

Ben Franklin Transit | 2027 Annual Service Plan | Executive Summary

2027 Annual Service Plan (ASP)

El The 2027 Annual Service Plan (ASP) describes Ben Franklin Transit's proposed service changes for the Tri-Cities region. It is built on spring 2026 ridership, productivity, and on-time performance data, plus operator and community input. Under the ASP Policy adopted in 2021, it also guides budget and staffing decisions. Changes would take effect in June 2027 contingent upon staffing and vehicle availability.

Agency Overview

Ben Franklin Transit (BFT) is committed to providing safe, reliable, accessible, and equitable transportation that supports the quality of life, mobility, and economic vitality of the Tri-Cities region. Established in 1981, BFT is funded primarily by voter-approved local sales tax and FTA formula grants.

Recommendations

- **Launch two new routes.** The West Richland route (two alternatives for public review) and the West Clearwater route. Both answer long-standing community requests.
- **Route 2X.** Reduce frequency to 30 minutes and move from peak service to all-day service.
- **Consider ending Route 27X.** This pilot route has shown minimal ridership growth and is the lowest in the system. Route 123 would be adjusted to keep coverage near the Duportail Bridge.

System Health

Routes 3, 40, and 65 are the most productive based on ridership per revenue hour. Systemwide Departure on-time performance is about 89.9%, with a 90% goal. Routes 40, 65 and 67 are also the top priorities for run-time analysis.

Beyond Fixed Route

CONNECT, Dial-A-Ride, and Rideshare anticipate no major changes in 2027. CONNECT will be redesigned through the upcoming Short Range Transit Plan (SRTP) to complement fixed route. Dial-A-Ride implemented RideCo, a new scheduling and dispatching platform, in September 2026. Rideshare plans to add 20–30 new groups. Bus stop upgrades continue.

Next Steps

Public feedback will be gathered throughout October. The final draft ASP will enter a 30-day public comment period in November 2026, followed by review of feedback and finalization for approval.

Strategic Initiatives and Looking into the Future

BFT will continue working towards the development of the 2027–2031 Short-Range Transit Plan, economic impact analysis, climate planning, transit-oriented development, and stronger public engagement.

Overall, the 2027 ASP provides a balanced approach to service expansion, resource stewardship, reliability, accessibility, and equity. Through continued collaboration with riders, operators, communities, and regional partners, BFT will strengthen the transit network and position the agency to respond effectively to continued regional growth and changing mobility needs.

Scheduled for Board Adoption: December 10, 2026