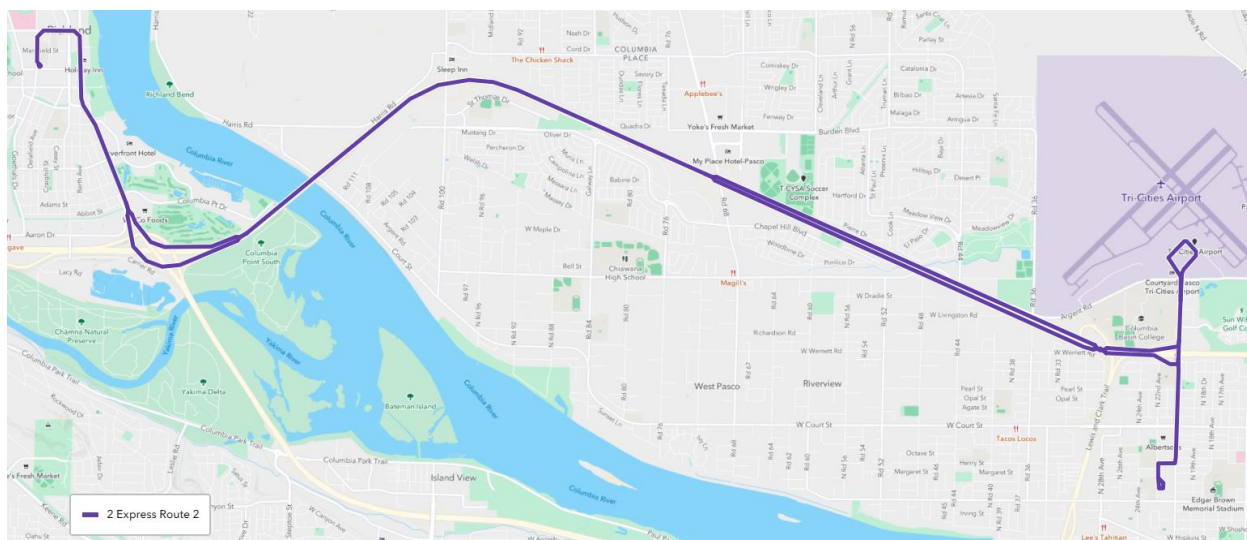
Although the elimination of Route 268 will reduce the Pasco-to-Richland connection to 30-minute frequency on Saturdays, METRO 1 will continue providing 20-minute service between Richland and Pasco via the Three Rivers Transit Center. Route 225 will also maintain 30-minute service on Saturdays, with the addition of direct service to the airport. This change replaces the previous routing through Saraceno Way at CBC.

Recommendations for METRO 2x:

- ✓ 15-minute peak service on weekdays
- ✓ Limited stop service connecting Knight Street Transit Center (Richland) to Columbia Basin College and 22nd Avenue Transit Center (Pasco).

Table 1: METRO 2x Proposed Service Change Data

Service Window	Operating Hours	Headway (min)	Vehicles	Annual Revenue Hours (Current)	Annual Revenue Hour Estimate (Proposed)
Weekday	6 AM-9 AM 2 PM-6 PM	15	4	0	7,378
Saturday	No Service	N/A	0	0	0
Sunday	No Service	N/A	0	0	0



Map 2: Proposed METRO 2x

EXPRESS 240x

EXPRESS 240x seeks to significantly reduce travel time between Dayton Transfer Point in Downtown Kennewick and Knight Street Transit Center in Richland. With the proposed removal of Route 41 along Fruitland and Columbia Dr., EXPRESS 240x will continue service to these areas.

Recommendations for Express 240x:

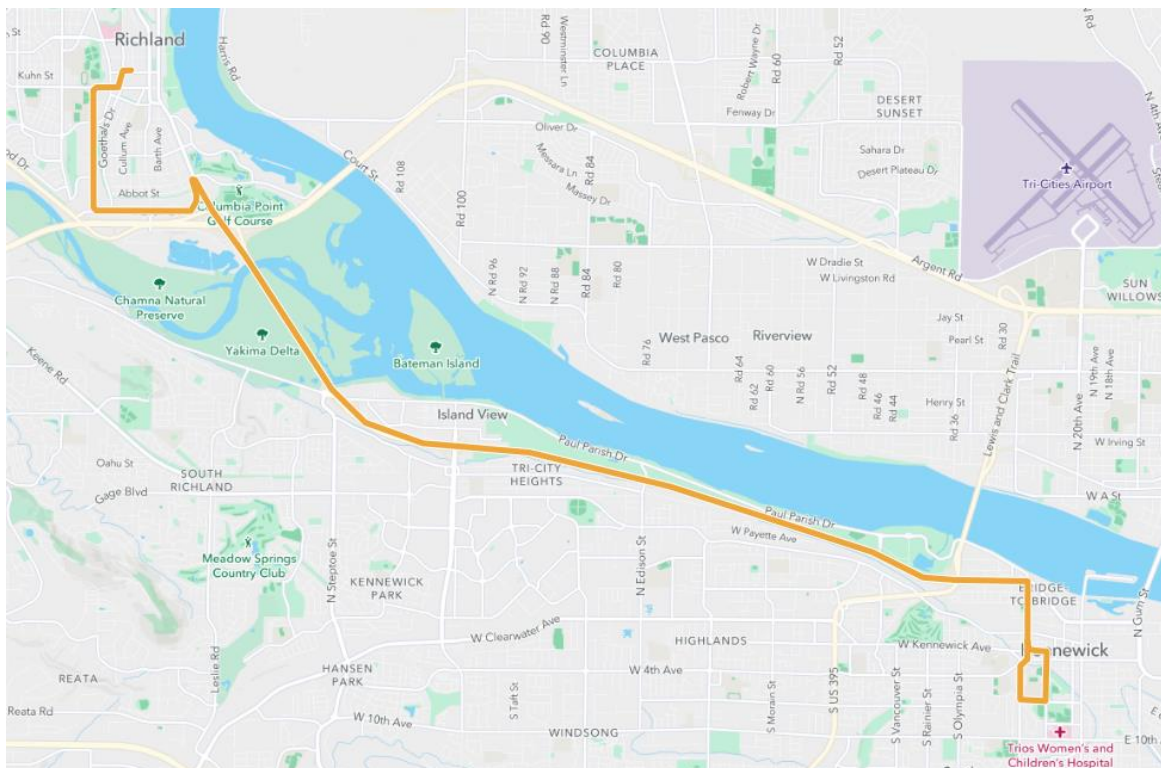
- ✓ 60-minute service Monday-Saturday
- ✓ Direct connection between Dayton Transfer Point and Knight Street Transit Center
- ✓ Maintain service along Fruitland St. and Columbia Dr. that would otherwise be left without service with proposed adjustments to Route 41.

Table 2: EXPRESS 240x Proposed Service Change Data

Service Window	Operating Hours	Headway (min)	Vehicles	Annual Revenue Hours (Current)	Annual Revenue Hour Estimate (Proposed)
Weekday	6 AM-8 PM	60	1	0*	3,655
Saturday	7 AM-7 PM	60	1	0*	693
Sunday	No Service	N/A	0	0	0

*Portion of route covered by current 41 Revenue Hours

Map 3: Proposed Express 240x

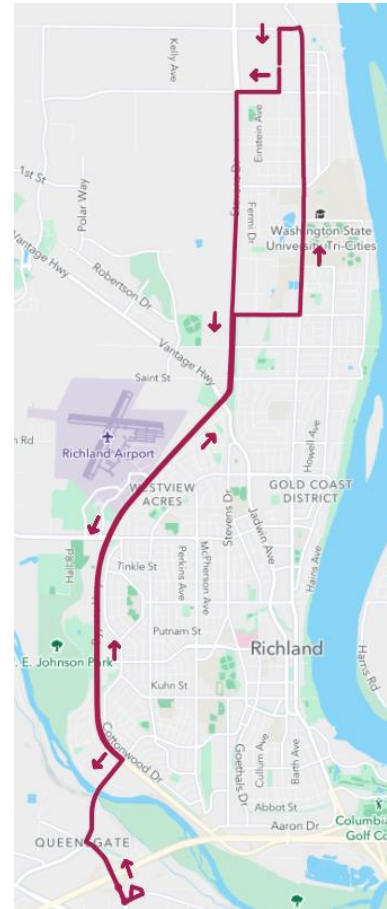


EXPRESS 27x

EXPRESS 27x seeks to provide a direct connection between Queensgate Transit Center in South Richland with North Richland education and employment areas, such as Battelle, Hanford High School, and WSU Tri-Cities. Alignment is subject to change before implementation based on feedback from the intended user base. Express 27x is contingent upon grant funding and availability of local funds.

Recommendations for EXPRESS 27x:

- ☑ 20-minute peak service on weekdays
- ☑ Limited-stop connection between Queensgate Transit Center and North Richland, servicing areas including Hanford High School, WSU Tri-Cities, and Battelle.



Map 4: Proposed EXPRESS 27x

Table 3: EXPRESS 27x Proposed Service Change Data

Service Window	Operating Hours	Headway (min)	Vehicles	Annual Revenue Hours (Current)	Annual Revenue Hour Estimate (Proposed)
Weekday	6 AM-9 AM 2 PM-6 PM	20	2	0	3,842
Saturday	No Service	N/A	0	0	0
Sunday	No Service	N/A	0	0	0

Route 41

Route 41 will be shortened to a 30-minute one-way clockwise loop to cover residential areas and maintain a connection to Horse Heaven Hills Middle School. With the implementation of EXPRESS 240x, staff suggests removing Route 41 from Columbia Dr. and Fruitland St. Additional suggestions include removing service along Hood Ave. where riders can utilize frequent service along the Clearwater corridor. Redundant service also exists on Volland St. and Kennewick Ave. The Gum St. area will be removed from Route 41 and replaced with Route 47 for more frequent service. Due to low productivity on 45th Ave., staff suggests Route 41 be realigned to serve 36th Ave. instead.

These changes are based on feedback from our long-range transit planning consultant, Transpo, and align with our ongoing planning efforts. The resources generated by reducing inefficient service on Route 41 will be reallocated to support the proposed EXPRESS 240x.

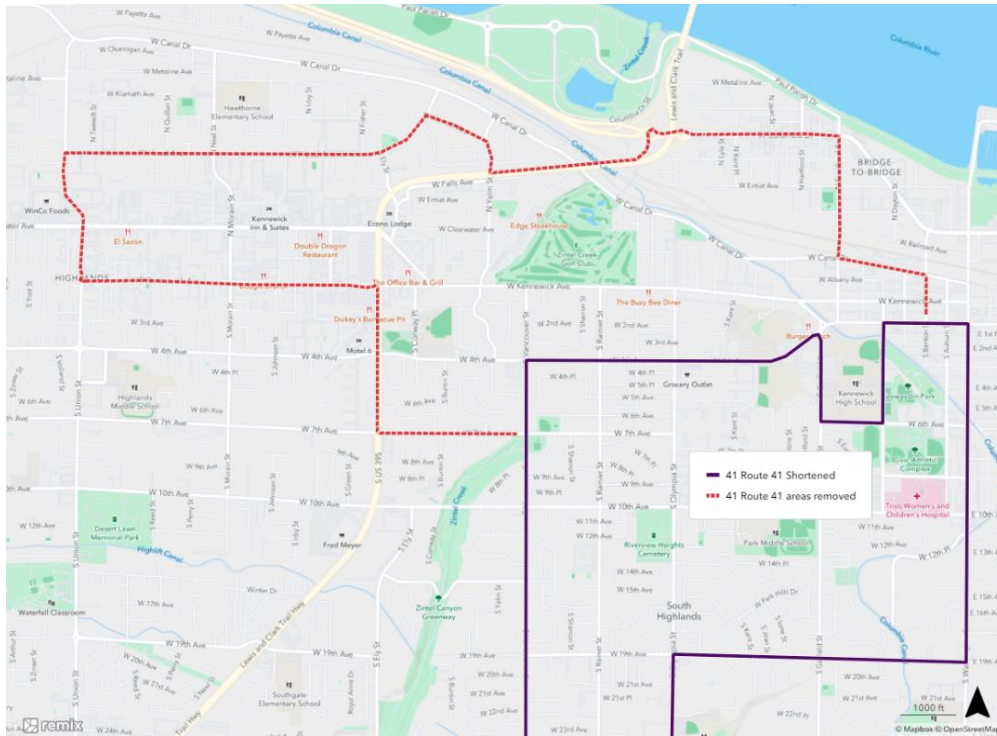
Recommendations for Route 41:

- ☒ Clockwise loop with 30-minute service
- ☒ Eliminate areas with redundant coverage and low ridership:
 - Canal Dr.
 - Columbia Dr.
 - Fruitland St.
 - Hood Ave.
 - Kennewick Ave.
 - Union St.
 - W 7th Ave.
 - W 45th Ave.

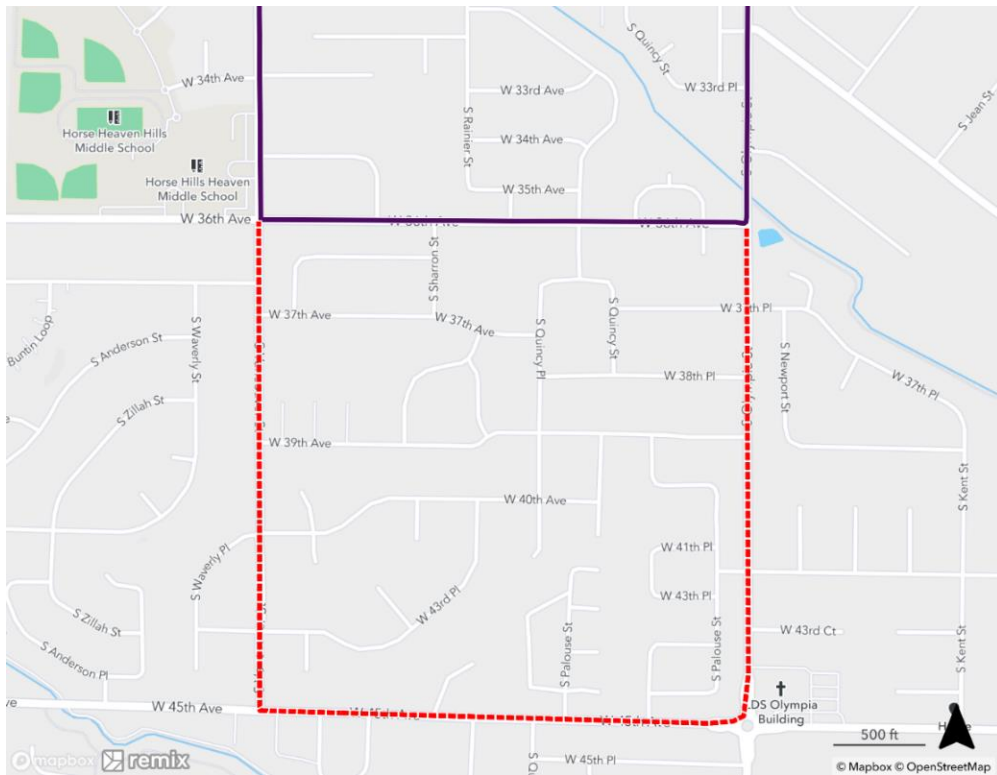
Table 4: Route 41 Proposed Service Change Data

Service Window	Operating Hours	Headway (min)	Vehicles	Annual Revenue Hours (Current)	Annual Revenue Hour Estimate (Proposed)
Weekday	No Change	No Change	-1	6,955	3,518 (-3,451)
Saturday	No Change	No Change	-2	1,320	0 (-1,437)
Sunday	No Change	No Change	No Change	0	0

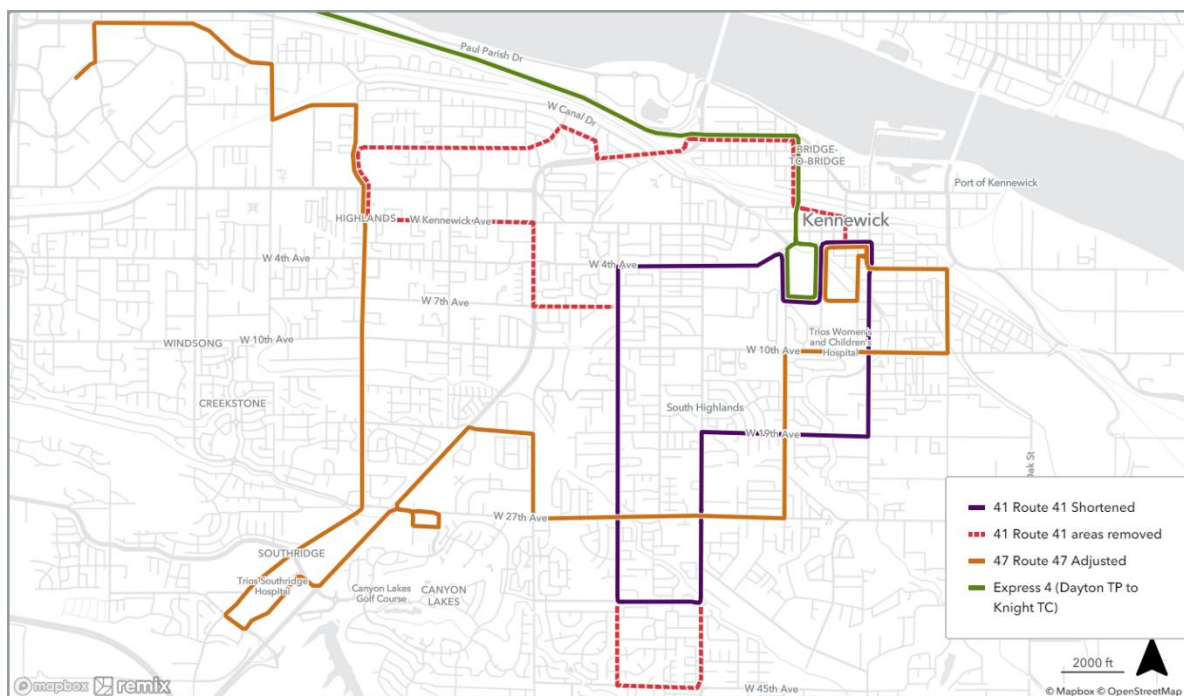
Map 5: Proposed Route 41 Adjustments



Map 6: Proposed Route 41 Adjustment – Removing 45th Ave. and realigning to 36th Ave.



Map 7: Proposed Route 41 & 47 Adjustments



Route 47

The route will no longer include under-utilized segments of Canyon Lakes Dr. In East Kennewick, Route 47 will be modified to include 10th Ave. and Gum St., providing more frequent service to areas no longer served by Route 41 with negligible changes to revenue hours. Bus stops on 28th Ave. near Walmart will be re-evaluated; however, there are currently no plans to alter the bi-directional service.

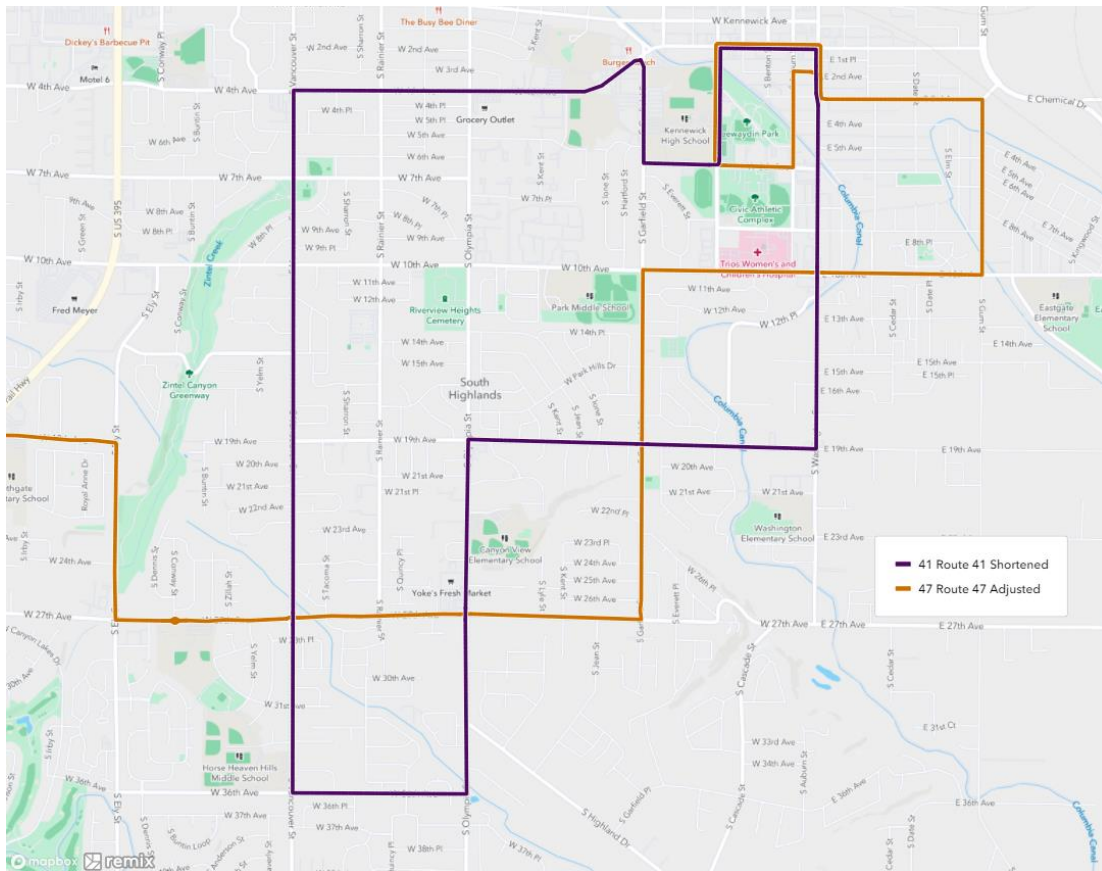
Recommendations for Route 47:

- ☒ Removal of service on Canyon Lakes Dr. due to low productivity.
- ☒ More frequent coverage of 10th Ave., Gum St., and 3rd Ave. previously on Route 41.

Table 5: Route 47 Proposed Service Change Data

Service Window	Operating Hours	Headway (min)	Vehicles	Annual Revenue Hours (Current)	Annual Revenue Hour Estimate (Proposed)
Weekday	No Change	No Change	No Change	0	0
Saturday	No Change	No Change	No Change	0	0
Sunday	No Change	No Change	No Change	0	0

Map 8: Proposed Route 41 & 47 Adjustments



Route 65

Route 65 will be realigned to provide improved service to Pasco High School while maintaining close proximity to the new Orion High School. This change is in response to the Pasco School District's restructured boundaries, effective Fall 2025.

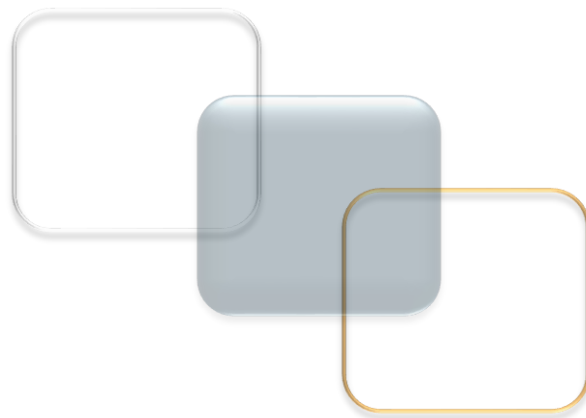
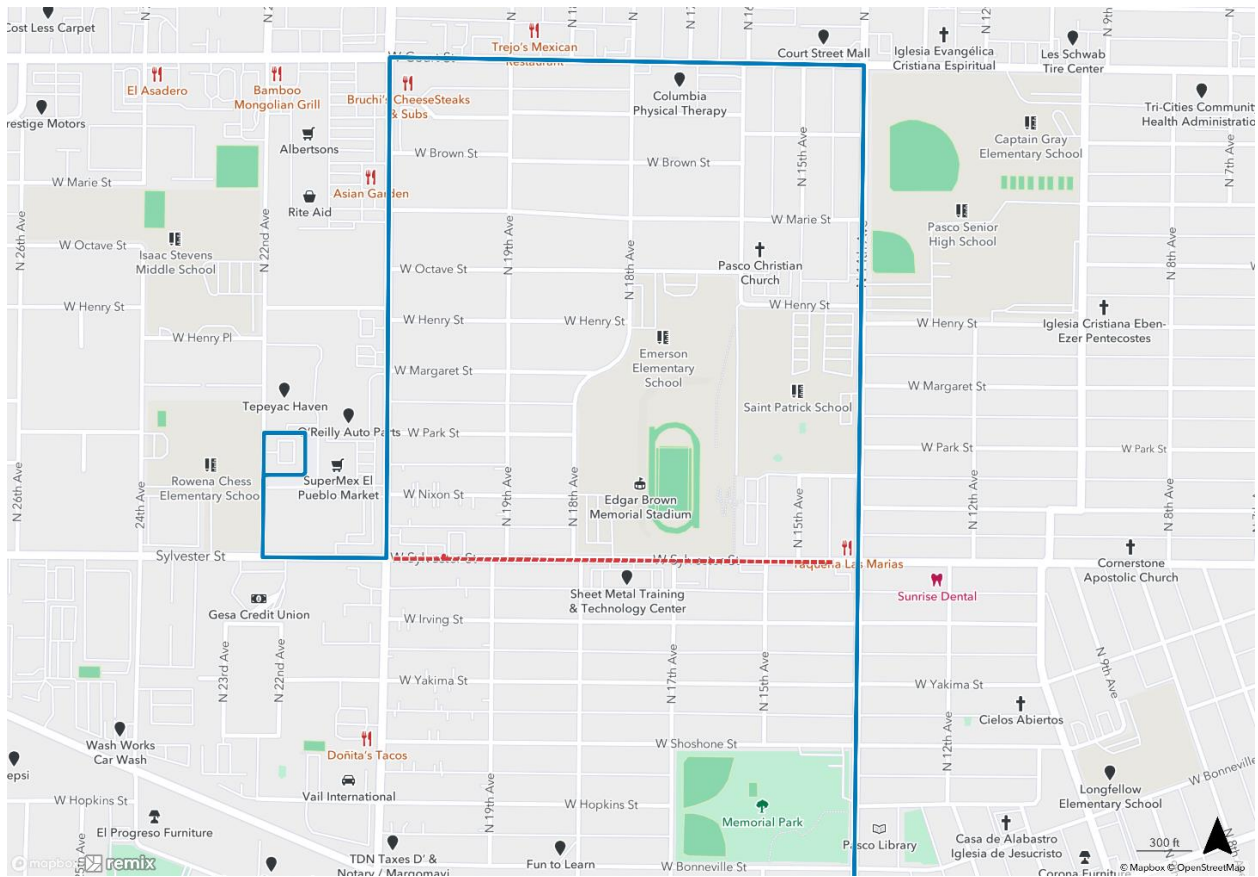
Recommendations for Route 65:

- ☒ Adjust routing to better serve Pasco High School along 14th Ave.
- ☒ Provide bus stops as near as possible to Orion High School.

Table 6: Route 65 Proposed Service Change Data

Service Window	Operating Hours	Headway (min)	Vehicles	Annual Revenue Hours (Current)	Annual Revenue Hour Estimate (Proposed)
Weekday	No Change	No Change	No Change	0	0
Saturday	7 AM to 7 PM	No Change	No Change	1529	1225 (-304)
Sunday	No Change	No Change	No Change	0	0

Map 9: Proposed Route 65



West Pasco - Routes 67/68/268

With the implementation of METRO 2x, adjustments to West Pasco's bus routes are planned. Staff proposes extending Route 67 (Map 11) to better serve West Pasco by including portions of Burns Road, Broadmoor, Chapel Hill, and Road 84. Route 268 will be eliminated and replaced with Route 68 (Map 10), which will cover the Pasco portion of Route 268. Routes 67 and 68 will operate in a figure-8 pattern with bidirectional service at 30-minute frequencies on weekdays. After 8 PM on weekdays and all day on Saturdays, the Route 67 extension will operate in place of Route 68.

These route alignments will be further modified to integrate with the new West Pasco Transit Center.

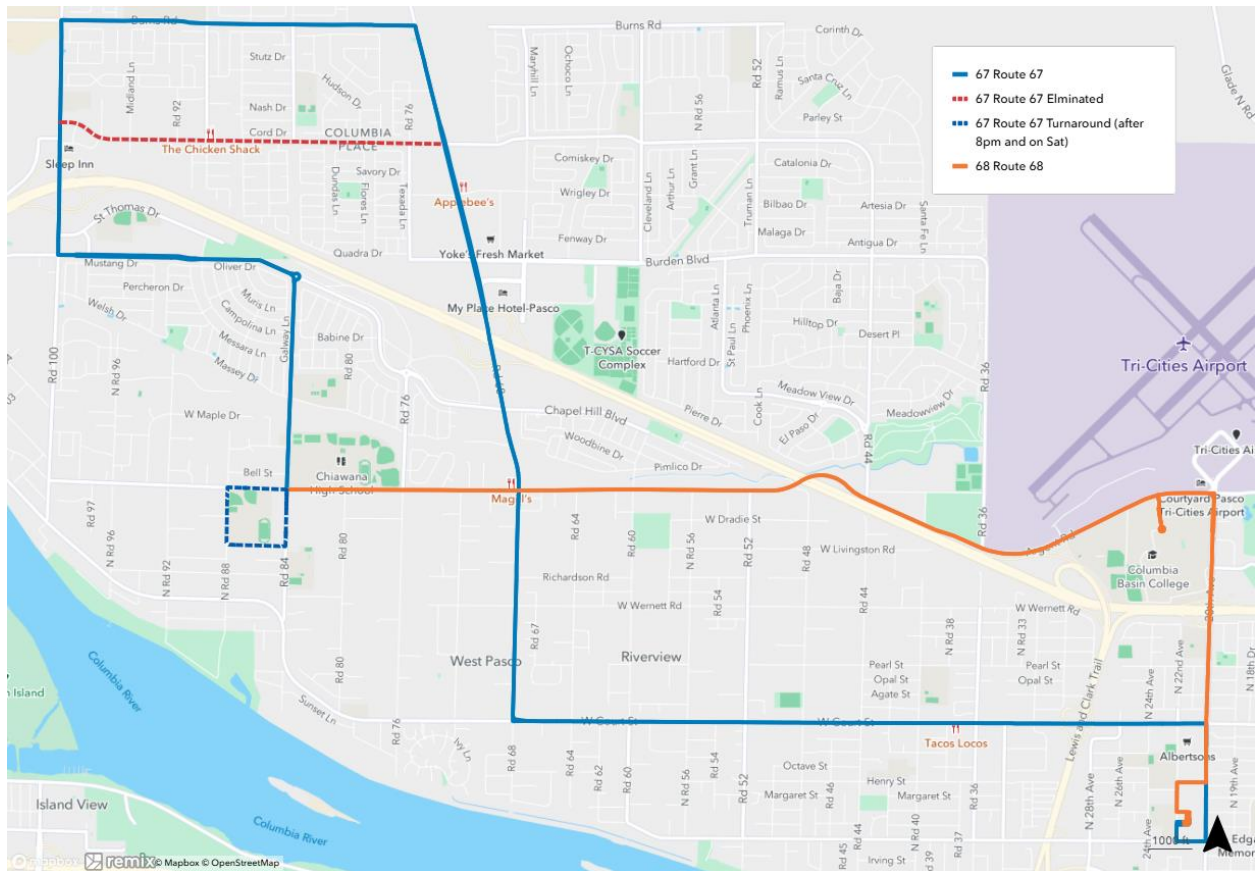
Recommended changes to West Pasco:

- ☒ Extending Route 67
 - Interlining mid-route with new Route 68.
- ☒ The Route 67/68 interline will operate until 8 PM on weekdays, after which the extended Route 67 will provide late evening service on weekdays and Saturdays.
- ☒ Removal of Route 268. Express 2 will help maintain the current Pasco-Richland connection frequency, in addition to Route 225 and METRO 1.
- ☒ Route 67 extension will require an additional bus that will in turn alleviate current on-time performance issues.

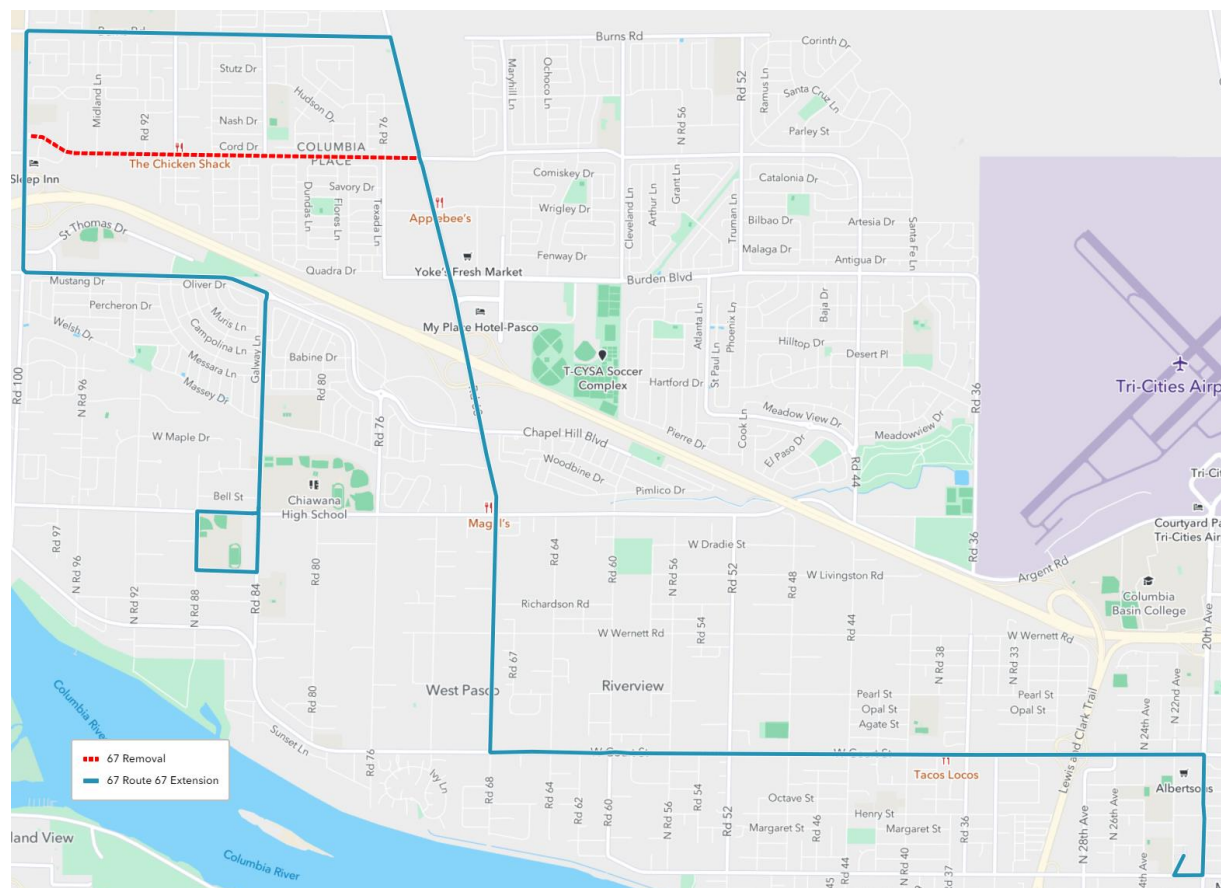
Table 7: Route 67/68 Proposed Service Change Data

Service Window	Operating Hours	Headway (min)	Vehicles	Annual Revenue Hours (Current Rt 67 & 268)	Annual Revenue Hour Estimate (Proposed Rt 67 & 68)
Weekday	6 AM-10 PM (8 PM-10 PM Rt 67 only)	30	4 (3 for Rt. 67 only)	18,526	15,300 (-3,226)
Saturday	7 AM-10 PM (Rt 67 only)	30	3	3,518	1,797 (-1,721)
Sunday	No Service				

Map 10: Proposed Route 67/68 Service Changes



Map 11: Proposed Route 67 Service Changes (Weekday routing after 8 PM and all-day Saturdays)



Route 225

BFT staff propose extending Route 225 to serve the new Sageview High School and nearby areas. The extension would operate on weekdays until 8 PM, after which the route would revert to its current configuration. On Saturdays and Sundays, the route will also follow its existing alignment with the addition of direct service to the airport. This change replaces the previous routing through Saraceno Way at CBC.

Both eastbound and westbound trips will serve Sageview High School on the north side of Burns Road by traveling in a counterclockwise loop. The extension is designed to accommodate the growing residential areas on the east side of Road 68 and ensure convenient access to the new school.

The added service to Sageview High School will support students by providing access to employment opportunities, before- and after-school activities (including breakfast options), and Columbia Basin College's Running Start program.

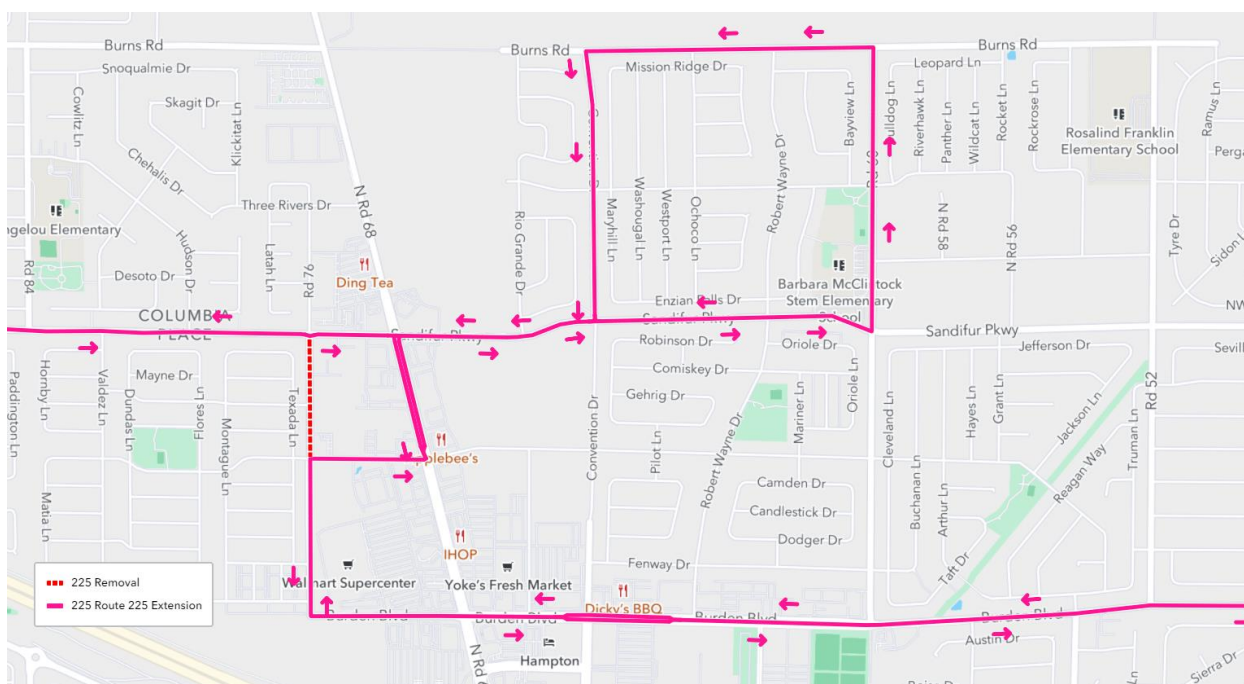
Recommendations for Route 225 Extension:

- ☑ Route 225 extension to serve Burns Rd by Sageview High School and Barbara McClintock STEM Elementary.
- ☑ The extension will operate on weekdays until 8 PM. Current routing will resume after 8 PM on weekdays and all-day Saturdays and Sundays.

Table 8: Route 225 Proposed Service Change Data

Service Window	Operating Hours	Headway (min)	Vehicles	Annual Revenue Hours (Current)	Annual Revenue Hour Estimate (Proposed)
Weekday	6 AM - 9 PM	30	3	12,300	15,997 (3,697)
Saturday	7 AM - 9 PM	30	3	2,352	2,352
Sunday	8 AM – 6 PM	30	3	1,611	1,611

Map 12: Proposed Route 225 Service Changes



Routes 10 and 20 Interline

By interlining Routes 10 and 20, Route 10's frequency could increase from hourly to every 30 minutes without requiring additional resources. This adjustment would enhance connections at the Queensgate Transit Center and improve access along the route. Weekday end times for both routes would remain unchanged. As part of the Saturday evening changes, Route 20's frequency would be reduced to hourly on Saturdays after 7 PM.

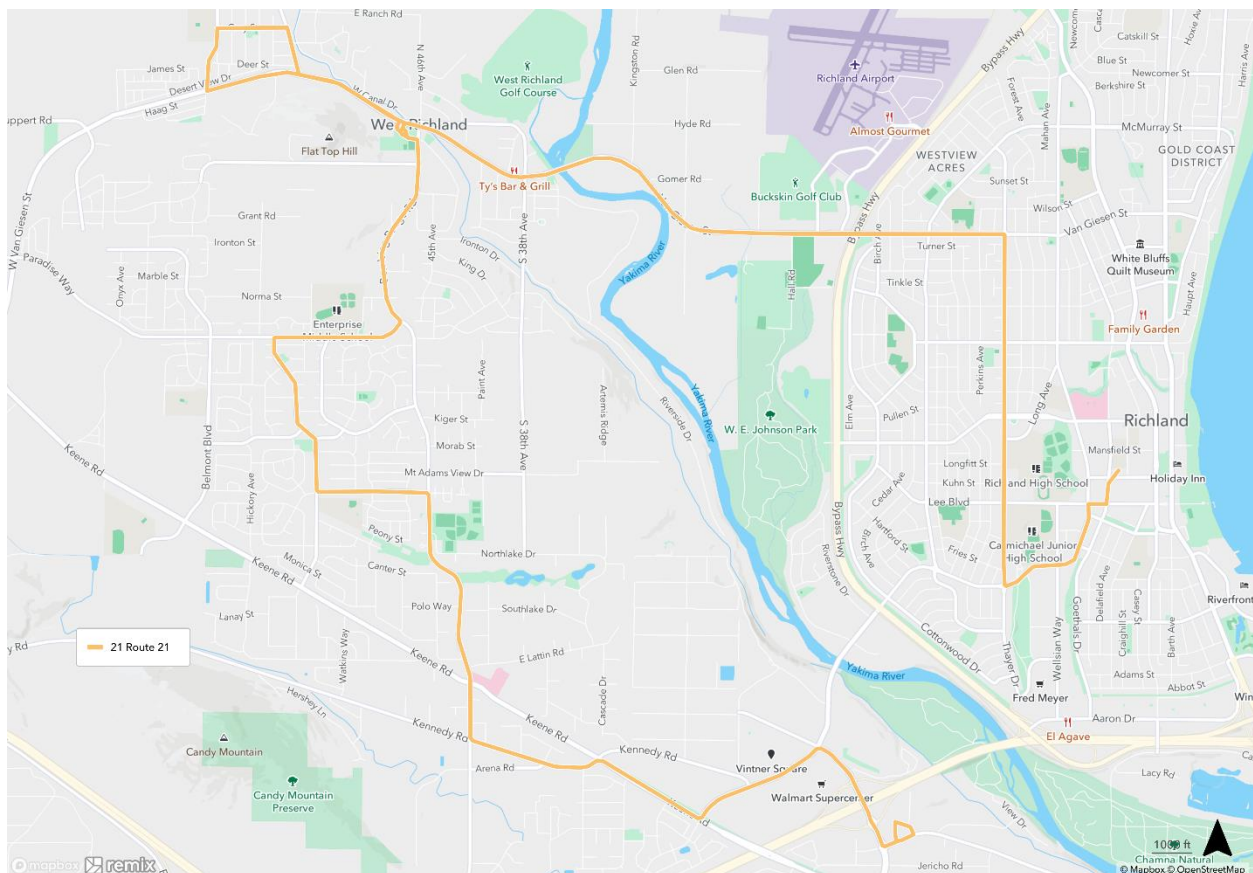
Recommended changes:

- ✓ Utilize existing resources to increase frequency in current Route 10 areas.
- ✓ Provide better connections at Queensgate Transit Center.

Table 9: Routes 10 & 20 Proposed Service Change Data

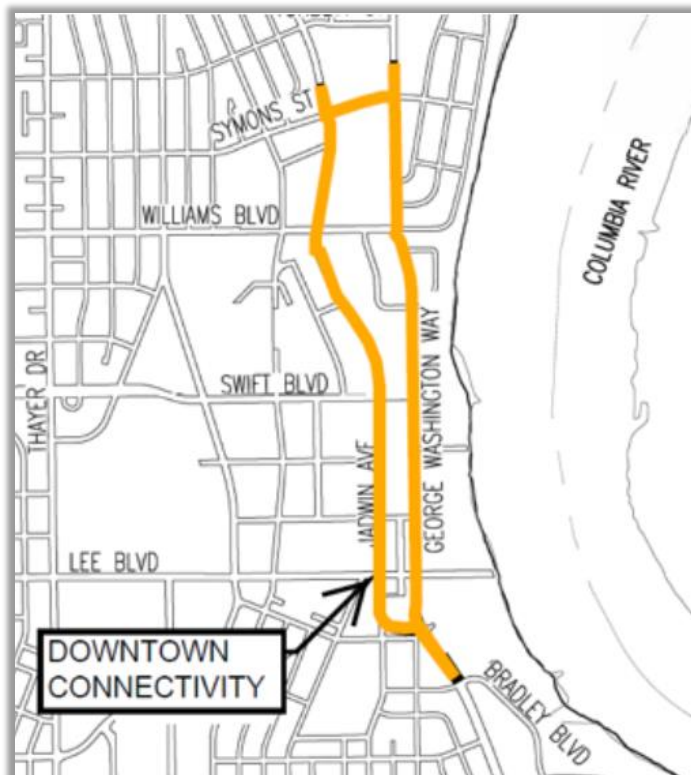
Service Window	Operating Hours	Headway (min)	Vehicles	Annual Revenue Hours (Current)	Annual Revenue Hour Estimate (Proposed)
Weekday	No Change	30	No Change	0	0
Saturday	No Change	Rt 10 & 20 @ 30 – Rt 20 only 60 after 7 PM	No Change	0	0
Sunday	No Change	No Change	No Change	0	0

Map 13: Proposed Routes 10 & 20 Service Changes



Routes 26 & 123 – Rerouting for Richland’s Downtown Couplet

Richland’s Downtown Connectivity Improvements project (Map 14) is planned to start construction in late spring 2025 with substantial elements completed in the late fall of 2026. This project will reconfigure a portion of Jadwin Ave. and George Washington Way into one-way streets, creating significant updates to Routes 26 and 123 with additional adjustments to routes approaching Knight Street Transit Center. With unknown timelines for implementation, the following are tentative plans and will be fully realized in the 2026 ASP. Detours during construction are to be expected and routing will be re-evaluated as needed.



Map 14: Richland’s Proposed Downtown Couplet

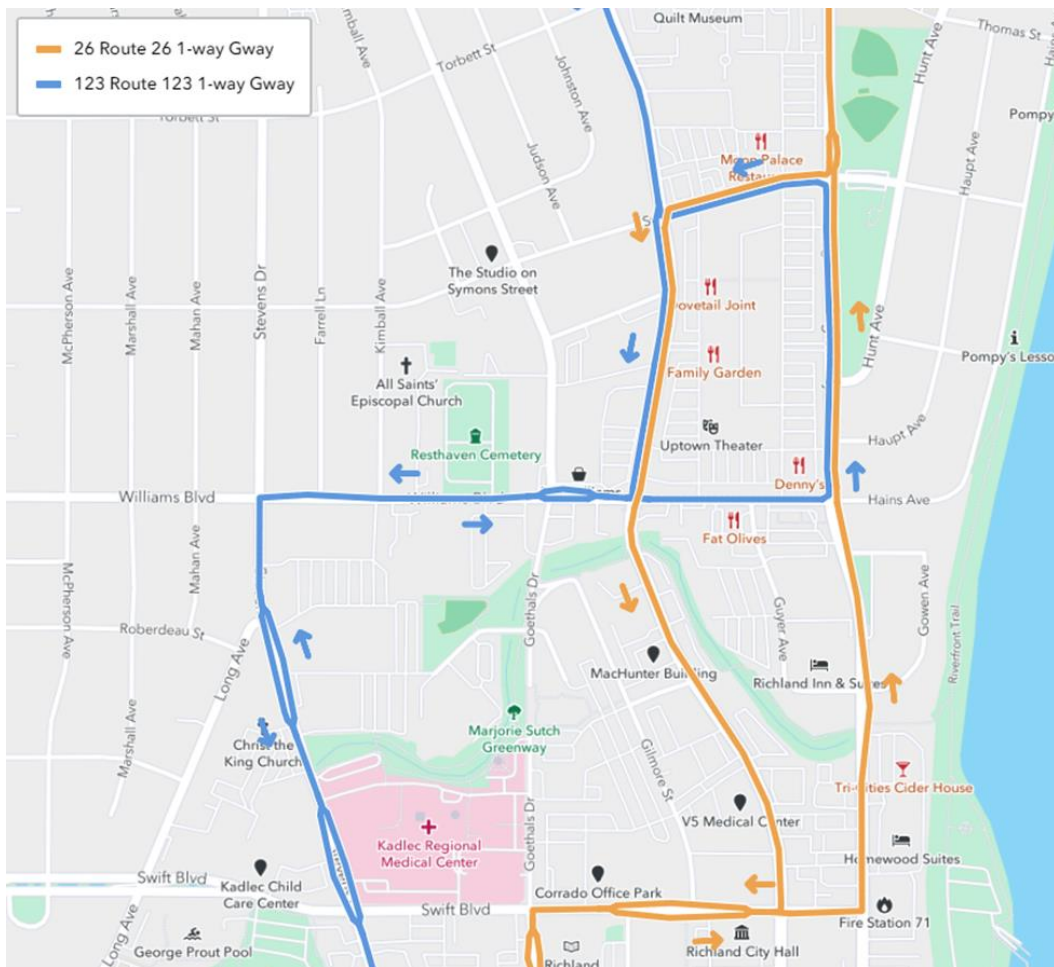
Recommendations for Routes 26 and 123:

- ☒ Adjust Routes 26 and 123 to utilize George Washington Way when heading northbound and Jadwin Ave when heading southbound as indicated in Map 15.

Table 10: Routes 26 & 123 Proposed Service Change Data

Service Window	Operating Hours	Headway (min)	Vehicles	Annual Revenue Hours (Current)	Annual Revenue Hour Estimate (Proposed)
Weekday	No Change	No Change	No Change	0	0
Saturday	No Change	No Change	No Change	0	0
Sunday	No Change	No Change	No Change	0	0

Map 15: Proposed Routes 26 & 123 Service Changes



End-of-Day Adjustments

BFT staff evaluated routes with low ridership during evening hours and identified the final hour of service on many Saturday routes as an opportunity to reduce service due to low demand. The following are proposed changes to the Saturday evening service.

- ☑ Saturday evening changes:
 - Route 20 reduced to 60-minute frequency after 7 PM
 - Routes 10, 25, 26, 42, 48, 65, 67, and 170 end at 7 PM
 - Route 40 extended to 10 PM
 - This route has been identified as having high demand, necessitating expanded evening service to maintain coverage in areas where Routes 42 and 48 will see reduced evening service.

Timetables & On-Time Performance

BFT staff will continue to evaluate timetables and on-time performance throughout the year to adjust as necessary for improved passenger experience and to maximize efficiency.

BFT contracted with CSched to review all time points throughout the day to match peak traffic periods. Implementation will be a slow rollout to test the accuracy. Routes 65 and 26 will start in December of 2024. Other routes will be adjusted if those prove to be successful.



2025 Fixed Route Service Change Summary

Route	Recommendations	Est. Vehicle Change	2025 ASP Est. Annual Rev Hour Change
METRO 2x	METRO route with limited-stop express service between Richland and Pasco	4	7,378
Route Express 240x	Limited-stop express service between Richland and Kennewick	1	4,348
Route Express 27x	Limited-stop express service between Queensgate and N Richland	2	3,842
Route 10	30-min. service (Rt. 20 interline). End at 7 PM on Saturdays.	0	1,419*
Route 20	Interline for increased frequency on Route 10. 60-min after 7 PM on Saturdays.	0	-1,639*
Route 26	End at 7 PM on Saturday	0	-226
Route 40	Extend to 10 PM on Saturday	0	104
Route 41	Route shortened to a 30-min one-way clockwise loop running weekday only	-1	-4,771
Route 42	End at 7 PM on Saturday	0	-208
Route 47	Route realignment to remove low ridership areas and provide more frequent service to some areas no longer covered by Rt. 41	0	84
Route 48	End at 7 PM on Saturday	0	-206
Route 50	End at 7 PM on Saturday	0	-104
Route 65	Route realignment to better serve Pasco High School. End route at 7 PM on Saturday.	0	-261
Route 67	30-min. mid-route interline with new Route 68 6 AM-8 PM weekdays. 2024 ASP extension after 8 PM weekdays and Saturdays. End at 7 PM on Saturdays.	1	2,240
Route 68	Mid-route interline with Route 67 every 30-min. 6 AM-8 PM weekdays only.	1	5,597
Route 170	End at 7 PM on Saturdays.	0	-104
Route 225	Extend to serve new Sageview High School 6 AM-8 PM weekdays. Current routing after 8 PM weekdays and all-day Sat. and Sun.	1	3,698
Route 268	Route eliminated.	-3	-12,784
Total		6	8,406

*Combined total revenue hours from interline: -220.

Other Changes

Dial-A-Ride

BFT will continue to provide reliable and accessible paratransit service throughout Benton and Franklin County within the PTBA. As BFT looks ahead to 2025, the primary focus remains on maintaining the high standards of service riders depend on. While there are no significant changes planned for the upcoming year, BFT recognizes the importance of addressing staffing challenges to uphold the quality of operations.

One of the key objectives for 2025 is to improve Dial-A-Ride (DAR) staffing levels. BFT understands that the dedication and expertise of staff directly impact the experience of riders. To achieve this goal, BFT will be implementing strategic measures to attract and retain qualified personnel, ensuring that there are a sufficient number of trained professionals to meet the demands of the paratransit service.

In instances where staffing shortages may temporarily affect the agency's ability to deliver seamless service, Via will be utilized to provide overflow services. The Operations team is empowered to assess the situation; and, if necessary, collaborate with Via for assistance. This approach will be utilized as needed and only as deemed essential to maintain service reliability and meet the needs of riders.

BFT trainers are actively engaged in refining the skills of drivers, providing them with tools to educate riders, and ensuring a consistent and positive experience for everyone. Through ongoing training initiatives, BFT aims to enhance communication, safety, and customer service standards. By investing in the continuous development of staff, the agency will be committed to ensuring that DAR remains a trusted and invaluable resource for the communities BFT serves.

BFT CONNECT

As a pivotal component of BFT's transportation system, the BFT CONNECT service is designed to offer tailored solutions for riders by filling gaps in the existing transit network and provide flexible and on-demand transportation. The BFT CONNECT service is utilized to complement existing transit services and ensure that the community has reliable transportation options, especially in areas where fixed routes may not be available. The utilization of CONNECT is often based on various factors, including the passenger's starting point or destination, the time of travel, and the availability of fixed routes.

BFT's CONNECT service made significant strides in 2024 to enhance accessibility and convenience for riders. These improvements include the introduction of a new BFT CONNECT app designed to streamline the booking process and provide users with real-time information about their ride. Additionally, the integration of fare types was added to simplify the interface and accommodate various passes, ensuring a seamless experience for riders. In response to feedback and evolving community needs, additional points of interest were incorporated, allowing for greater coverage and flexibility in transportation options where transit is not normally available within the PTBA.

Looking ahead to 2025, BFT is committed to building upon these achievements and further improving the CONNECT service while ensuring that the fixed route is a primary source of transportation. In the coming year, BFT will explore opportunities for area growth to meet the increasing demand from riders.

Under the guidance of the BFT Board of Directors, potential expansions and enhancements will be carefully considered to ensure that CONNECT continues to serve riders who don't have access to fixed routes or when the service is unavailable. To gain valuable insights into customer satisfaction and preferences, a biannual customer survey will be rolled out via the app, allowing BFT to gather feedback and make data-driven decisions for service improvement. Additionally, there is a possibility of adding

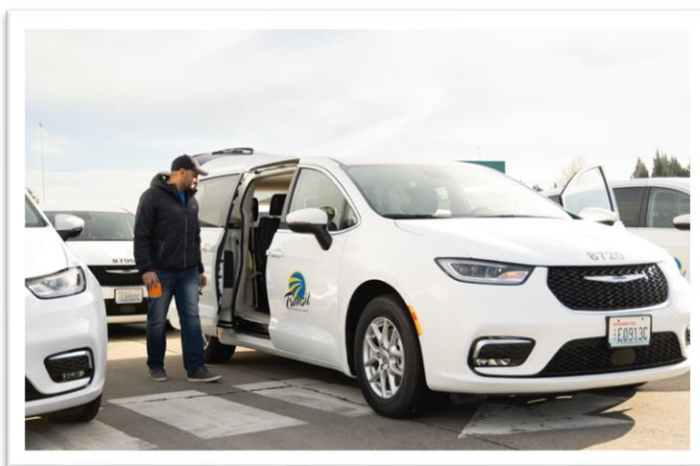
new points of interest based on community growth and need, particularly in areas where fixed-route options are limited or unavailable.

Efforts will also be made to enhance the user experience by improving app functionality across different platforms, ensuring consistency and reliability for both Android and iPhone users. Furthermore, BFT remains committed to closely monitoring driver partners, ensuring the contracted service provides drivers with comprehensive training and the necessary tools to deliver exceptional service consistently. Through these initiatives and ongoing commitment to innovation and customer satisfaction, BFT's CONNECT service will continue to evolve and adapt to meet the dynamic transportation needs of the community, providing convenient, reliable, and accessible mobility solutions.

Rideshare

BFT's Rideshare service, formerly known as Vanpool, underwent significant improvements in 2024 aimed at ensuring the continued comfort, safety, and efficiency of passengers' commutes. New vehicles were introduced to replace aging ones and to replenish the fleet after the sale of some vehicles during the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. These updates not only modernized the fleet but also reaffirmed BFT's commitment to providing reliable transportation solutions.

In anticipation of 2025, BFT is dedicated to further expanding the reach and impact of the Rideshare program. The primary focus will be on fostering the growth of Rideshare groups, nurturing a sense of community among commuters while alleviating traffic congestion and reducing environmental impact. By encouraging more individuals to join Rideshare groups, BFT aims to enhance transportation options and promote sustainable commuting practices across the service area. A review of the current fare structure will also take place.



In addition to growing Rideshare groups and refining fare structures, BFT will also embark on an initiative to create educational videos. These videos will serve as valuable resources, providing guidance and simplifying the process for new Rideshare groups and participants. By offering comprehensive educational materials, staff aim to empower passengers with the knowledge and tools they need to make informed decisions and maximize the benefits of shared rides.

Looking into the Future

As the Tri-Cities region continues to experience rapid growth, particularly in West Richland, the demand for expanded public transportation services is becoming increasingly evident. West Richland's ongoing residential and commercial development underscores the need for additional bus routes to serve these emerging areas. Enhanced service in this region would improve accessibility, connect residents to key destinations, and support the area's growth by providing a reliable alternative to driving.

Additionally, the need for new transfer centers in strategic locations is critical to improving regional connectivity and efficiency. In South Kennewick's Southridge area, a transfer center near Trios Southridge Hospital would better serve this growing community while enhancing access to healthcare, retail, and residential areas. Similarly, transfer centers in Benton City and Prosser would strengthen transit connections along the I-82 corridor, allowing for faster, more streamlined service between these communities and the rest of the Tri-Cities.

Pasco is also experiencing rapid growth, particularly in West Pasco, highlighting the need for a dedicated West Pasco Transit Center. Such a facility would serve as a vital hub for connecting residents to key destinations within the city and beyond. As the King City area and East Pasco's industrial and residential developments continue to expand, additional routes will be required to meet the growing demand for public transportation. Furthermore, there have been requests to extend service to Burbank and industrial sites in Wallula, creating new connections and enhancing regional mobility. Expansion of service area will be further evaluated in BFT's ongoing Long-Range Transit Plan, which is tentatively planned to be brought to the Board of Directors for approval in Q4 2025.

The Aerospace, Innovation, and Manufacturing (AIM) Center, a transformative project spearheaded by the Port of Pasco, represents a significant opportunity for transit expansion. Spanning 450 acres near the Tri-Cities Airport, the AIM Center will become a hub for innovation, community engagement, and economic development over the next two decades. Reliable transit service to this location will be essential to support the workforce and visitors it will attract. In addition, Pasco's residential growth, particularly in its northern neighborhoods, continues to drive the need for expanded bus services.

BFT plans to further define the PTBA expansion process in 2025 and identify areas currently outside of the PTBA that could potentially become part of our service area in the future such as Badger Canyon. These investments in public transportation infrastructure will not only address current needs but also position the region to accommodate future growth while reducing traffic congestion and improving mobility for residents across the area.

BFT looks forward to identifying the best ways to serve the many growing needs of our region as staff continue collaborating with Transpo and jurisdictional partners on BFT's long-range transit plan. The final document is expected to be completed in the fall of 2025.

Title VI Service Equity Analysis

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. BFT considers a potential for a disproportionate burden or disparate impact when recommended changes for low-income and/or minority populations would result in said populations receiving the benefits of a change 20% less than or bearing the adverse effects 20% more than the area average.

It has been determined that some of the service changes outlined in the 2025 ASP are considered a major service change per BFT's Major Service Change Policy, thus a Title VI Service Equity Analysis was required. BFT staff conducted a Title VI Service Equity Analysis, and it was concluded that none of the recommended changes would result in a disparate impact on minority populations. In fact, minority populations are expected to substantially benefit from specific changes such as the Route 65 realignment that will provide direct service between East Pasco, the Court St commercial corridor, Pasco High School, and 22nd Ave Transit Center.

Discontinuation of Route 268 and the substantial decrease in coverage of Route 41 are major changes whose implementation could have adverse effects despite not exceeding the 20% threshold of BFT's Disparate Impact and Disproportionate Burden policies (see table/figure). In the case of Route 268, impacts of change will be mitigated by the implementation of Routes 68 and METRO 2x. Route 41's coverage area will be significantly reduced, but the route will now operate on half-hour headways, doubling frequencies for the majority of the day. Overall, the 2025 ASP service recommendations result in minority populations born the change 6.8% less than the service area average of 41.2%. Low-income populations

For additional information, please refer to the 2025 ASP Title VI Service Equity Analysis appendix.

Title VI Service Equity Analysis Results Summary		
	Low Income	Minority
Change Borne By	17.7%	34.4%
Area Average	11.4%	41.2%
Delta	6.3%	-6.8%

Revenue

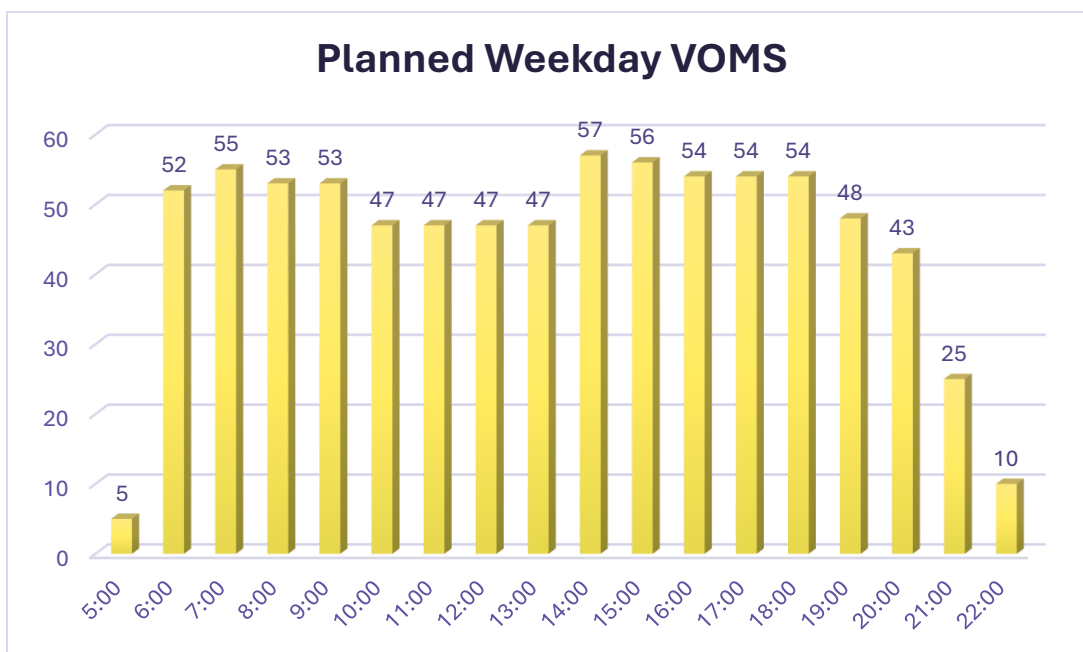
The 2025 ASP is anticipated to increase annual revenue hours by approximately 8,400. This equates to an approximate addition of \$1.25 Million to the annual budget given the current average cost per revenue hour of \$150.61. Service recommendations will be implemented in June and August, so prorated revenue hours are expected to increase by approximately 1,575 in 2025, with a budget increase of approximately \$250,000.

Labor

Implementation of the 2025 ASP is estimated to require seven (7) additional operators for fixed route service in 2025. However, reaching the currently approved headcount of 172 would suffice. Operations and Training staff will continue a hiring effort to address current labor shortages and work towards reaching the approved fixed route operator headcount.

Vehicle Utilization

Fixed Route Vehicles Operated in Maximum Service (VOMS) are expected to grow from 51 to 57 on weekdays. The reason for this significant increase is the focus on providing more service during peak hours of the day. This expansion will be possible with BFT's current fleet size and will also help BFT reach Federal requirements around vehicle spare ratio, which should be no more than 20%.



Public Outreach

Outreach Initiatives

The 2025 ASP was open for an informal public comment period during the month of October 2024. Staff provided three opportunities for the community to provide feedback. Sessions were available in person and online. Planning staff also provided two internal open houses during the informal comment period to collect feedback from BFT staff.

The 2025 ASP was open for public comment from January 5, 2025, to February 13, 2025. Staff provided four opportunities for the community to provide feedback. Sessions were available in person and online.*

❖ Open houses

- **January 7, 2025, at 6 p.m.** Pasco Mid-Columbia Library
Location: 1320 W Hopkins St., Pasco, WA 99301
- **January 14, 2025, at 6 p.m.** Three Rivers Transit Center
Location: 7109 W Okanogan Pl., Kennewick, WA 99336
- **January 15, 2025, at 12 p.m.** Virtual session only on Zoom*

Zoom link:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/85431965448?pwd=0as0Nv5y4Wz0pB6bND5BX1QrLigNSa.1>

Meeting: 854 3196 5448

Passcode: 593265

By phone: 253-205-0468 or (Toll Free) 877-853-5247

❖ Public hearing

- **February 13 at 6 p.m.** during the Board Meeting
Location: Ben Franklin Transit Board Room located at 1000 Columbia Park Trail, Richland, WA 99352.

Zoom Link: <https://zoom.us/j/98962178731?pwd=OGg1amhEQXA0RG5QRTdqNnFpRGN5dz09>

Meeting: 989 6217 8731

Passcode: 833979

By phone: 253-215-8782 or (Toll Free) 877-853-5247

❖ Feedback was also available in the following ways:

- ☐ Email input to CustomerComment@bft.org
- ☐ Call **Customer Service** at **509.735.5100**

Translation services were made available in Spanish. Outreach initiatives will be updated after the public comment period. In an effort to expand and modernize outreach to the community, BFT offered an interactive mapping system as a visual tool to gain customer feedback on the proposed route changes. The [interactive map](#) was available during the public comment period. User-friendly video instructions were available in English and in Spanish to help familiarize riders with utilizing the new tool.

Public Feedback

FINAL COMMENTS WILL BE ADDED AFTER THE PUBLIC OUTREACH PROCESS IS COMPLETE

Outreach efforts were conducted by BFT Planning staff. Marketing promoted the public comment period through various outlets. All comments and questions can be reviewed in the 2025 Service Equity Analysis. Summaries of the discussions are included below.

Online Interactive Map:

To date, the online comments requested Sunday service for Route 65 and weekend service to the Pasco Flea Market with concerns about walking such long distances in the summer. Two comments focused on Route 2x. One stated it was a waste of resources while the other said a direct route to the airport would be a great help for travelers.

Customer Service:

Customer Service received several comments. Three commendations and one concern pertaining to the 2024 ASP over changes to Route 170 that significantly increased travel from Prosser to Richland. It also stated the Queensgate Transit Center is not near anything useful, just a large expanse of parking. The commendations stated the following:

- I've been a regular transit rider for about a year now. I want to take a moment to share how much I've enjoyed my experience riding the bus during this time. The drivers are always so kind and professional, and it's clear they care about making the ride as smooth and enjoyable as possible. The main buses I use are the 123 and the 1.
- Yesterday I rode the bus with my 5-year-old as an alternative to driving. We invited a friend and her 4-year-old. The children enjoy the bus, and we'd like them to become familiar with transit before the world tells them that it's second-class transportation. We agree that it's a great way to experience and explore our community.

The final commendation resulted from a customer service representative at 22nd Ave Transit Center distributing flyers with information about the ASP 2025 open house. An elderly Spanish-speaking woman took a flyer and mentioned she would call if she had any questions, which she eventually did. She inquired about the proposed changes in Pasco. After reviewing the changes, she expressed her agreement and wanted to thank BFT. She shared that BFT is her primary way of getting around town since she doesn't drive or own a vehicle.

Open Houses:

BFT Staff conducted three open-house events. Two were in person and one was virtual.

- January 7, 2025, Pasco Library: one person attended from the public, and comments were received from the translator who was present at the event. An attendee provided several suggestions and concerns, including adding bus stops to maps, extending phone availability after Customer Service hours for late Route 40 riders, and posting presentation slides online. The need was emphasized to promote public transit for students, particularly in Prosser, where transportation is a barrier to higher education in the Tri-Cities. They also requested data on cost per revenue hour and expressed frustration with difficulties booking rides on CONNECT as a wheelchair user. Additionally, they asked for updates on Hanford service, ADA-compliant bus stops, and the removal of Canyon Lakes from the ASP map.

- January 14, 2025, Three Rivers Convention Center – four members of the public, two BFT employees, and the interpreter attended. Comments included concerns about the Route 41 alignment change impacting residents near Hood Ave and Ely St., the need for more frequent Route 240x service, and reduced frequency near Richland WinCo. They also questioned the possibility of a fare increase and the decision for METRO 2x to bypass the CBC loop. However, attendees were pleased with the expansion of peak express services and the improved 30-minute frequency for Route 47 in East Kennewick.
- January 14, 2025, Zoom. Five BFT employees and an interpreter attended the virtual open house. No comments were made regarding the ASP.

Memorandum

Date: February 13, 2025

To: Thomas Drozt, Chief Executive Officer

From: Kevin Sliger, Chief Planning and Development Officer

Re: Authorizing the Adoption of the 2025 Annual Service Plan & Accompanying Title VI Service Equity Analysis

Background

The 2025 Annual Service Plan (ASP) consists of service change recommendations that will continue to prioritize equity and emphasize efficiency by making changes to the fixed route network with the goal of providing faster, more frequent, and more reliable service. Additionally, staff conducted thorough cost-benefit analyses to uphold quality while remaining financially prudent when determining these recommendations. The majority of the recommended service changes will be implemented in June 2025 with a few routes starting in August 2025. The 2025 ASP was released for public comment on January 5, 2025.

Recommended Fixed Route Service Changes:

Route Eliminations:

- Route 268 – Eliminated; Pasco portions covered by new Route 68.

New Routes:

- METRO 2x – New peak weekday service from 22nd Ave TC (Pasco) to Knight Street TC (Richland), no weekend service.
- Express 27x – New express service from Dayton TP (Kennewick) to Knight Street TC (Richland), Monday-Saturday service.
- Express 240x – New peak weekday express service from Queensgate TC (South Richland) to North Richland education/employment areas, no weekend service.
- Route 68 – New route covering Pasco portions of Route 268.

Route Adjustments & Realignments:

- Route 41 – Eliminate unproductive portions, increased to 30-minute frequency and will only operate in clockwise direction
- Route 47 – Extend to segments of Route 41.
- Route 65 – Adjusted to better serve Pasco High School on 14th Ave.
- Route 67 – Extended to Burns Road and interlined with Route 68.
- Route 225 – Realigned to serve Sageview High School and surrounding areas near Burns Road.

Service Interlining for Frequency Improvements:

- Routes 10 & 20 – Interlined for improved frequency on Route 10.

Adjustments to Schedule:

- Saturday Evening Service Reductions – Decreased service on select routes with low ridership.

- Route 40 – Additional service after 8 PM on Saturdays.

Recommended CONNECT Service Changes:

- Explore opportunities for area growth to meet the increasing demand from riders by adding points of interest based on community growth and need, particularly in areas where fixed-route options are limited or unavailable
- Improving app functionality
- Monitor driver partners, ensuring contracted service provides comprehensive training and the necessary tools to deliver exceptional service consistently

Recommended ADA/Dial-A-Ride Service Changes:

- No changes planned. The goal is to improve current Dial-A-Ride (DAR) staffing levels. In instances where staffing shortages may temporarily affect the agency's ability to deliver seamless service, staff are using a third-party provider for assistance, which was implemented in early December 2024

Recommended Vanpool/Rideshare Service Changes:

- New vehicles continue to be introduced into service to replace aging fleet
- Creating educational videos

Title VI Service Equity Analysis:

It has been determined that service changes outlined in the 2025 ASP are considered a major service change per BFT's Major Service Change Policy, thus a Title VI Service Equity Analysis was required. BFT staff conducted a Title VI Service Equity Analysis, and it was concluded that none of the recommended changes will result in a disparate impact to minority populations or disproportionate burden to low-income populations was identified through the analysis based on BFT's Disparate Impact Policy and Disproportionate Burden Policy. The recommended changes will result in a net increase in service for those impacted

Labor & Vehicle Resources:

Implementation of the 2025 ASP is estimated to require seven (7) additional operators for fixed route service in 2025. However, reaching the current approved headcount of 172 would suffice. Operations and Training staff will continue a hiring effort to address current labor shortages and work towards reaching the approved fixed route operator headcount

Fixed Route Vehicles Operated in Maximum Service (VOMS) are expected to grow from 51 to 57 on weekdays. The reason for this significant increase is the focus on providing more service during peak hours of the day. This expansion will be possible with BFT's current fleet size and will also help BFT reach Federal requirements around vehicle spare ratio, which should be no more than 20%

Budget Impact – Revenue Hours:

The 2025 ASP is anticipated to increase annual revenue hours by approximately 2,500. This equates to an approximate addition of \$377,000 to the annual budget based on the average cost per revenue hour of \$150.61. All service recommendations will be implemented in June with the exception of METRO 2x and Express 27x which will begin in August 2025, so prorated revenue hours are expected to decrease by approximately 2,160 in 2025, with a budget decrease of

approximately \$325,200. All resource increases needed to operate the 2025 ASP recommendations are included in the approved 2025 Operating Budget. BFT planning staff recommend increasing the budgeted vehicle revenue hours from 231,000 (2024) to 233,500 (2025). This accounts for a 1.1% increase in revenue hours on an annualized basis when compared to 2024 budgeted.

Public Comment:

BFT conducted public outreach on the 2025 ASP through an online interactive map, customer service feedback, and open houses. Marketing promoted the comment period, and all feedback is included in the 2025 Service Equity Analysis. Below is a summary of key comments:

Online Interactive Map:

- Request for Sunday service on Route 65
- Request for weekend service to Pasco Flea Market due to long walking distances in summer
- Route 2x: one comment viewed it as a waste of resources, another supported a direct airport route

Customer Service Feedback:

- Three commendations for positive rider experiences, helpful drivers, and outreach efforts
- Concern about Route 170 changes increasing travel time from Prosser to Richland
- Concern that Queensgate Transit Center is isolated and primarily a parking lot

Open Houses:

Pasco Library (January 7, 2025)

- **Requests:** Bus stops on maps, extended phone hours for late Route 40 riders, online presentation slides.
- **Concerns:** Transit barriers for Prosser students, difficulty booking CONNECT for wheelchair users, need for ADA-compliant stops.
- **Questions:** Updates on Hanford service, removal of Canyon Lakes from ASP map, cost per revenue hour data

Three Rivers Transit Center (Jan. 14, 2025)

- **Concerns:** Route 41 realignment (Hood Ave & Ely St.), reduced frequency near Richland WinCo
- **Requests:** More frequent Route 240x service
- **Questions:** Fare increase possibility, METRO 2x bypassing CBC loop
- **Positive feedback:** Peak express service expansion, improved Route 47 frequency in East Kennewick

Virtual Open House (Jan. 14, 2025):

No public comments received

Public Hearing:

February 13 at 6 p.m. during the Board Meeting

*Location: Ben Franklin Transit Board Room located at 1000 Columbia Park Trail,
Richland, WA 99352*

The complete 2025 ASP can be viewed on the BFT website at: <https://www.bft.org/about/annual-service-plan>

Funding

Budgeted: Yes
Budget Source: Operating Budget
Funding Source: FTA, State, and Local

Recommendation

Authorize the Chief Executive Officer to adopt the 2025 Annual Service Plan and Title VI Service Equity Analysis

Forward as presented:



Thomas Drozt, Chief Executive Officer

**BEN FRANKLIN TRANSIT
RESOLUTION 02-2025**

A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE ADOPTION OF THE 2025 ANNUAL SERVICE PLAN & ACCOMPANYING TITLE VI SERVICE EQUITY ANALYSIS

WHEREAS, Planning staff have worked with Operations, Finance, and Marketing as well as the public to identify needed service changes that are intended to improve accessibility and efficiency and have incorporated the recommended changes into the 2025 Annual Service Plan; and

WHEREAS, Planning staff have completed a review of the adopted 2025 operating budget and identified labor requirements for implementation of service changes outlined in the 2025 Annual Service Plan; and

WHEREAS, A Title VI Service Equity Analysis was completed since there were major service changes recommended; and

WHEREAS, Planning and Marketing staff published and advertised the draft document and incorporated public comments into the 2025 Annual Service Plan.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BEN FRANKLIN TRANSIT BOARD OF DIRECTORS THAT:

The Chief Executive Office is authorized to adopt the 2025 Annual Service Plan and implement the outlined recommendations as detailed.

APPROVED AT A REGULAR BEN FRANKLIN TRANSIT BOARD OF DIRECTORS meeting held Thursday, February 13, 2025, at 1000 Columbia Park Trail, Richland, Washington.

ATTEST:



Shea Walter, Clerk of the Board



Will McKay, Chair

APPROVED AS TO FORM BY:



Jeremy J. Bishop, Legal Counsel

Memorandum

Date: February 13, 2025

To: Thomas Drozt, Chief Executive Officer

From: Kevin Sliger, Chief Planning and Development Officer

Re: Authorizing the Adoption of the 2025 Annual Service Plan & Accompanying Title VI Service Equity Analysis

Background

The 2025 Annual Service Plan (ASP) consists of service change recommendations that will continue to prioritize equity and emphasize efficiency by making changes to the fixed route network with the goal of providing faster, more frequent, and more reliable service. Additionally, staff conducted thorough cost-benefit analyses to uphold quality while remaining financially prudent when determining these recommendations. The majority of the recommended service changes will be implemented in June 2025 with a few routes starting in August 2025. The 2025 ASP was released for public comment on January 5, 2025.

Recommended Fixed Route Service Changes:

Route Eliminations:

- Route 268 – Eliminated; Pasco portions covered by new Route 68.

New Routes:

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- Explore opportunities for area growth to meet the increasing demand from riders by adding points of interest based on community growth and need, particularly in areas where fixed-route options are limited or unavailable
- Improving app functionality
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Recommended ADA/Dial-A-Ride Service Changes:

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Implementation of the 2025 ASP is estimated to require seven (7) additional operators for fixed route service in 2025. However, reaching the current approved headcount of 172 would suffice. Operations and Training staff will continue a hiring effort to address current labor shortages and work towards reaching the approved fixed route operator headcount

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approximately \$325,200. All resource increases needed to operate the 2025 ASP recommendations are included in the approved 2025 Operating Budget. BFT planning staff recommend increasing the budgeted vehicle revenue hours from 231,000 (2024) to 233,500 (2025). This accounts for a 1.1% increase in revenue hours on an annualized basis when compared to 2024 budgeted.

Public Comment:

BFT conducted public outreach on the 2025 ASP through an online interactive map, customer service feedback, and open houses. Marketing promoted the comment period, and all feedback is included in the 2025 Service Equity Analysis. Below is a summary of key comments:

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- **Questions:** Updates on Hanford service, removal of Canyon Lakes from ASP map, cost per revenue hour data

Three Rivers Transit Center (Jan. 14, 2025)

- **Concerns:** Route 41 realignment (Hood Ave & Ely St.), reduced frequency near Richland WinCo
- **Requests:** More frequent Route 240x service
- **Questions:** Fare increase possibility, METRO 2x bypassing CBC loop
- **Positive feedback:** Peak express service expansion, improved Route 47 frequency in East Kennewick

Virtual Open House (Jan. 14, 2025):

No public comments received

Public Hearing:

February 13 at 6 p.m. during the Board Meeting

*Location: Ben Franklin Transit Board Room located at 1000 Columbia Park Trail,
Richland, WA 99352*

The complete 2025 ASP can be viewed on the BFT website at: <https://www.bft.org/about/annual-service-plan>

Funding

Budgeted: Yes
Budget Source: Operating Budget
Funding Source: FTA, State, and Local

Recommendation

Authorize the Chief Executive Officer to adopt the 2025 Annual Service Plan and Title VI Service Equity Analysis

Forward as presented:



Thomas Drozt, Chief Executive Officer

**BEN FRANKLIN TRANSIT
RESOLUTION 03-2025**

A RESOLUTION ADOPTING THE 2025 TITLE VI SERVICE EQUITY ANALYSIS

WHEREAS, Staff has concluded that the majority of fixed route service changes outlined within the 2025 Annual Service Plan (ASP) are a major service change based on BFT's *Major Service Change Policy*; and

WHEREAS, A Title VI Service Equity Analysis has been conducted to identify if the coming service changes may impose adverse effects on low-income population, but no adverse impacts are expected for the effected minority populations; and

WHEREAS, the results have been included in the 2025 Title VI Service Equity Analysis; and

WHEREAS, The Title VI Service Equity Analysis was released for a 30-day public comment period to meet federal and state funding compliance requirements; and


WHEREAS, Staff are evaluating comments from the public and a summary of the feedback will be included in the final ASP and 2025 Title VI Service Equity Analysis

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BEN FRANKLIN TRANSIT BOARD OF DIRECTORS THAT:

The Chief Executive Officer is authorized to adopt the 2025 Title VI Service Equity Analysis and accept the findings within the document

APPROVED AT A REGULAR BEN FRANKLIN TRANSIT BOARD OF DIRECTORS meeting held Thursday, February 13, 2025, at 1000 Columbia Park Trail, Richland, Washington.

ATTEST:



Shea Walter, Clerk of the Board



Will McKay, Chair

APPROVED AS TO FORM BY:



Jeremy J. Bishop, Legal Counsel