

**Board of Commissioners/Community Transportation Advisory Grp
Special Joint Meeting Agenda
January 24, 2025 - 4:00 p.m.**



Virtual Meeting Participation Information:
Dial: 1-253-215-8782 Meeting ID No. 84248362060
Webinar link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84248362060>

Physical Meeting Location:
Pierce Transit Training Center
3720 96th Street SW
Lakewood, WA 98499

Call to Order

Roll Call

Introductions

Presentation/Discussion

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. Review Fixed Route Classifications and Route Productivity Standards | Brittany Carbullido
Planner |
| 2. Recap of Six Year Forecast | Chris Schuler
Chief Financial Officer |
| 3. Review of Draft Long-Range Plan – Destination 2045, and Discussion about Level of Service Capabilities Meeting Future Growth and Employment Projections in Pierce County | Darin Stavish
Senior Planner |

Adjournment

Pierce Transit does not discriminate on the basis of disability in any of its programs, activities, or services. To request this information in an alternative format or to request a reasonable accommodation, please contact the Clerk's Office at 253.581.8066, before 4:00 p.m., no later than the Thursday preceding the Board meeting.

Fixed Route Service Standards Appendix: Route Classifications & Productivity



Background



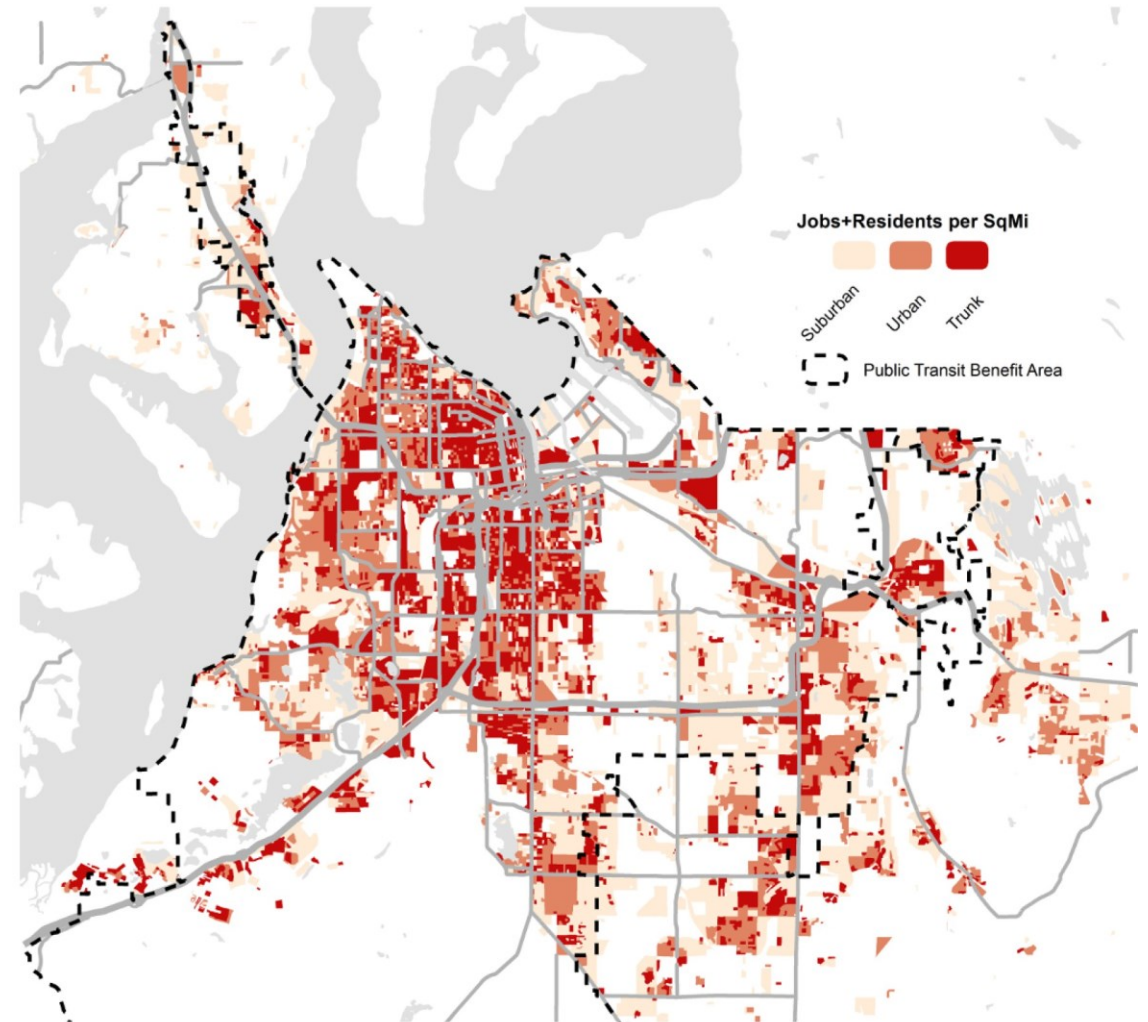
- Current route classifications and productivity standards adopted in 2016 Long Range Plan (LRP) appendix; largely unchanged since 2003
- Interim productivity standards adopted in December 2022, effective January 2023
- New LRP in development - time to re-examine classifications & standards

Route Classifications: Transit & Density

"...There are two primary linkages between density and transit use. First, residents of high-density neighborhoods are more likely to use transit. Second, higher densities bring more origins and destinations within easy access of transit..."

Puget Sound Regional Council Guidance Paper: Transit-Supportive Densities and Land Uses, 2015

Using density to guide transit service hierarchies/route classifications is a regional & national best practice.



Which Level of Density Warrants Which Type of Service?
Pierce Transit 2016 Long Range Plan Appendix

Current Route Classifications

Trunk <i>>6,000 AU</i> 3 Routes	Urban <i>>4,000 AU</i> 19 Routes	Suburban <i>>1,800 AU</i> 5 Routes	Community Connector <i>>1,800 AU</i> 1 Route	Express <i>Variable AU</i> 1 Route
Peak Frequency Target 10-30 minutes	Peak Frequency Target ≤30 minutes	Peak Frequency Target ≤60 minutes	Peak Frequency Target Based on demand	Peak Frequency Target Variable
Weekday Operating Hour Span Target 19.5 hours	Weekday Operating Hour Span Target 16 hours	Weekday Operating Hour Span Target 14 hours	Weekday Operating Hour Span Target Based on demand	Weekday Operating Hour Span Target Variable

Updated Route Classifications

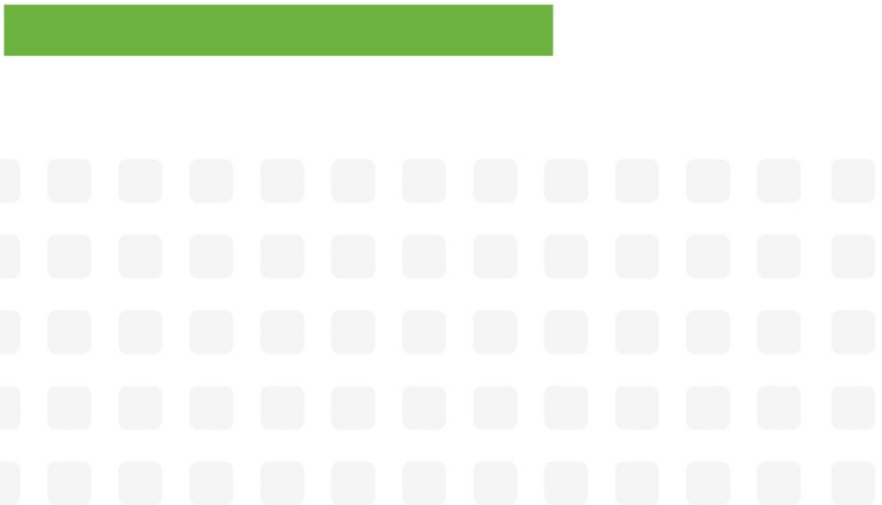
Stream <i>>8,000 AU</i>	Core <i>>8,000 AU</i>	Urban <i>8,000 - 6,000 AU</i>	Connector <i><6,000 AU</i>	Express <i>Variable AU</i>
1 Route	11 Routes	9 Routes	8 Routes	1 Route
Peak Frequency Target 10-20 minutes	Peak Frequency Target 15-30 minutes	Peak Frequency Target 30-60 minutes	Peak Frequency Target 30-60 minutes	Peak Frequency Target Variable
Weekday Operating Hour Span Target 20 hours	Weekday Operating Hour Span Target 17.5 hours	Weekday Operating Hour Span Target 17 hours	Weekday Operating Hour Span Target 15 hours	Weekday Operating Hour Span Target Variable

Activity Units (AU) = Residential, Employment, & Students Per Square Mile

Updated Route Classifications

Stream (High Capacity) Peak Frequency Target 10-20 minutes	Core Peak Frequency Target 15-30 minutes	Urban Peak Frequency Target 30-60 minutes	Connector Peak Frequency Target 30-60 minutes	Express Peak Frequency Target Variable
Stream Community Line	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 6th Ave. - Pacific Ave. 2 S. 19th St. - Bridgeport 3 Lakewood - Tacoma ↑ 11 Pt. Defiance ↑ 16 North End ↑ 28 S. 12th St. ↑ 41 S. 56th St. - Salishan ↑ 42 McKinley Ave. ↑ 45 Yakima ↑ 48 Sheridan - M St. ↑ 57 Union - S. 19th St. - Hilltop 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10 Pearl St. 53 University Place 52 Fircrest - TCC 54 38th St. - Portland 55 Tacoma Mall 202 72nd St. 212 Steilacoom 500 Federal Way 501 Milton - Federal Way 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ↓ 4 Lakewood - South Hill 100 Gig Harbor 101 Gig Harbor Trolley* ↓ 206 Pac Hwy/Tillicum/Madigan ↓ 214 Washington 400 Puyallup - Tacoma ↓ 402 Meridian 409 Puyallup - 72nd St. <p style="text-align: right; font-size: small;">*Seasonal route</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 497 Lakeland Hills Express

Route Classifications: Important Notes & Takeaways



- Classifications tied to frequency and span targets
- Updated classifications \neq service reductions
- System Recovery Plan will continue to be implemented
- Updates are needed, describe current environment, and will be used for productivity analysis

Route Productivity: New Benchmark Methodology



Annual Updates

Each year, prior year's daily passengers by service hour & revenue mile create new benchmarks for each route classification

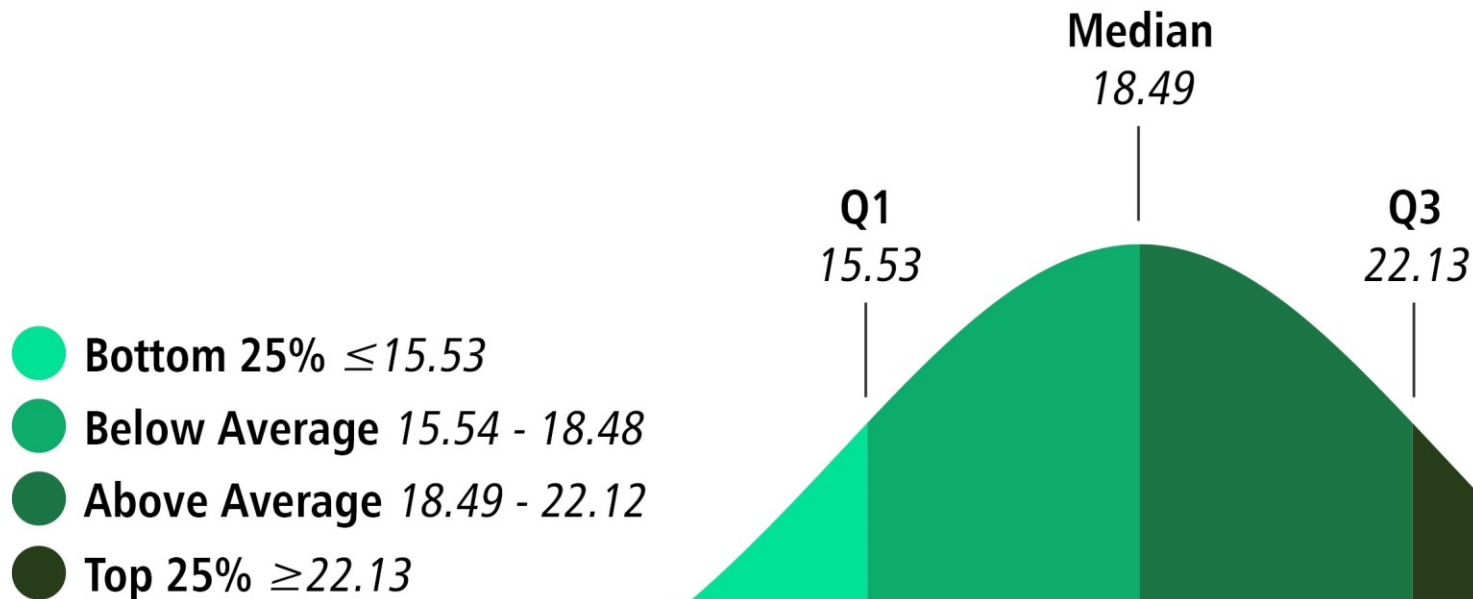


Rating System

Data-driven benchmarks used for *bottom 25%, below average, above average, and top 25%* designations

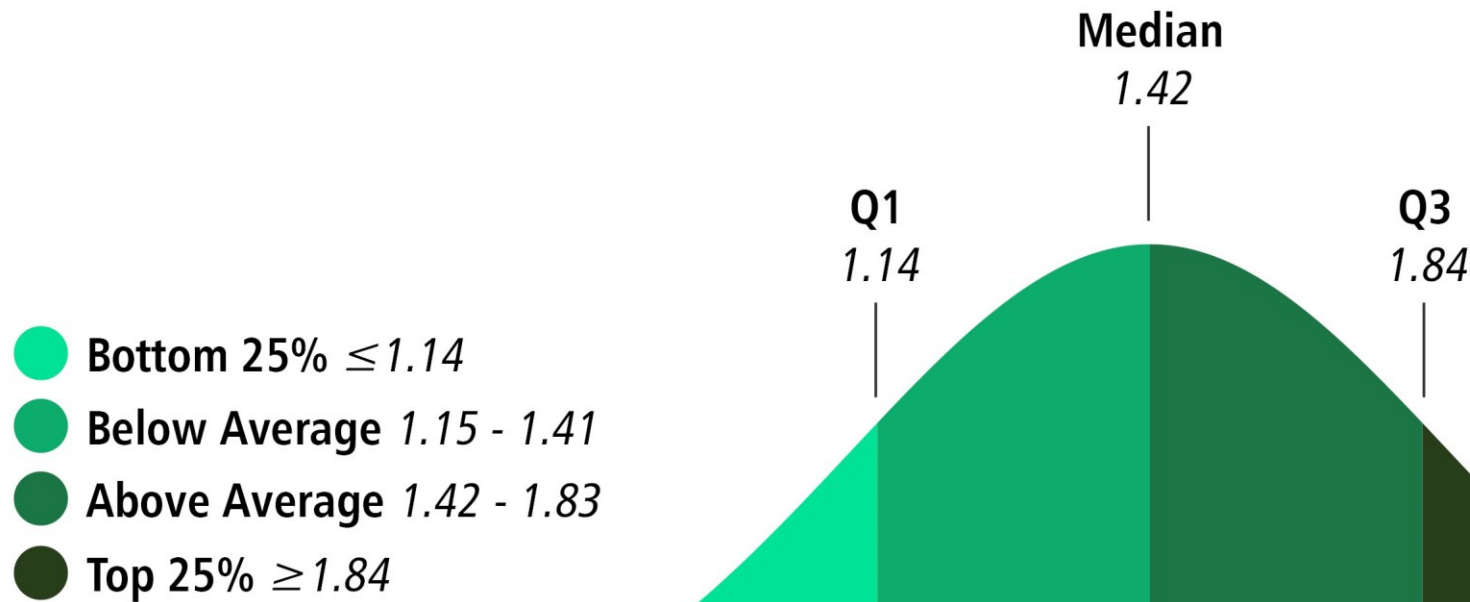
Benchmarks Explained

Example shows Daily Passengers Per **Service Hour** using 2023 trunk routes data.



Benchmarks Explained

Example shows Daily Passengers Per Revenue Mile using 2023 trunk routes data.



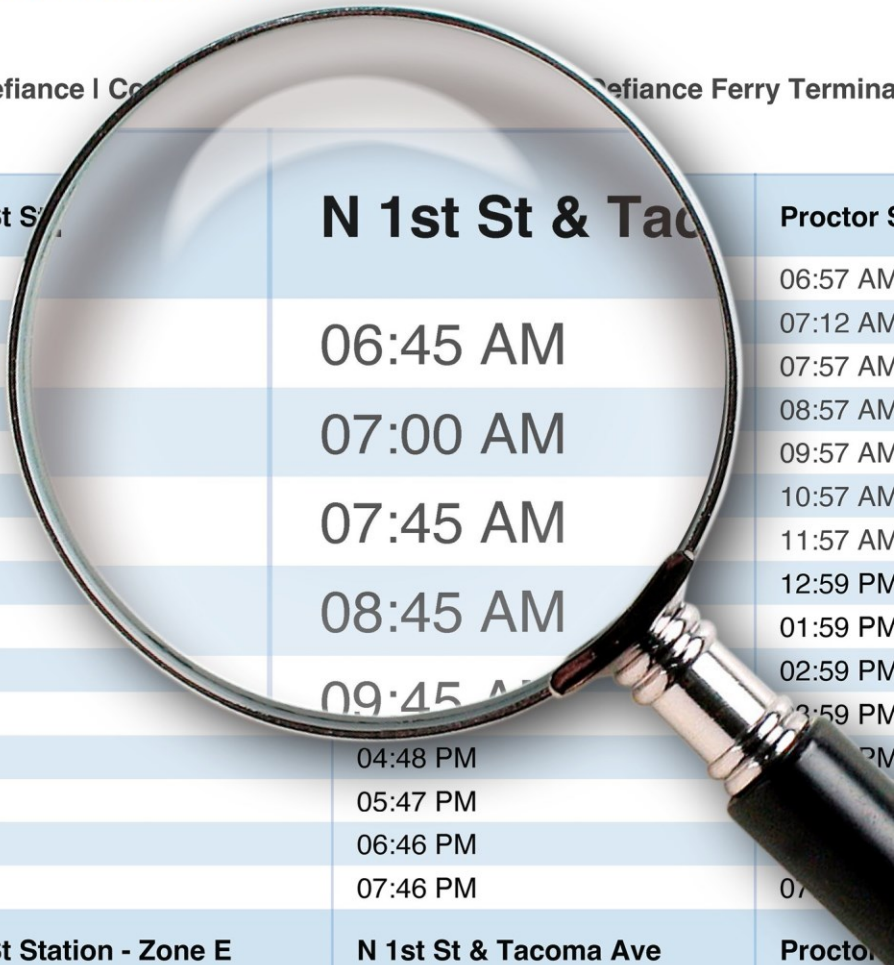
Trip Level Analysis

- Are there certain times/trips that a route is over or underperforming?
- Consider span and/or frequency adjustments.



Route 11 Pt Defiance I Co

Defiance Ferry Terminal

A magnifying glass is positioned over the table, focusing on the "N 1st St & Tacoma Ave" column. The handle of the magnifying glass is visible in the bottom right corner.

Commerce St Station	N 1st St & Tacoma Ave	Proctor Station
06:40 AM		06:57 AM
06:55 AM		07:12 AM
07:40 AM	06:45 AM	07:57 AM
08:40 AM	07:00 AM	08:57 AM
09:40 AM	07:45 AM	09:57 AM
10:40 AM	08:45 AM	10:57 AM
11:40 AM	09:45 AM	11:57 AM
12:40 PM		12:59 PM
01:40 PM		01:59 PM
02:40 PM		02:59 PM
03:40 PM		03:59 PM
04:42 PM	04:48 PM	04:54 PM
05:41 PM	05:47 PM	05:53 PM
06:40 PM	06:46 PM	06:52 PM
07:40 PM	07:46 PM	07:52 PM
Commerce St Station - Zone E	N 1st St & Tacoma Ave	Proctor Station

Productivity Analysis Purpose

1

Identify and report on route productivity

2

Investigate productivity at the trip level

3

Use data to make informed decisions about resource allocation and productivity improvement

Yearly Route Performance Report



- Issued every April
- Includes the following:
 - productivity benchmarks based on prior year's data
 - productivity results for routes and trips
 - actions being taken to address issues
 - fixed route customer survey data, costs, on-time performance, and bus stop amenity distribution

Next Steps



Include in Long Range Plan

New route classifications & productivity methodology included in Destination 2045 Long Range Plan System Performance Standards Appendix

Issue Route Report

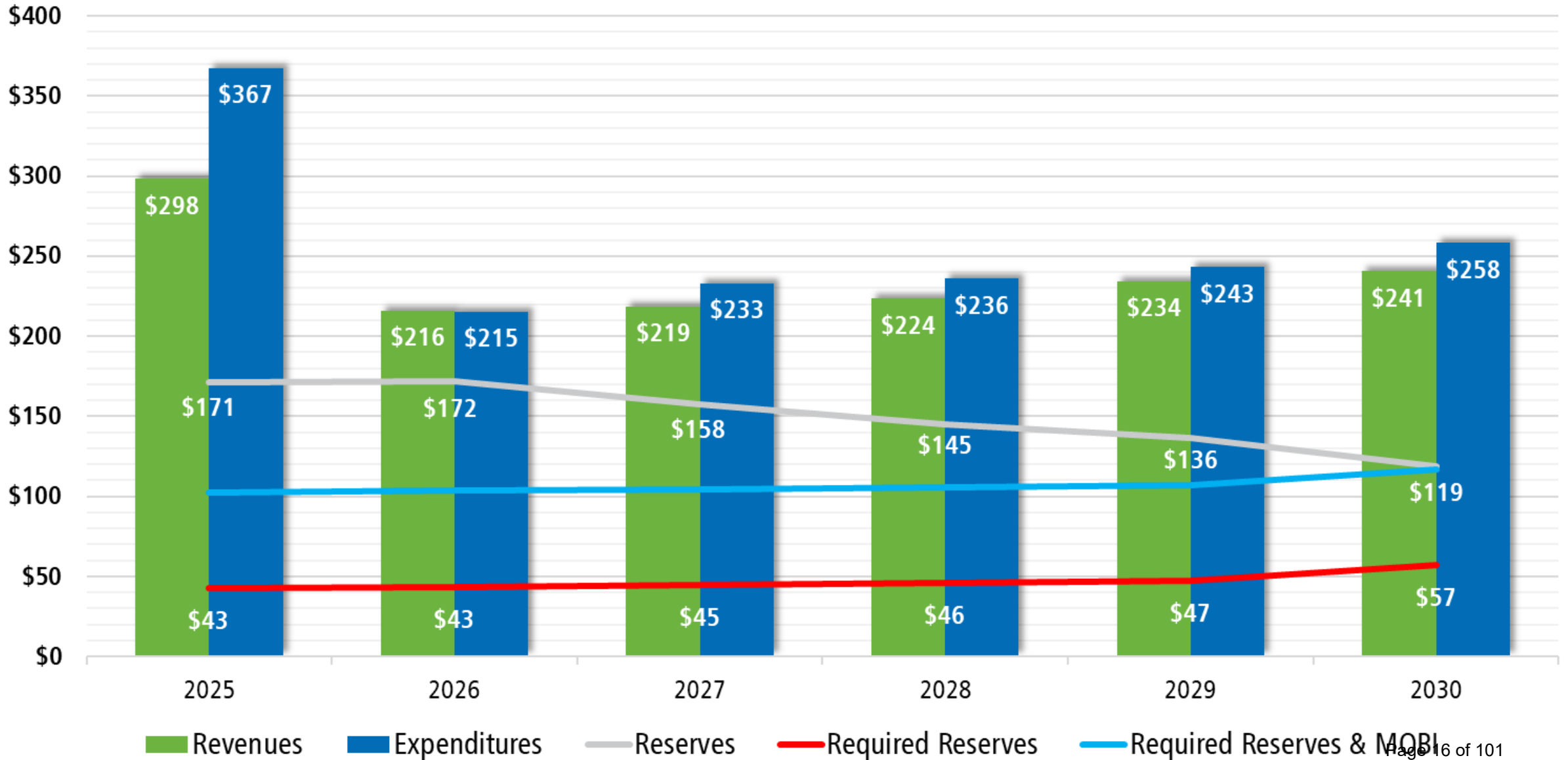
1st Route Performance Report issued in April 2025

Fixed Route Service Standards Appendix: Route Classifications & Productivity



Six-Year Forecast

(dollars in millions)



Destination 2045

LONG RANGE PLAN



Anna Petersen
Senior Planner

Darin Stavish
Principal Planner

Tina Lee
Planning Manager

Aaron Gooze
Principal - Fehr & Peers



The Long Range Plan

- Portrays long-term vision, goals and objectives through the horizon year 2045
- Estimates costs and staff resources for long-term investment needs
- Focuses on performance-based planning for long-term service outcomes
- References previous Destination 2040 Long Range Plan (2016, update 2020)
- Assumes minimum 0.9% sales tax and requires additional funding to implement



Focus Areas





**For more information or to access the
Draft Destination 2045, Appendices, and
Online Comment Form (thru February 3)**

scan or visit PierceTransit.org/long-range-plans

Common Themes for Transit in 2045

- Need for New Bus Routes and Services
- Frequency and Scheduling Improvements
- Transit Service to Growing and Underserved Areas and Populations
- Better Regional Integration
- Environmental and Economic Considerations
- Improved Infrastructure at Transit Locations



Outreach Numbers

13

Jurisdictions Met With
for Comprehensive Plan
Update Coordination

15

Scheduled Special Jurisdictional
(Focused) Presentations to City/Town
Councils and Planning Commissions

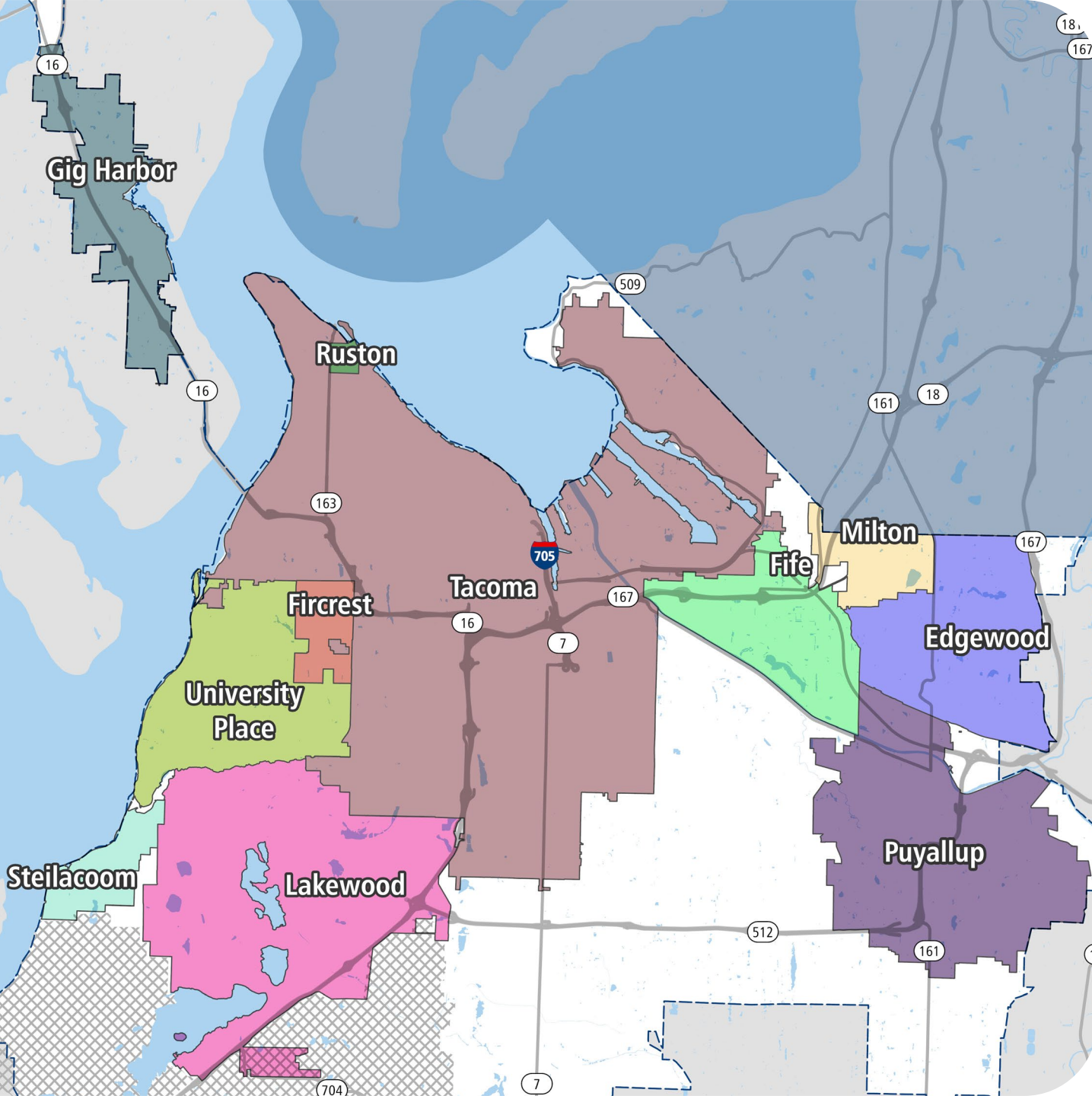
27

Special Events
farmers markets, neighborhood councils, etc.

4

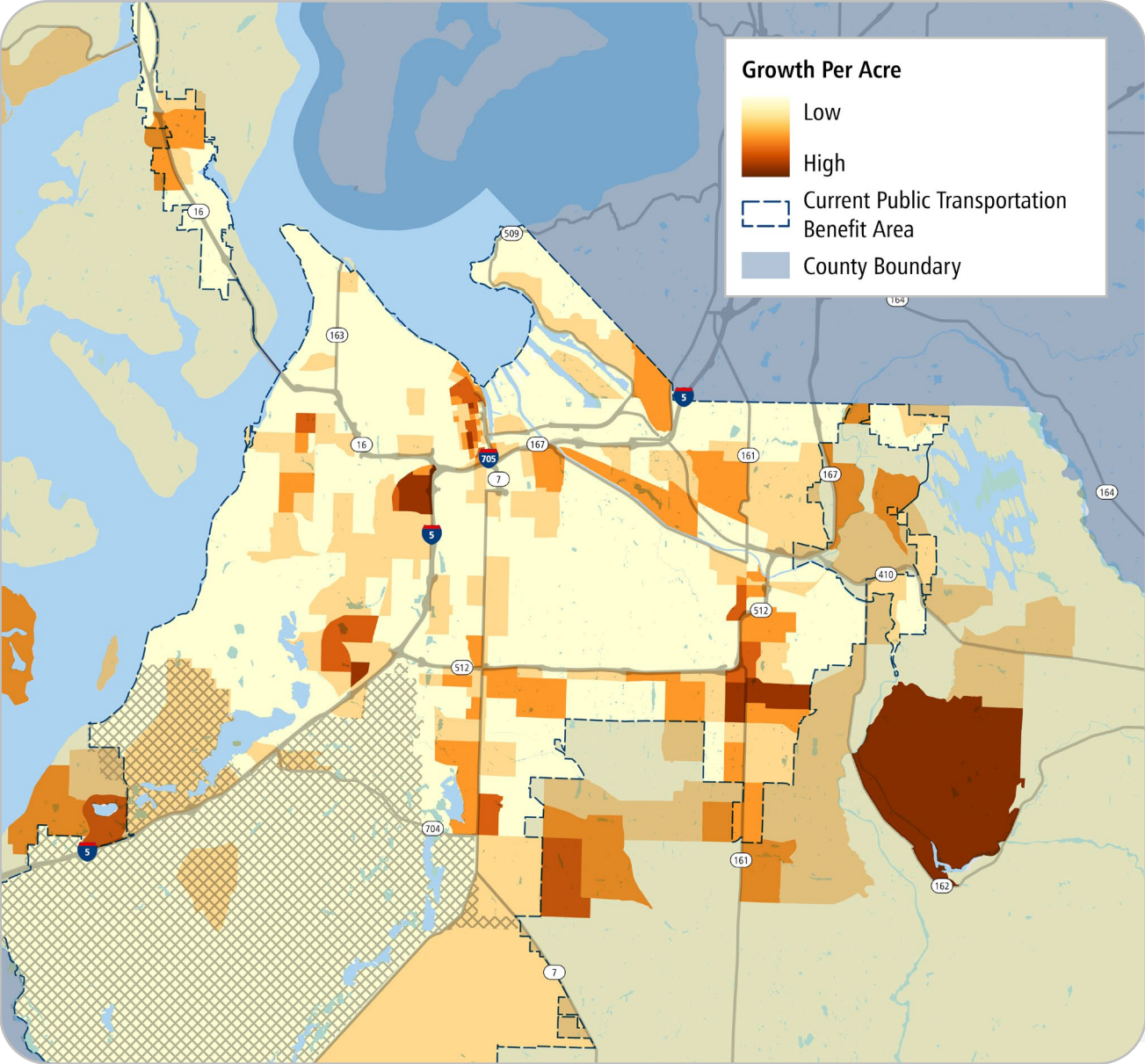
Open Houses
in-person or virtual/online

Partner Coordination



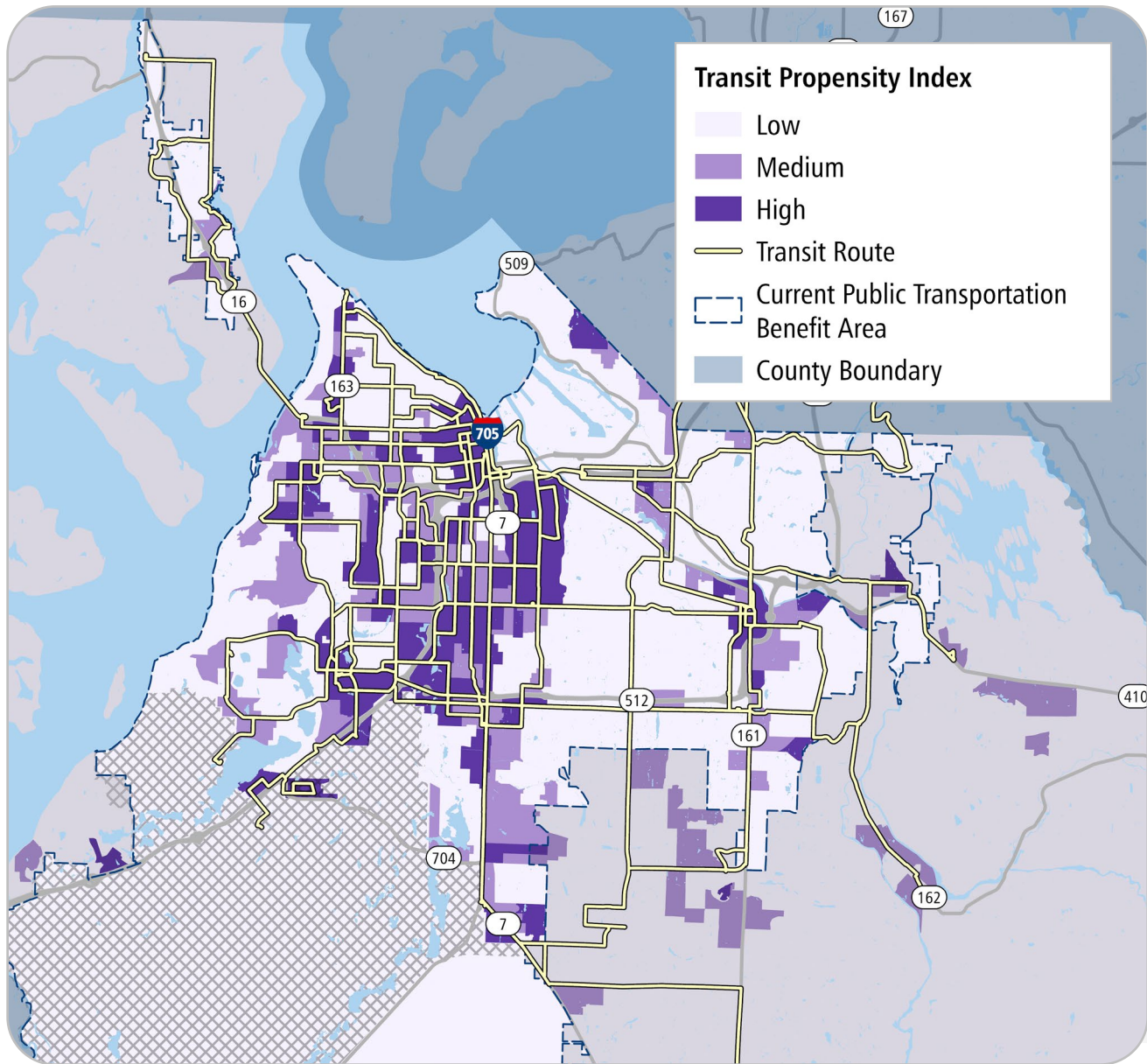
- Edgewood
- Fife
- Fircrest
- Gig Harbor
- Lakewood
- Milton
- Puyallup
- Ruston
- Steilacoom
- Tacoma
- University Place
- Current Public Transportation Benefit Area
- County Boundary

Basing System Expansion Scenarios on Future Land Use Changes



Focused service improvements where population growth is forecast to be the greatest

Net predicted growth in population and employment through 2044.
Source: PSRC Land Use Vision - Implemented Targets (LUV-it)



Basing System Expansion Scenarios on Future Land Use Changes

Using an Equity lens to refine and align new transit service with growth

Service Expansion Scenarios

Scenarios A and B

600-650K Annual Service Hours

- Later service for more productive routes
- 30-minute all day weekday frequency for select routes that operate 30-minute only in the peak periods

Scenario C

735K Annual Service Hours

- Improvements from A and B
- Route 2 or 3: Bus Rapid Transit
- Route 4: Fast, Frequent and Reliable Network
- 20-minute weekday frequency for the more productive routes
- Later service and more frequent service for other local routes

Scenario D

900K Annual Service Hours

- Improvements from A, B, and C
- Assumes expansion of the Pierce Transit service area
- New service to Auburn, Bonney Lake, Frederickson, Graham, Orting, Sumner, plus Fife Light Rail station
- Routes 2 and 3: Bus Rapid Transit
- Route 202: Fast, Frequent and Reliable Network



Discussion

- **Balancing Frequency and Coverage**
How can we balance the trade-offs between providing more frequent service in core areas and expanding service geography?



Discussion

- **Balancing Frequency and Coverage**
How can we balance the trade-offs between providing more frequent service in core areas and expanding service geography?
- **Framing the Challenge**
To start, what do you see as the most important consideration for Pierce Transit as we work to fund and deliver the services outlined in this plan?



Discussion

- **Balancing Frequency and Coverage**
How can we balance the trade-offs between providing more frequent service in core areas and expanding service geography?
- **Framing the Challenge**
To start, what do you see as the most important consideration for Pierce Transit as we work to fund and deliver the services outlined in this plan?
- **Community Messaging**
What are your suggestions for how Pierce Transit can best communicate our plans and funding needs to your community?





Discussion

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How can we balance the trade-offs between providing more frequent service in core areas and expanding service geography?
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To start, what do you see as the most important consideration for Pierce Transit as we work to fund and deliver the services outlined in this plan?
- **Community Messaging**
What are your suggestions for how Pierce Transit can best communicate our plans and funding needs to your community?
- **Role of Local Governments**
How can cities and the county best support Pierce Transit in advocating for greater local transit funding?

Destination 2045

LONG RANGE PLAN



Anna Petersen
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Connect With Local and Regional Plans: Make sure this all-new plan works well with other local and Puget Sound Regional Council long range plans.

Provide More Diverse Transit Options: Work towards more frequent and expanded fixed route service and new high-capacity transit options over the next 20 years.

Improve Existing Routes: Focus on improving the reliability of existing high-performing routes and reducing travel time through speed and reliability investments that can be implemented faster and cheaper than Bus Rapid Transit.

Focus on Equity: Use equity as a key part of planning, aimed at those customers who need the services the most.

Learn From the Pandemic: Use what we learned during COVID-19 to better help essential workers get around.

Prepare for Climate Changes: Make plans to handle changes in the climate and other resiliency efforts.

Spot Future Problems: Figure out what might go wrong or could be challenging as we start to implement this plan.



Figure 23. Scenario A System Map

Source(s): Pierce Transit Future System, developed for Destination 2045.

- Stream Bus Rapid Transit
- Extended Hours and/or More Frequent
- Existing Route Unchanged
- Current Public Transportation Benefit Area
- County Boundary

1. Please note that any expansion of the service area would require a vote by residents of those communities to rejoin the PTBA through sales taxation.
2. This map shows proposed fixed route service and does not show Runner microtransit or SHUTTLE paratransit that are also part of the Pierce Transit network.

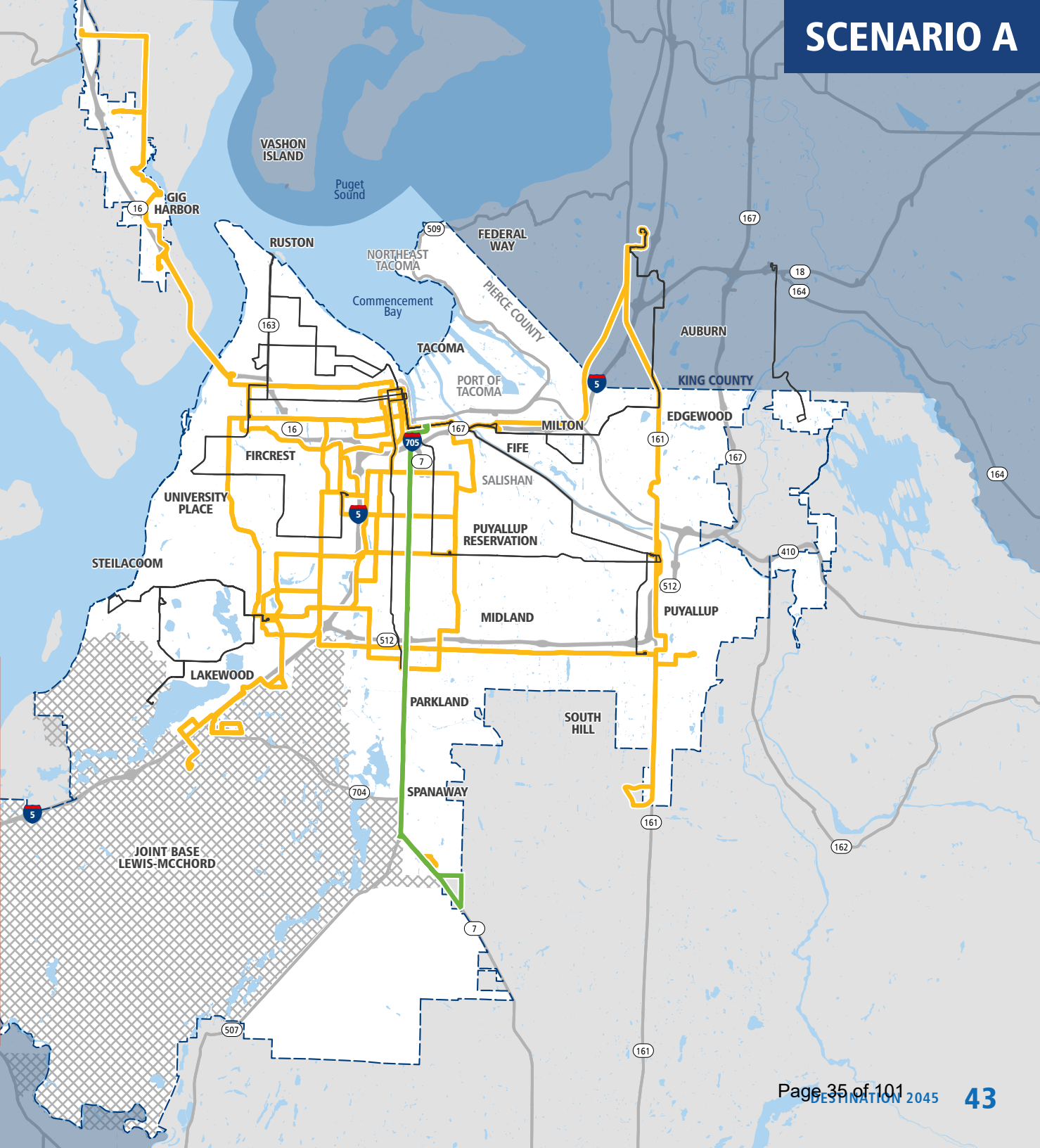
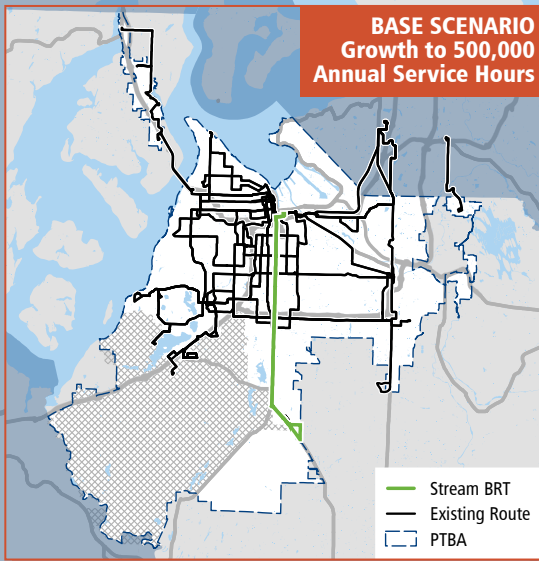
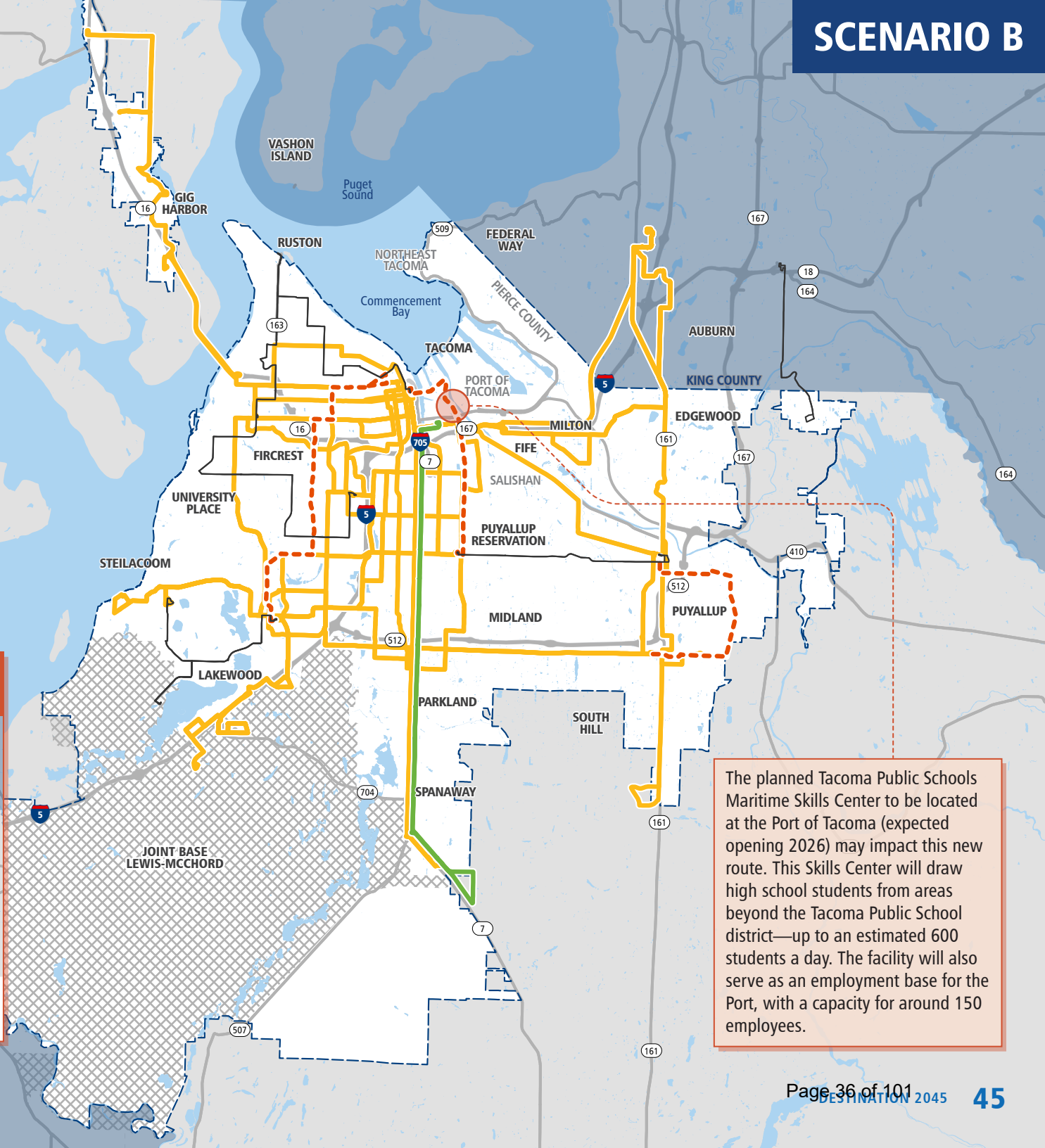
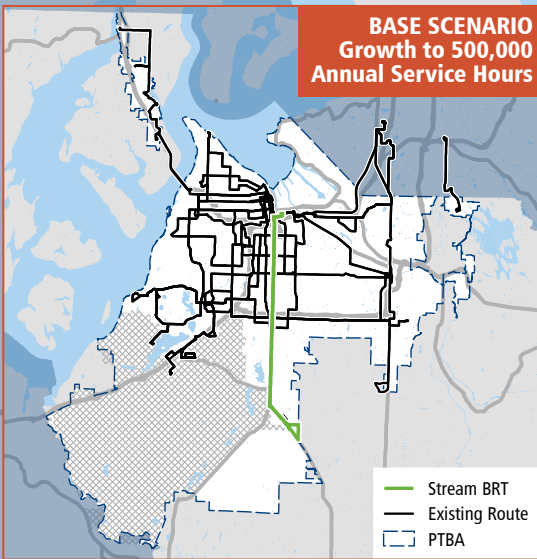


Figure 24. Scenario B System Map

Source(s): Pierce Transit Future System, developed for Destination 2045.

- Stream Bus Rapid Transit
- - - New Fixed Route
- Extended Hours and/or More Frequent
- Existing Route Unchanged
- Current Public Transportation Benefit Area
- County Boundary

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2. This map shows proposed fixed route service and does not show Runner microtransit or SHUTTLE paratransit that are also part of the Pierce Transit network.



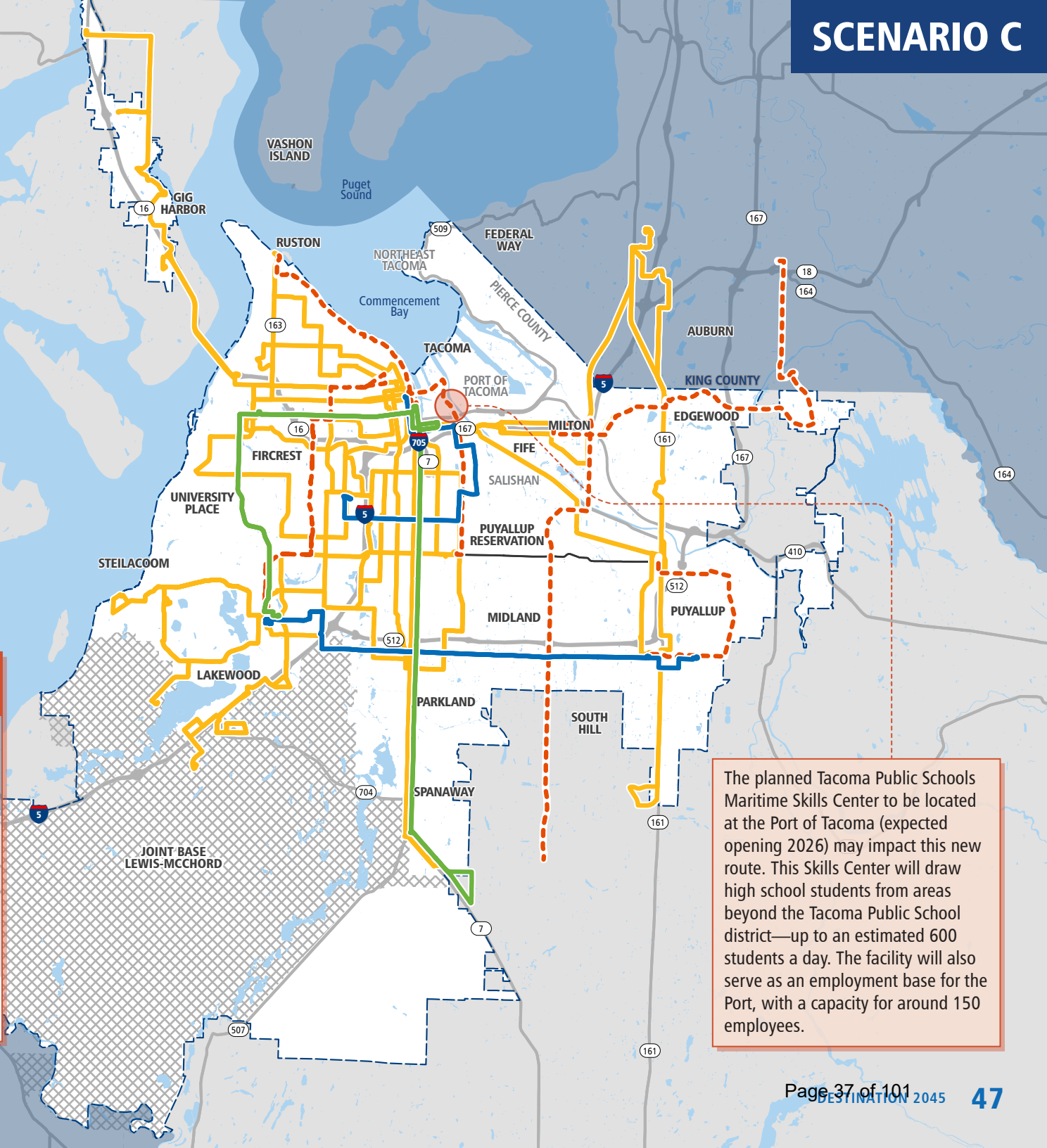
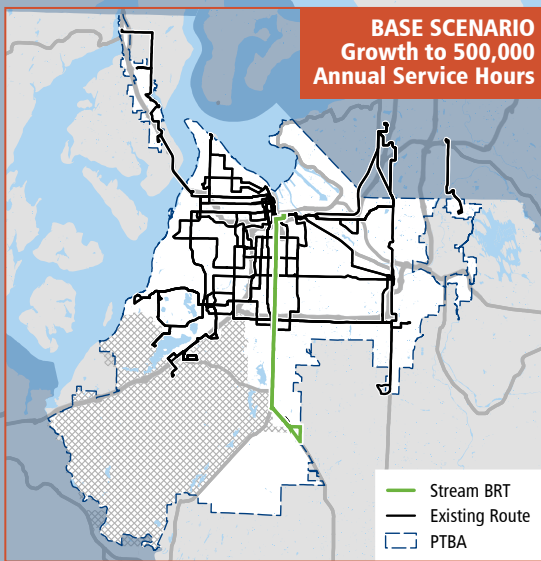
The planned Tacoma Public Schools Maritime Skills Center to be located at the Port of Tacoma (expected opening 2026) may impact this new route. This Skills Center will draw high school students from areas beyond the Tacoma Public School district—up to an estimated 600 students a day. The facility will also serve as an employment base for the Port, with a capacity for around 150 employees.

Figure 25. Scenario C System Map

Source(s): Pierce Transit Future System, developed for Destination 2045.

- Stream Bus Rapid Transit
- New Fast, Frequent, and Reliable Route
- New Fixed Route
- Extended Hours and/or More Frequent
- Existing Route Unchanged
- Current Public Transportation Benefit Area
- County Boundary

1. Please note that any expansion of the service area would require a vote by residents of those communities to rejoin the PTBA through sales taxation.
2. This map shows proposed fixed route service and does not show Runner microtransit or SHUTTLE paratransit that are also part of the Pierce Transit network.



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Figure 26. Scenario D System Map

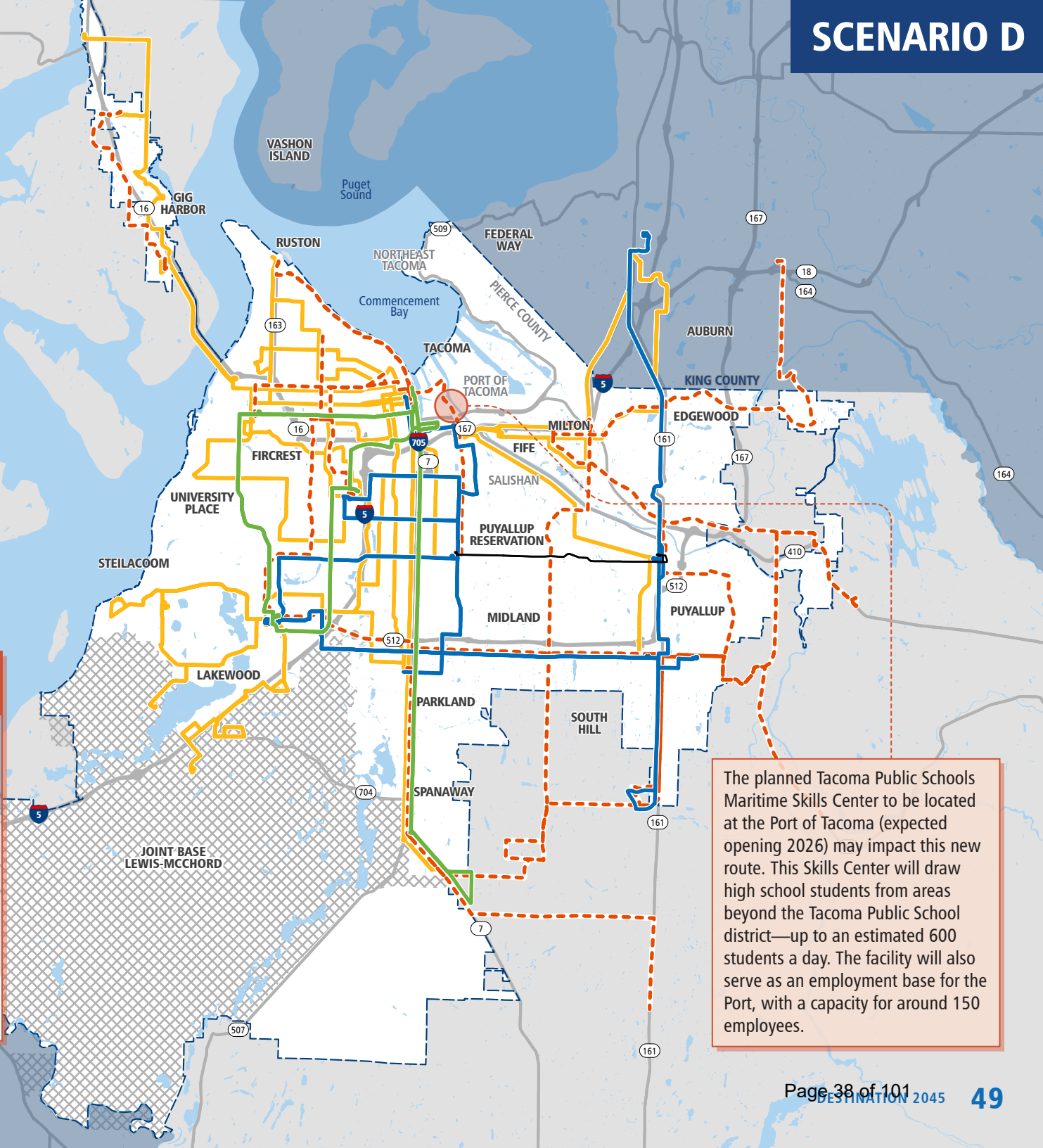
Source(s): Pierce Transit Future System, developed for Destination 2045.

- Stream Bus Rapid Transit
- New Fast, Frequent, and Reliable Route
- New Fixed Route
- Extended Hours and/or More Frequent
- Existing Route Unchanged
- Current Public Transportation Benefit Area
- County Boundary

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BASE SCENARIO
Growth to 500,000
Annual Service Hours

- Stream BRT
- Existing Route
- PTBA



The planned Tacoma Public Schools Maritime Skills Center to be located at the Port of Tacoma (expected opening 2026) may impact this new route. This Skills Center will draw high school students from areas beyond the Tacoma Public School district—up to an estimated 600 students a day. The facility will also serve as an employment base for the Port, with a capacity for around 150 employees.

FIRST DRAFT

Released
December 20, 2024

DESTINATION



LONG RANGE PLAN





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Key Terms and Definitions

Term	Acronym	Definition
Bus Rapid Transit	BRT	High-capacity transit designed to deliver fast, efficient, and cost-efficient services by integrating features typically associated with light rail or streetcar systems.
Fast, Frequent, and Reliable Network	FFRN	Higher frequency, more reliable transit service along targeted routes that serve critical connections within the PTBA.
Fixed Route Regular Bus		Transit service on fixed routes and set schedules. Pierce Transit operates 29 regular bus routes.
Greenhouse Gas Emissions	GHG	The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency defines GHG as gases that trap heat in the atmosphere, such as a carbon dioxide, methane, and nitrous oxide.
High-Capacity Transit	HCT	Light rail, commuter rail, and Bus Rapid Transit that provide connections to regional destinations throughout the Central Puget Sound Region.
House Bill 1110	HB 1110	Adopted bill requiring cities in Washington State to provide middle housing in areas traditionally dedicated to single-family detached housing.
Long Range Plan	LRP	The long range plan provides a guide for long-term service and capital investment over the next 20+ years.
Microtransit (Runner) / On-demand Transit		A service strategy intended to provide first/last-mile connections and supplement existing fixed route bus. Pierce Transit's microtransit/on-demand transit service is known as Runner.
Paratransit (SHUTTLE)		A shared-ride door-to-door service for people who, because of their disability, are unable to ride a regular Pierce Transit bus.
Public Transportation Benefit Area	PTBA	A special taxing district created for the purpose of funding public transportation.
Rideshare		A rideshare is a small group people who share their commute to and from work. Formerly known as Vanpool, Pierce Transit's Rideshare program provides vehicles for three or more occupants to share a commute.
Shared Mobility Hub		Places where transit, bicycles, rideshare, micromobility modes, and pedestrians converge to provide travel options for people not using a private vehicle.
Speed & Reliability	S&R	Improvements in transit design, roadway infrastructure, and technology designed to improve transit system performance.
Stream Community Line		Pierce Transit's high-capacity transit line connecting Tacoma and southeast Pierce County on Pacific Avenue S/SR 7.
Transit Development Plan	TDP	The TDP reviews transit agency accomplishments over the past calendar year and describes planned activities over the next six years.
Transit Propensity Index	TPI	A quantitative metric computed to determine the propensity of a rider to take transit based on the density of indicators such as people with disabilities, people with low incomes, and zero-vehicle households.
Vehicle Miles Traveled	VMT	Measure of total number of miles traveled of all vehicles in a region over a given time period.
Washington State Growth Management Act	GMA	Requires counties and cities to periodically review their plans and regulations to address any changes in the GMA and respond to changes in land use and population growth.

➤ Chapter 1

STRATEGIC GOALS & OBJECTIVES FOR PIERCE TRANSIT

This chapter provides an introduction to Destination 2045, Pierce Transit's all-new Long Range Plan. Destination 2045 describes how Pierce Transit's services will expand and evolve over the next 20+ years to meet community needs.

PIERCE TRANSIT IMPROVES PEOPLE'S QUALITY OF LIFE

Why a Long Range Plan?

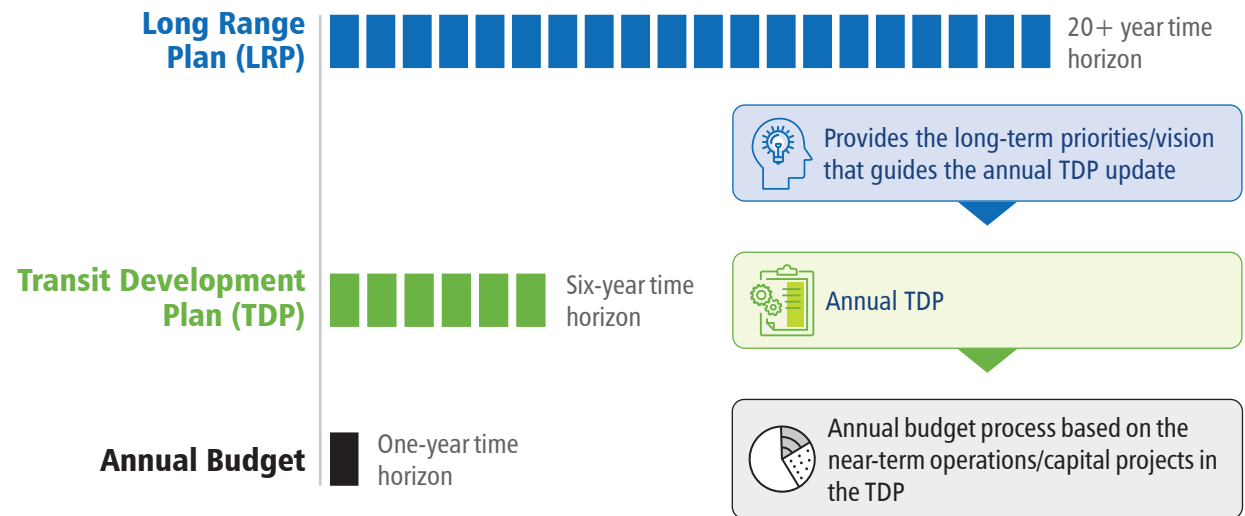
Destination 2045 helps define Pierce Transit's role over the next 20+ years.

The Long Range Plan (LRP) provides a guide for long-term service and capital investments, which inform near-term plans and processes such as the annual Transit Development Plan (TDP) and the annual budget. Destination 2045 outlines the priorities we heard from the community. These priorities guide how Pierce Transit will adapt to meet growth

across the region, connect with Sound Transit's expanded regional Link light rail service, and respond to the changing transportation environment.

Figure 1 summarizes the purpose of the LRP and its relationship to other plans.

Figure 1. LRP Purpose and Relationship to Other Plans



Goals and Objectives for Pierce Transit

Seven strategic goals guide Destination 2045. Specific sections in the LRP addressing each goal are linked below: **SECTION, PAGE**

GOAL 1

Connect With Local and Regional Plans

Make sure this all-new plan works well with other local and Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) long range plans.

LAND USE CHANGE, PAGE 18

GOAL 2

Provide More Diverse Transit Options

Work towards more frequent and expanded fixed route bus and new high-capacity transit options over the next 20 years.

INNOVATIVE SERVICES, PAGE 40

GOAL 3

Improve Existing Routes

Focus on improving the reliability of existing high-performing routes and reducing travel time through Speed & Reliability (S&R) investments that can be implemented faster and cheaper than Bus Rapid Transit (BRT).

GROWTH SCENARIOS A-D, PAGE 42

GOAL 4

Focus on Equity

Use equity as a key part of planning, aimed at those customers who rely on transit services the most.

DEMOGRAPHICS/TPI INDEX, PAGE 24

GOAL 5

Learn From the Pandemic

Use lessons learned during COVID-19 to better help essential workers get around.

RIDERSHIP CHANGES, PAGE 16

GOAL 6

Prepare for Climate Changes

Make plans to handle changes in the climate and other resiliency efforts.

APPENDIX E - PLANNING FOR CLIMATE CHANGE AND RESILIENCY

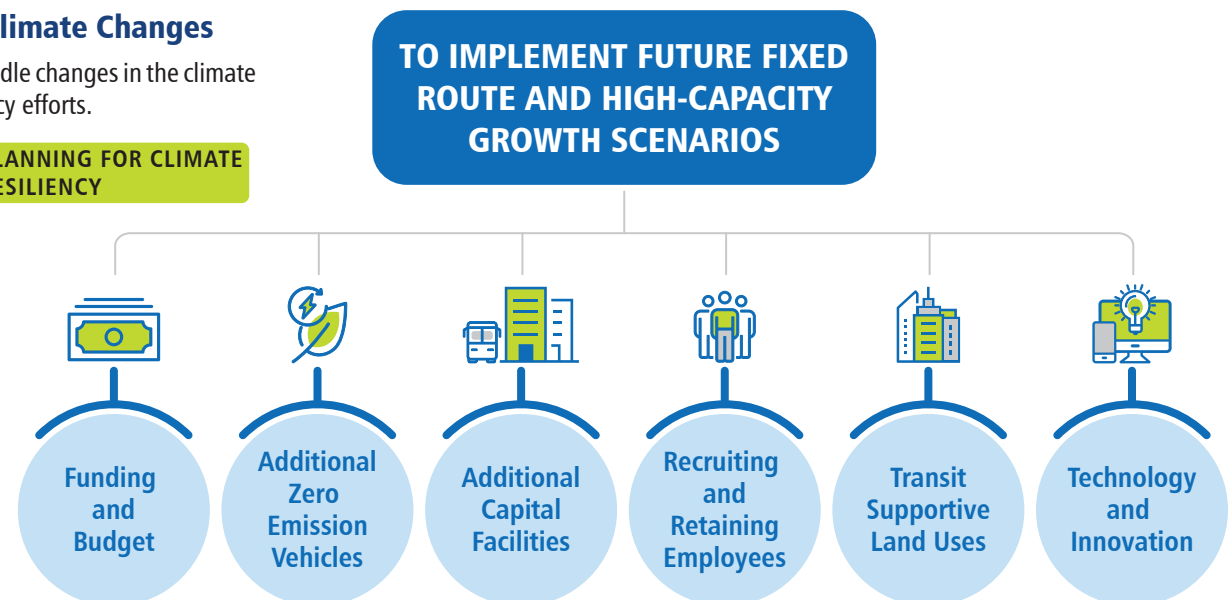
GOAL 7

Spot Future Problems

Figure out what might go wrong or could be challenging as Pierce Transit starts to implement this plan.

CAPITAL NEEDS, PAGE 52

Figure 2. Long Range Plan Focus Areas



Our Vision

Your Preferred Transportation Choice

Our Mission

Pierce Transit improves people’s quality of life by providing safe, reliable, innovative and useful transportation services that are locally based and regionally connected.

Our Values



Innovative



Responsible



Driven



Equitable

Agency Goals

Pierce Transit recently adopted a set of four goals that guide the agency in its near-term and long-term planning. They are:

GOAL 1



Adopt a “Customer First” Mindset

The first corner of the “strategic building,” and the foremost goal, is to foster a customer first mindset throughout Pierce Transit’s organization, ensuring that riders’ needs, comfort, safety, and satisfaction are at the heart of everything the agency does.

GOAL 2



Engage with the Community

Next to holding customers as the highest priority, ensuring the broader community is also engaged and supportive is critical to the long-term sustainability of the agency. Partnerships with public, community, and private organizations are critical to Pierce Transit’s role in the community and fulfilling the agency’s mission.

GOAL 3



Elevate the Employee Experience

Pierce Transit employees deliver essential services to the community and are the most important element of the agency. Quality services can only be provided with a dedicated, professional, engaged workforce. Therefore, employee retention and engagement should be a top agency priority.

GOAL 4



Assure Sustainability of Agency’s Finances, Infrastructure, and Environment

Ensuring that finances can sustain the agency’s plan and that physical assets remain in quality and functional condition is essential to long-term sustainability. As a major source of vehicle emissions, it is also important that the agency meet the needs of the community and the riders for environmentally sound practices and emission policies.

➤ Chapter 2

PLANNING CONTEXT

This chapter provides an overview of the existing and planned changes that affect Pierce Transit's operations. The planning context also summarizes key travel trends and predicted land use changes likely to impact how people travel across the region.

TRANSIT HELPS GET WORKERS TO JOBS, AND CUSTOMERS TO BUSINESS LOCATIONS.

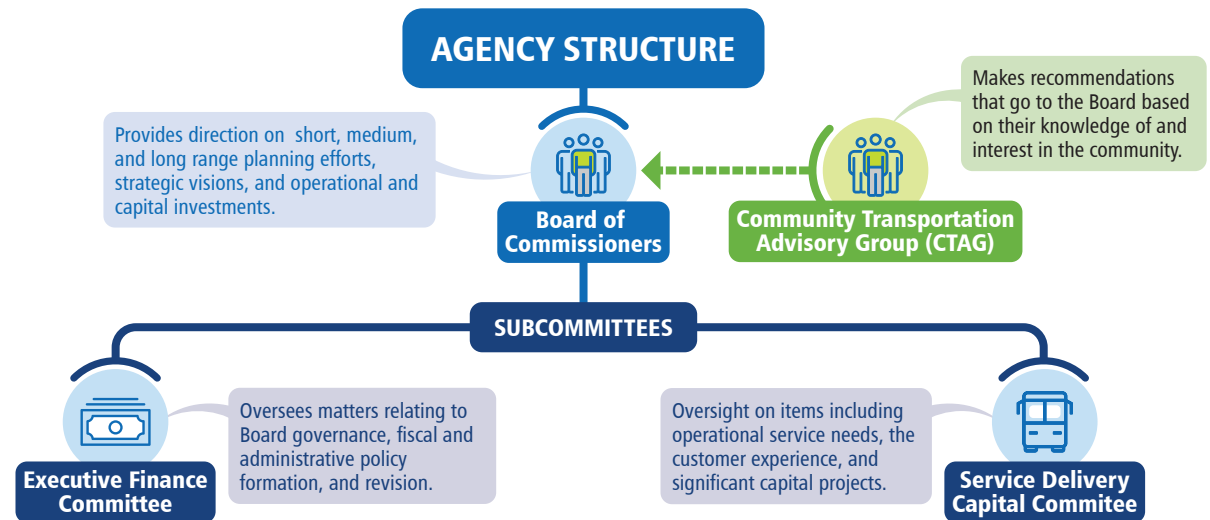
Pierce Transit Today

Pierce Transit provides public transportation services for Pierce County, Washington's second largest county with approximately 927,000 residents. The defined service area, or Public Transportation Benefit Area (PTBA), covers around 70 percent of Pierce County's population, or nearly 300 square miles in Pierce County's urban area, including 13 cities and towns and parts of unincorporated county.

Pierce Transit is governed by a nine-member Board of Commissioners representing communities in the service area, plus a tenth non-voting member representing the Amalgamated Transit Union Local 758 and the International Labor Union of Machinists and Aerospace Workers. Board members provide direction on a variety of short, medium, and long range planning efforts, strategic visions, as well operational and capital investments needed by the agency.

As Figure 3 illustrates, the Board of Commissioners has two subcommittees: The Executive Finance Committee, which oversees matters related to Board governance and policy, and the Service Delivery Capital Committee, which advises on items like operational service needs, customer experience, and capital projects. Pierce Transit also engages community stakeholders through a chartered Community Transportation Advisory Group (CTAG) that provides insight into community interests.

Figure 3. Pierce Transit Governance



Service Types

Pierce Transit provides four types of public transportation service:



Fixed Route Bus

Pierce Transit runs and operates 29 bus routes on set schedules, plus additional regional express bus routes under contract with Sound Transit.



Paratransit (SHUTTLE)

Pierce Transit's SHUTTLE service complements service areas and hours around fixed route corridors by matching operating hours and providing rides, scheduled one to five days in advance, within ¾ mile of any bus route.



Rideshare

Previously known as Vanpool, Pierce Transit's Rideshare program provides vehicles for three or more occupants to share a commute, reducing travel by single-occupancy vehicles.



Microtransit (Runner)

On-demand Microtransit service (known as Runner) is a service strategy to supplement fixed route bus and provide first/last mile connections in six zones: Gig Harbor, Puyallup, Ruston, Spanaway, Tideflats, and Joint Base Lewis-McChord (JBLM). Riders can use the [Runner app](https://piercetransit.org/runner/)¹ on their smartphones to book a ride or call the Pierce Transit support number to request a pick-up/drop-off at a specific address.

¹ Pierce Transit Runner: <https://piercetransit.org/runner/>

Current Initiatives

Pierce Transit has several initiatives currently underway:

Strategic Plan

Pierce Transit recently completed a new six-year Strategic Plan that focuses on four goals:

- Adopt a customer-first mindset;
- Engage the community;
- Elevate the employee experience; and
- Assure sustainability of our finances, infrastructure, and the environment.

Bus System Recovery and Restoration Plan

The recovery process following the COVID-19 pandemic, which saw a temporary decline in fixed route ridership and changes in ridership patterns, prompted a comprehensive review of current system performance and identified where improvements could be made. In 2023, after significant public input, Pierce Transit’s Board adopted a Bus System Recovery and Restoration Plan that lays out a road map for restoring and increasing transit service. In early 2024, Pierce Transit accomplished the first action item in the Plan with the unveiling of South Sound’s first high-capacity bus transit corridor that runs between Tacoma and southeast Pierce County on Pacific Avenue S/SR 7. This high-capacity transit (HCT) service is called **Stream Community Line**, and it is a partnership with MultiCare.

Sustainability

Pierce Transit continues to be a leader in transit environmental responsibility. Rather than diesel, most of Pierce Transit’s buses run on Compressed Natural Gas, and have since the mid-1980s. For the few vehicles that do use diesel, the agency just switched over to Renewable Diesel, which is made from renewable feedstocks. Pierce Transit is also expanding its electric fleet, and last year installed its first-ever, on-route charging stations.

Pierce Transit is transitioning to a zero emission fleet through the installation of **INDUCTEV 300 kW fast charging pads** at two key transit centers. The first project, recommended for funding by WSDOT for the 2025-2027 biennium, will equip the Lakewood Transit Center with four charging pads to serve four 40-foot battery electric buses (BEBs). This center, located within the Towne Center retail area, is the agency’s most-utilized facility, with over 1.9 million boardings from 2019 to 2023 and connects eight local routes to destinations like Tacoma, University Place, Steilacoom, Puyallup, and JBLM. The second project, awarded the CMAQ program funding for Federal fiscal year 2028, will install four charging pads at the Tacoma Community College Transit Center to serve eight local routes, including the system’s two most productive, Routes 1 and 2.

Each project is estimated to cost around \$2.8 million and will support Pierce Transit’s goal of operating up to 49 BEBs, enhancing service efficiency, and reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.

Operational Upgrades

Pierce Transit is making major improvements to the agency’s 35-year-old Lakewood headquarters base, including a new fuel and wash building (opened in 2023), and upgrades to its maintenance and operations facility.

Pierce Transit has also been awarded two grants to help fund operational upgrades: the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement (CMAQ) grant and the Green Transportation Capital grant, which was recommended in the State’s budget for the 2025-2027 biennium. These grants will fully fund upgrades to charging capabilities; the planned 30-vehicle BEB overhead gantry system at the Lakewood base, plus the aforementioned four-vehicle BEB inductive charging system at the Lakewood Transit Center.





Fast Facts About Pierce Transit

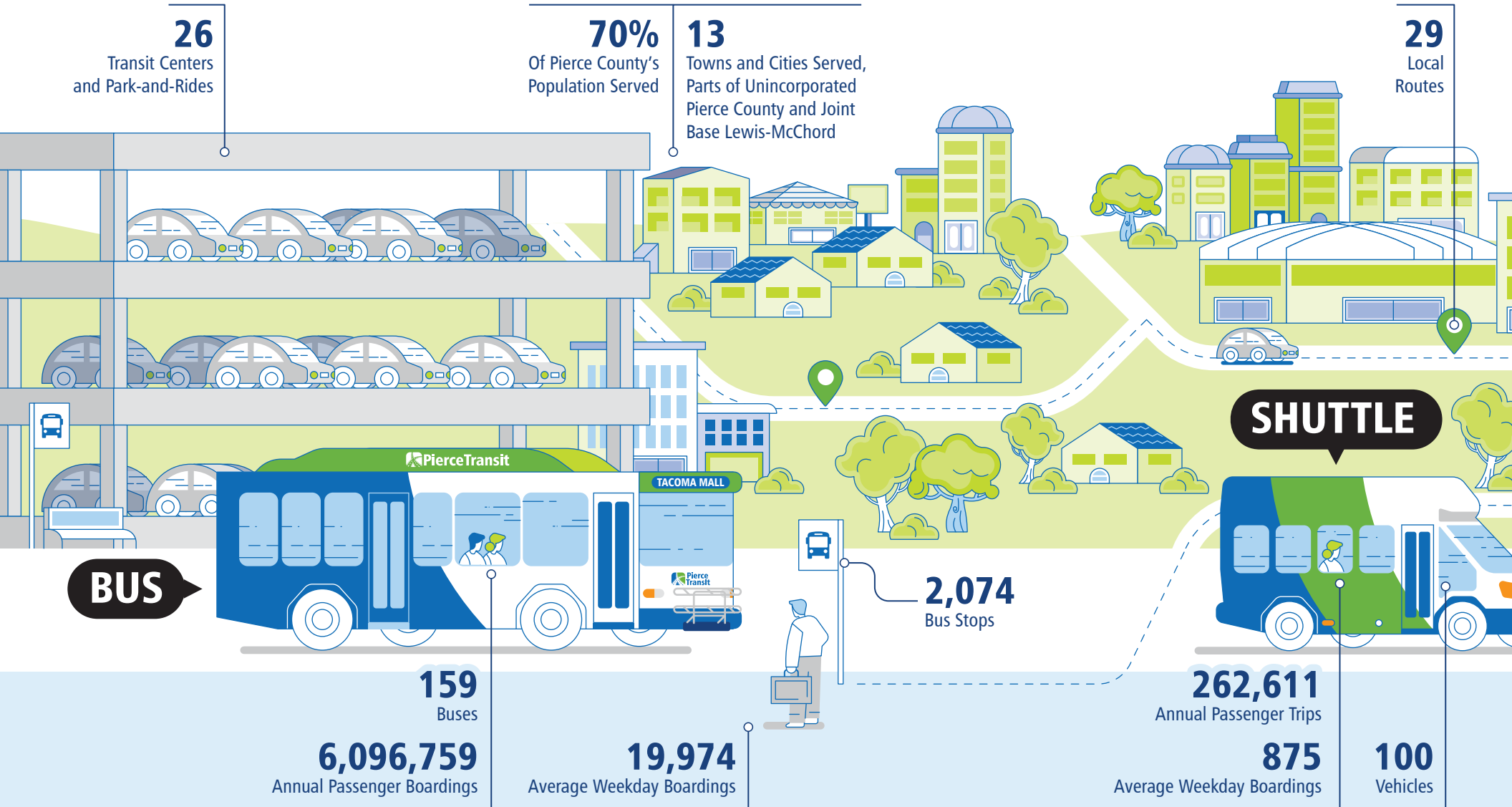
(Based on 2023 data)

26
Transit Centers
and Park-and-Rides

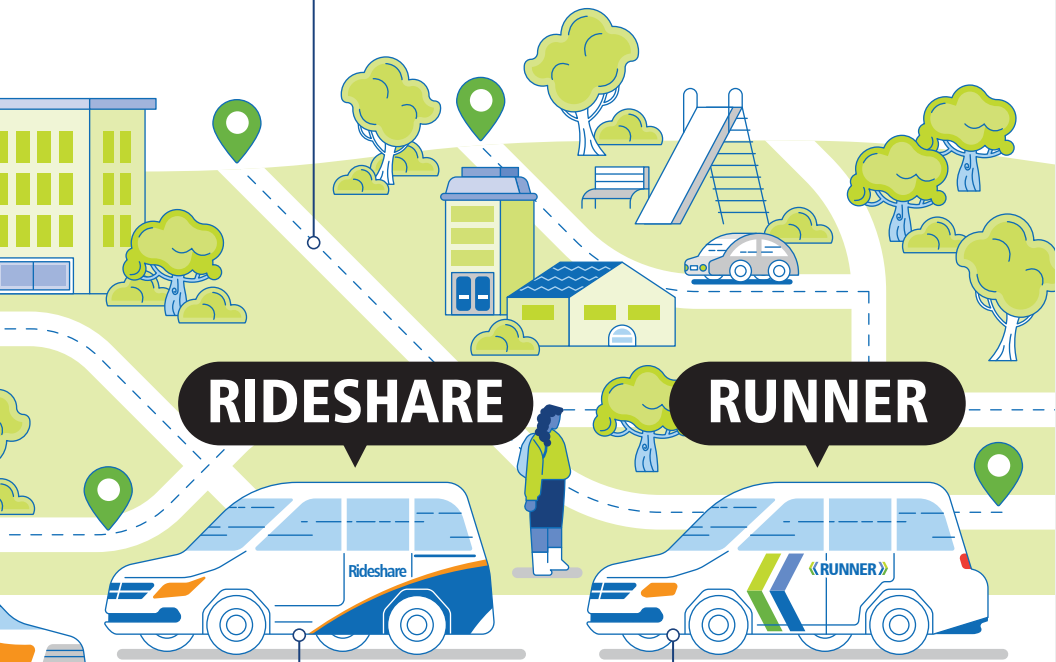
70%
Of Pierce County's
Population Served

13
Towns and Cities Served,
Parts of Unincorporated
Pierce County and Joint
Base Lewis-McChord

29
Local
Routes



10,693,236
Annual Miles Traveled
(Bus, SHUTTLE, Rideshare,
and Runner Combined)



RIDESHARE

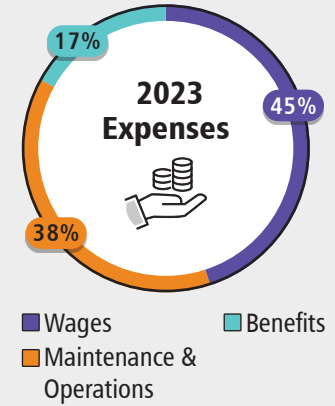
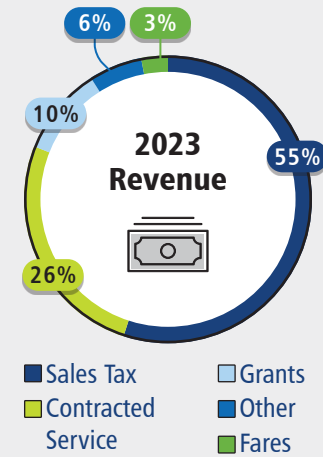
RUNNER

265 Vehicles
412,042
Annual Passenger Boardings
1,527
Average Weekday Boardings

15,787
Passenger Trips

Budget, Revenue, and Expenses

Local sales tax is by far Pierce Transit's largest funding source. Grants and fares also contribute but are a much smaller percentage. In fact, Pierce Transit collects just 6/10ths of a penny on every dollar spent within its service area, the lowest rate among similar sized transit agencies in Washington State.



Our People

Pierce Transit currently has just under 1,000 employees, and roughly half of those are transit operators. In fact, our workforce is only 12 percent administrative employees, and the rest are directly supporting service on the street—bus operators (drivers), mechanics, dispatchers, service support personnel, and public safety employees, among others. Pierce Transit also partners with Sound Transit to operate and maintain the regional express buses that run between Pierce and King Counties. This partnership provides around 300 jobs and strengthens regional mobility.

950
Employees

120
Administration

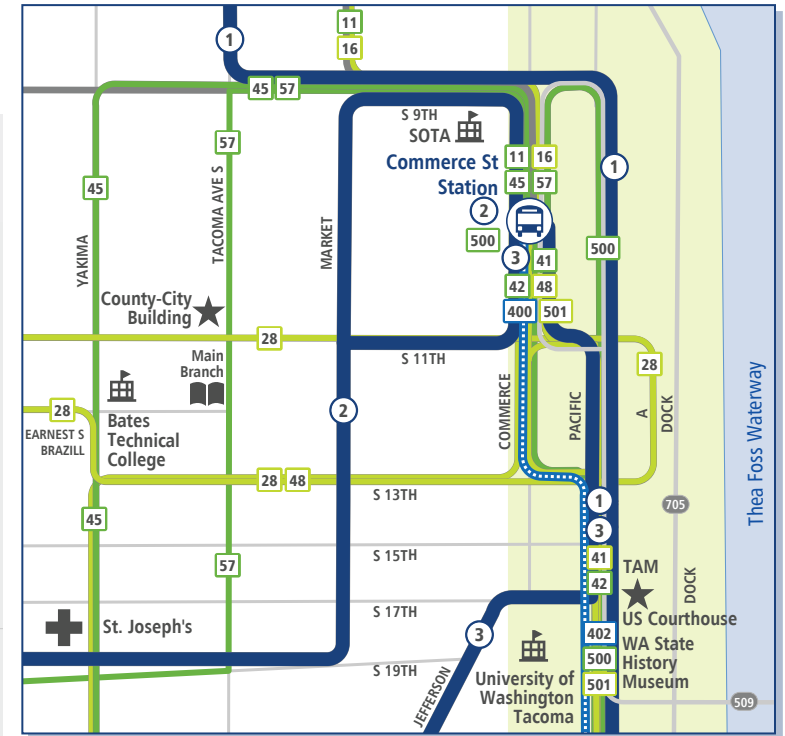
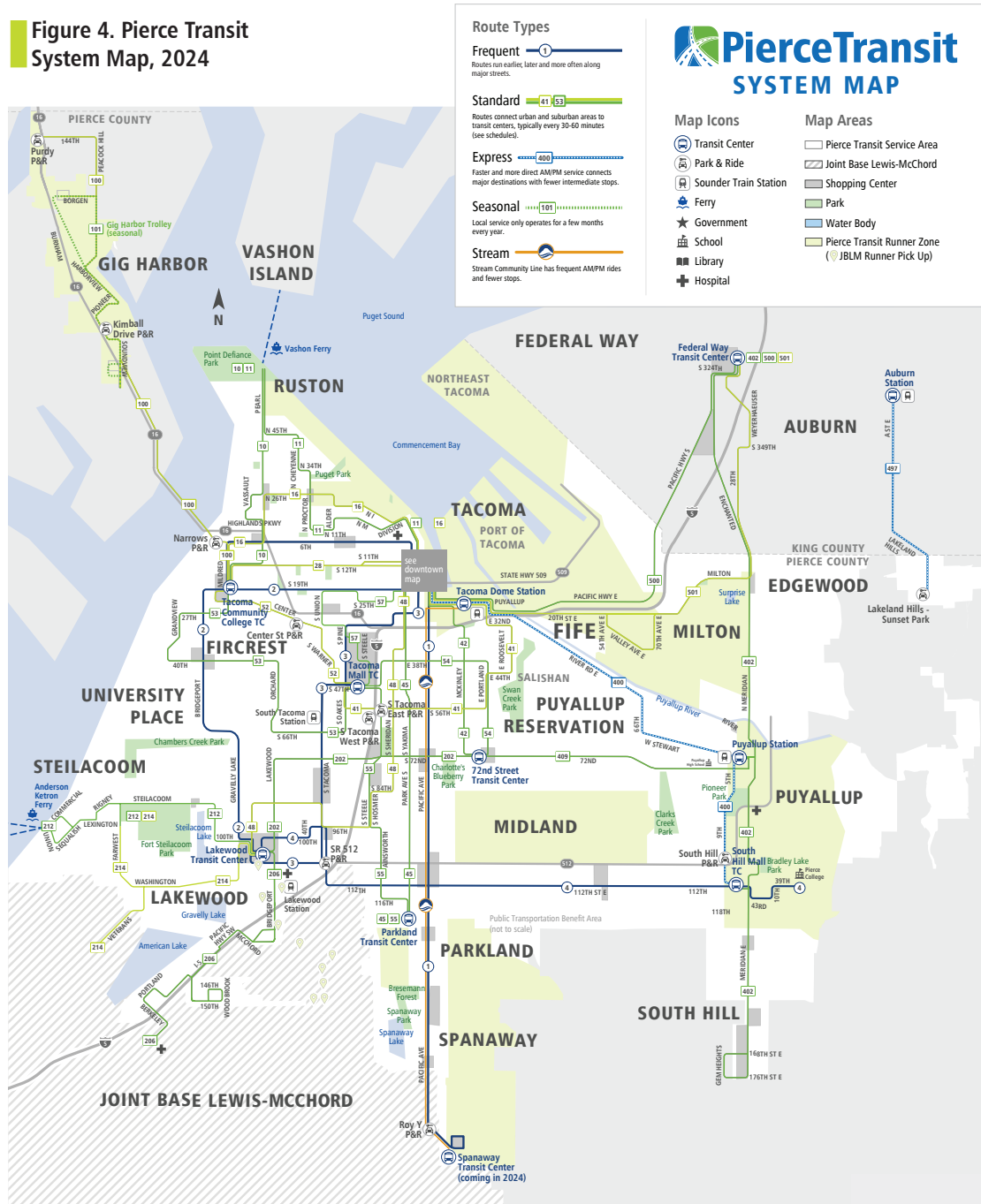
488
Transit Operators

156
Veterans

880
Service and Maintenance

38
Journey Level Mechanics

Figure 4. Pierce Transit System Map, 2024



Downtown Tacoma (Not to Scale)

Current System

Pierce Transit currently operates 29 routes that serve Pierce County and local jurisdictions within.

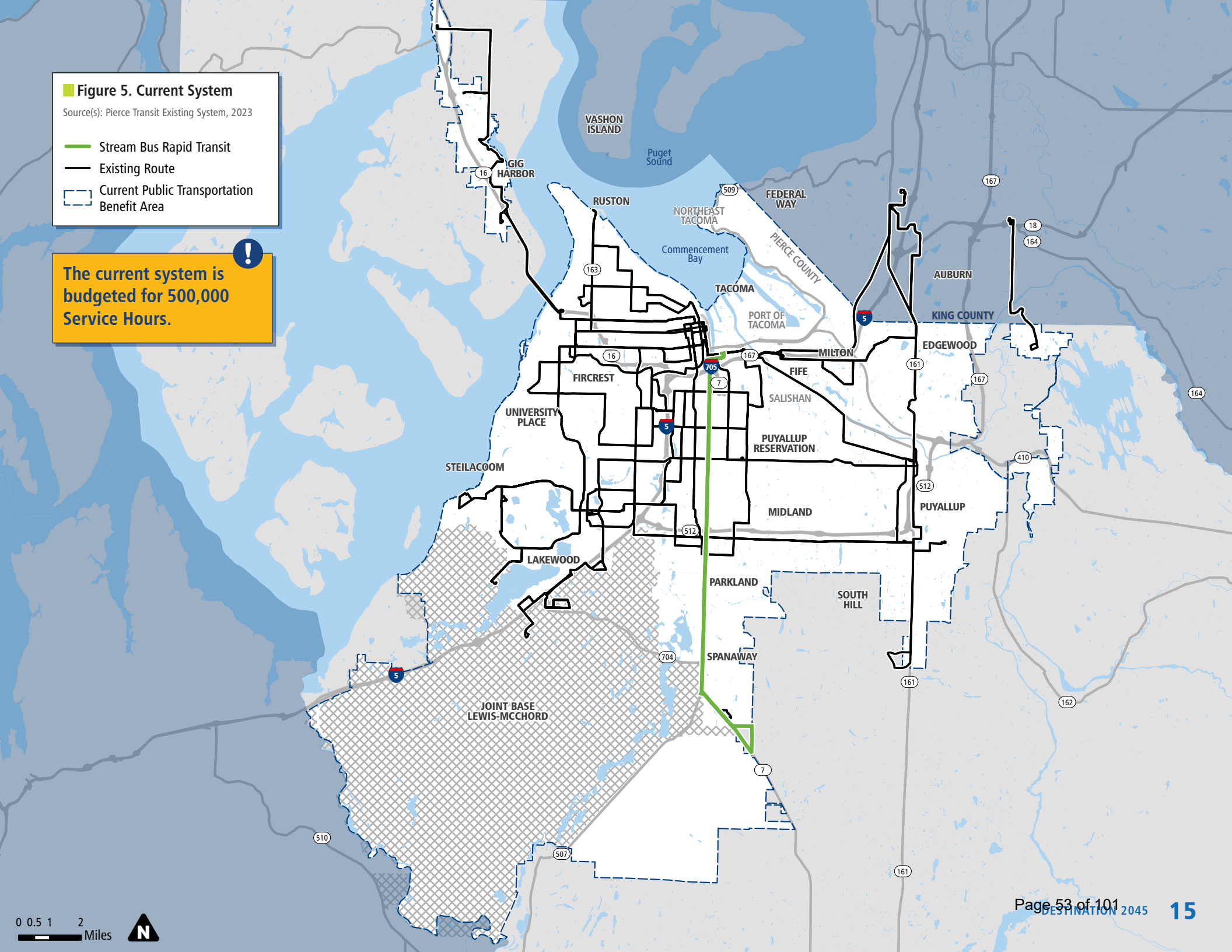
Figures 4 and 5 show Pierce Transit's current system. Individual routes vary in frequency and span of service based on seasonal patterns and regular need ongoing service evaluations. For a deeper dive into the existing system, the TDP² includes an overview of each route in terms of densities served, ridership, and strategic importance. These routes form the baseline scenario upon which growth through 2045 is planned.

² Transit Development Plan, <https://piercetransit.org/public-documents/>

Figure 5. Current System
 Source(s): Pierce Transit Existing System, 2023

- Stream Bus Rapid Transit
- Existing Route
- Current Public Transportation Benefit Area

The current system is budgeted for 500,000 Service Hours.



Ridership Change

Pierce Transit ridership has recovered quicker compared to peer agencies since the COVID-19 pandemic, which reflects the important role Pierce Transit plays in providing essential connections for the community.



It should be noted that ridership changes have been driven by several key factors, namely the COVID-19 pandemic and adjustments to projected housing densities (which account for shifting commute patterns and changes to zoning and land use regulations).



Since the onset of COVID-19, transit agencies across the United States have experienced significant fluctuations in ridership. With lock-downs and remote work, some agencies saw drops as high as 50 percent. As shown in **Figure 6 and 7**, transit ridership has been recovering steadily. Pierce Transit has performed comparatively better than peer agencies, suggesting a higher transit dependency exhibited by Pierce Transit riders. In summer of 2024, ridership was only 15 percent below pre-pandemic ridership levels, while it has also increased over 10 percent since 2023.³

Ridership change across stops is also more evenly spread with growth occurring in the non-urban core of Lakewood and Steilacoom, University Place, and Midland adjacent to SR 512 and SR 167 between Fife and Puyallup. These areas represent opportunities for new or improved service. Of concern is the reduced ridership in the downtown core areas of Tacoma and Puyallup with a cascading effect on adjoining locations. These areas represent potential for increased and more frequent service. Routes such as Route 41, Route 54, and Route 202 have shown the highest ridership growth over the last decade.

³ Based on combined ridership in June, July, and August

Figure 6. Annual Pierce Transit Boardings and Boardings per Service Hour

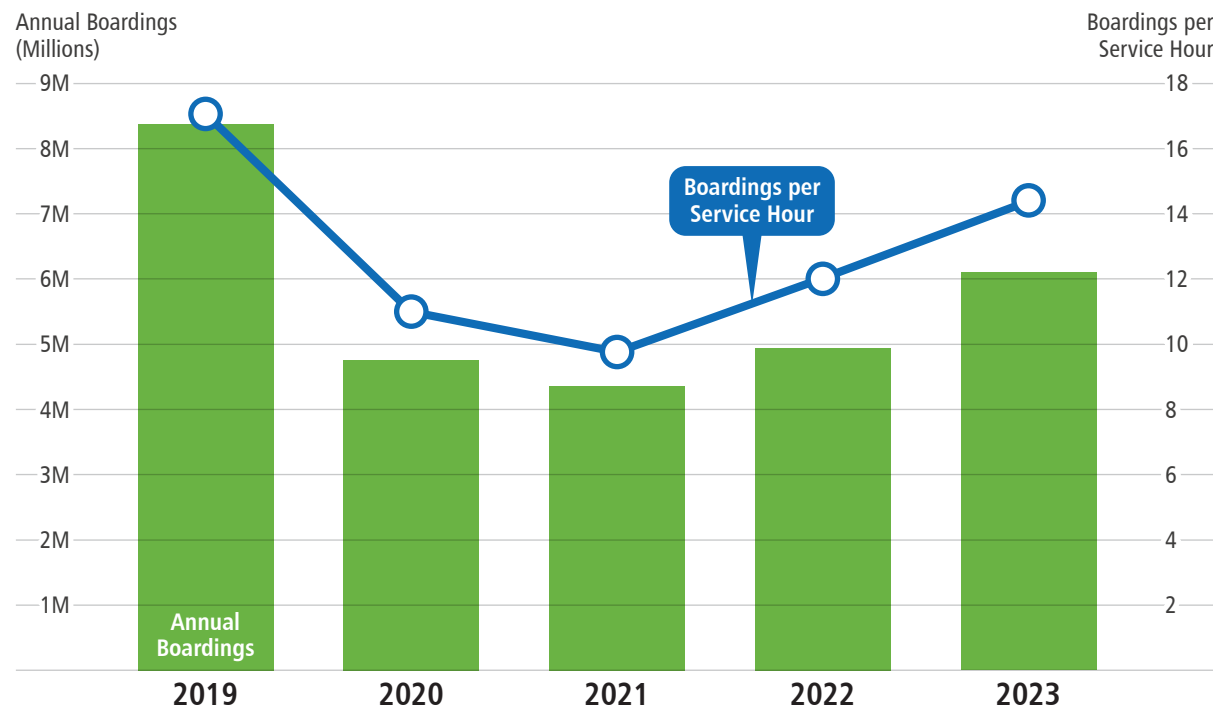
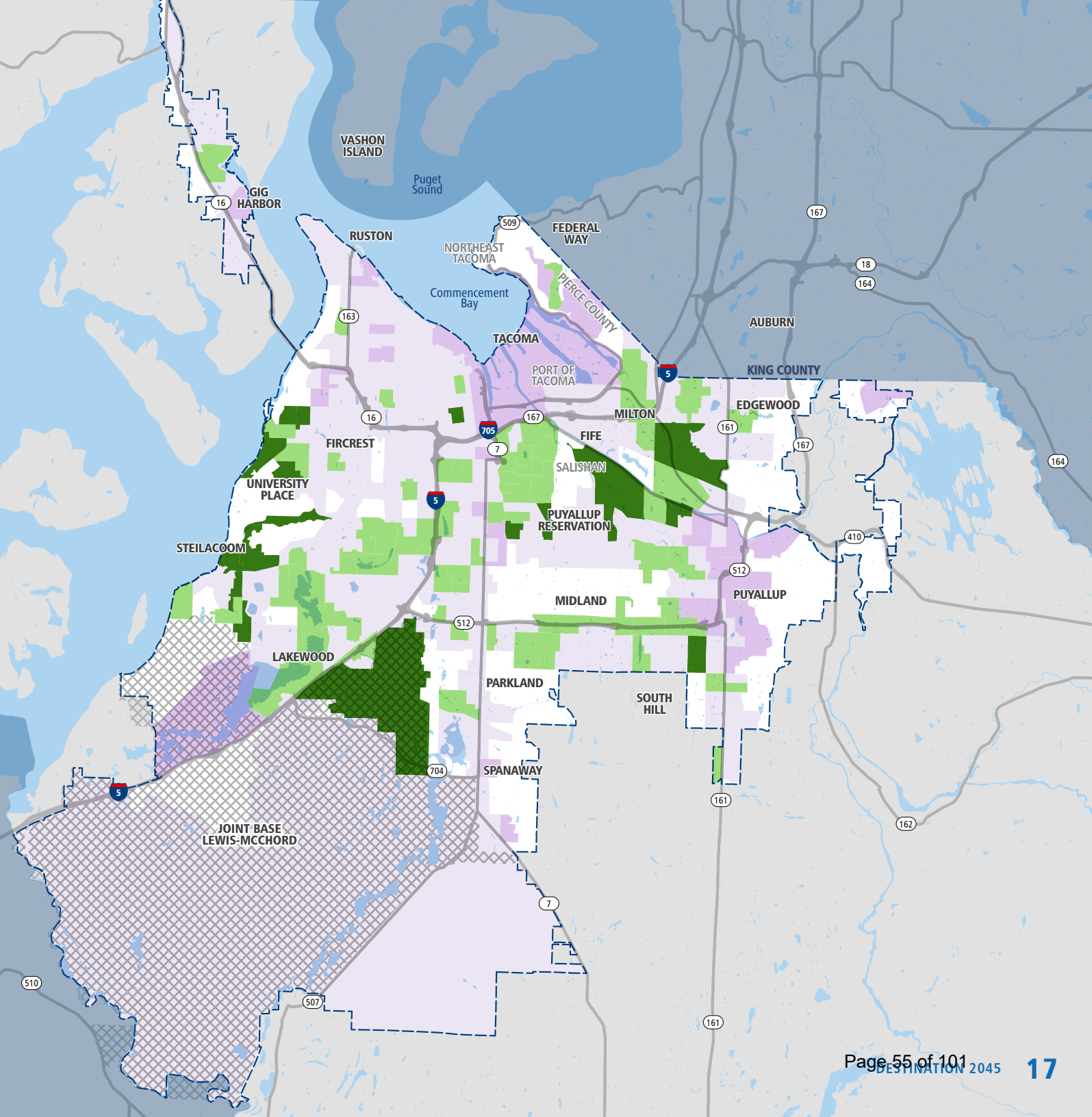


Figure 7. Fixed Route Bus Ridership Change: 2019-2023

Pierce Transit Ridership Data, 2019 and 2023.

- > 50% Decrease
- 50% Decrease
- 50% Increase
- > 50% Increase
- Current Public Transportation Benefit Area
- County Boundary



Land Use Change


The projected net growth in population and employment reflects the potential to meet growing ridership demands for Pierce Transit.

and unincorporated areas of Pierce County, including South Hill and Spanaway. Additionally, cities outside of the PTBA, such as Orting, Sumner, Bonney Lake, and DuPont also show growth.

Population growth in the area is driven by migration; newcomers are drawn by the South Sound’s appeal as a more affordable residential and employment hub centered around the major metropolitan center of Tacoma. This population surge is anticipated to continue to be largely driven by young adults who have historically shown a greater propensity for transit patronage.

Growth in denser neighborhoods and unincorporated areas provide the opportunity for fast and frequent as well as expanded service.

Combining population and employment to derive a growth per acre measure, high growth (as shown in **Figure 8**) is seen in two identifiable clusters—inner city census block groups of the three major cities of Lakewood, Puyallup, and Tacoma,



This plan aligns with the Pierce County Growth Management Coordinating Committee (GMCC) and Washington State Growth Management Act (GMA) requirements.

Alignment with Local and Regional Plans

The LRP (pages 20-21) highlights three of the jurisdictions—**Tacoma, Puyallup, and Lakewood**—that are undertaking initiatives to accommodate this future growth, including creating opportunities for additional transit service and improving ridership on existing routes.

Home in Tacoma



Puyallup 2044



Lakewood Station Plan

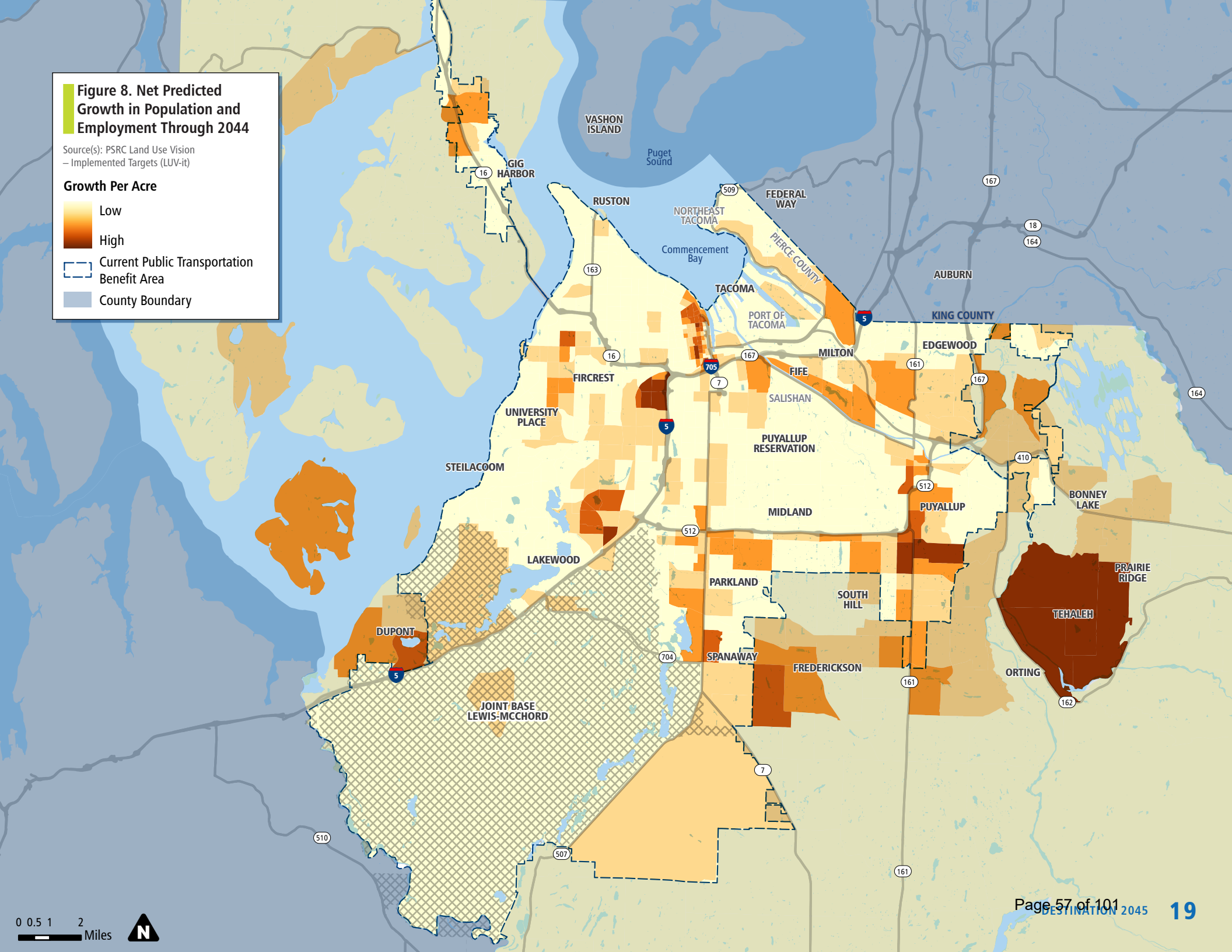


Figure 8. Net Predicted Growth in Population and Employment Through 2044

Source(s): PSRC Land Use Vision
 – Implemented Targets (LUV-it)

Growth Per Acre

- Low
- High
- Current Public Transportation Benefit Area
- County Boundary



Home in Tacoma

The Home in Tacoma initiative is a planning effort by the City of Tacoma to promote diverse and affordable housing options within the jurisdiction.

It aims to diversify housing types, revise zoning regulations to promote higher density urban residential areas, and enhance supply of housing (as shown in Figure 9). The plan seeks to increase supply in areas well served by public transportation, and reduce parking requirements. These measures provide motivation for increased ridership on associated transit corridors and enhancing opportunities for newer routes, plus greater span and frequency improvements within Pierce Transit's service planning.

To learn more, visit the City of Tacoma's [Affordable Housing Action Strategy website](https://www.cityoftacoma.org/cms/one.aspx?pageId=180033).⁴



4 City of Tacoma Affordable Housing Action Strategy website: <https://www.cityoftacoma.org/cms/one.aspx?pageId=180033>

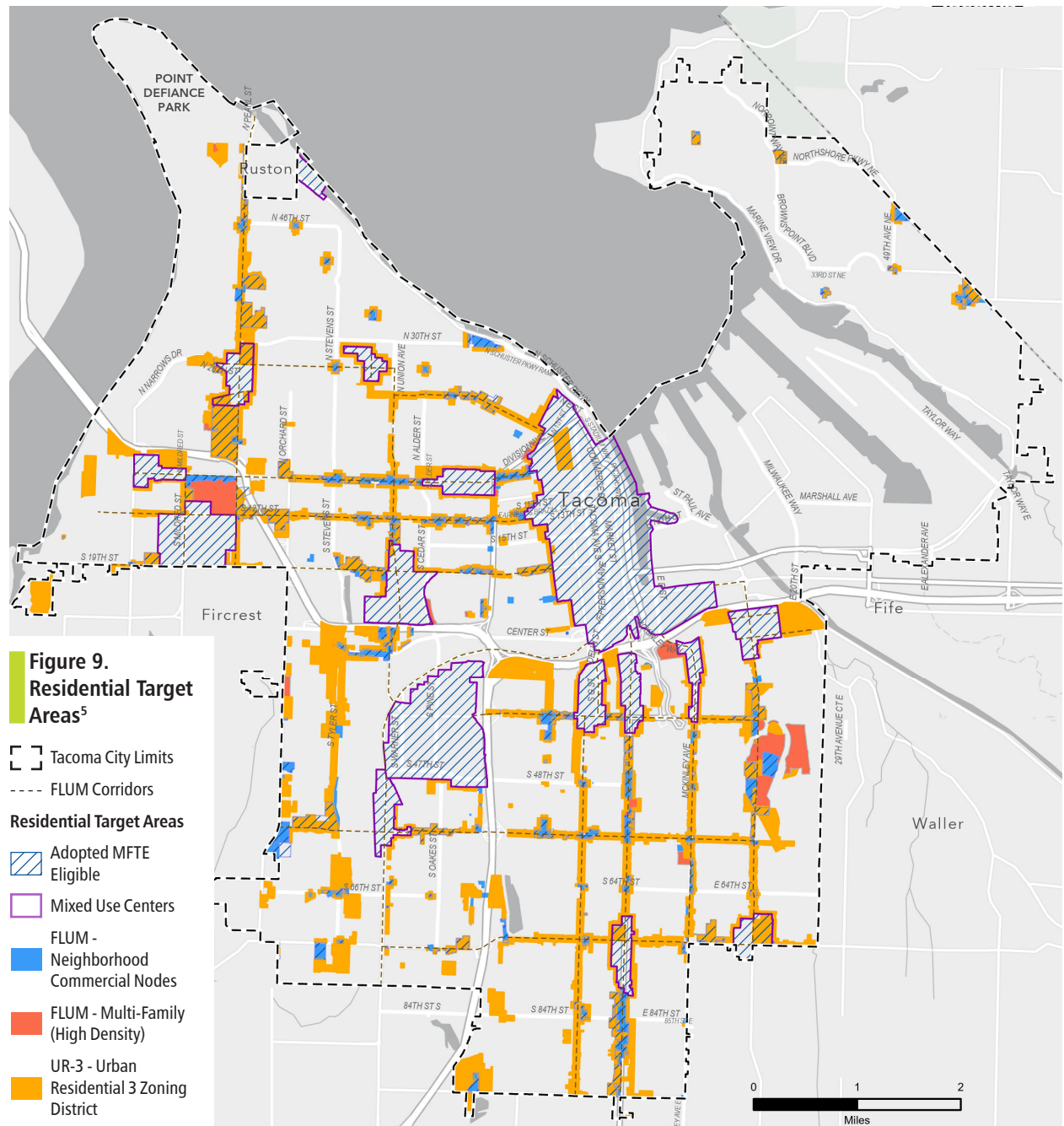









Figure 9. Residential Target Areas⁵

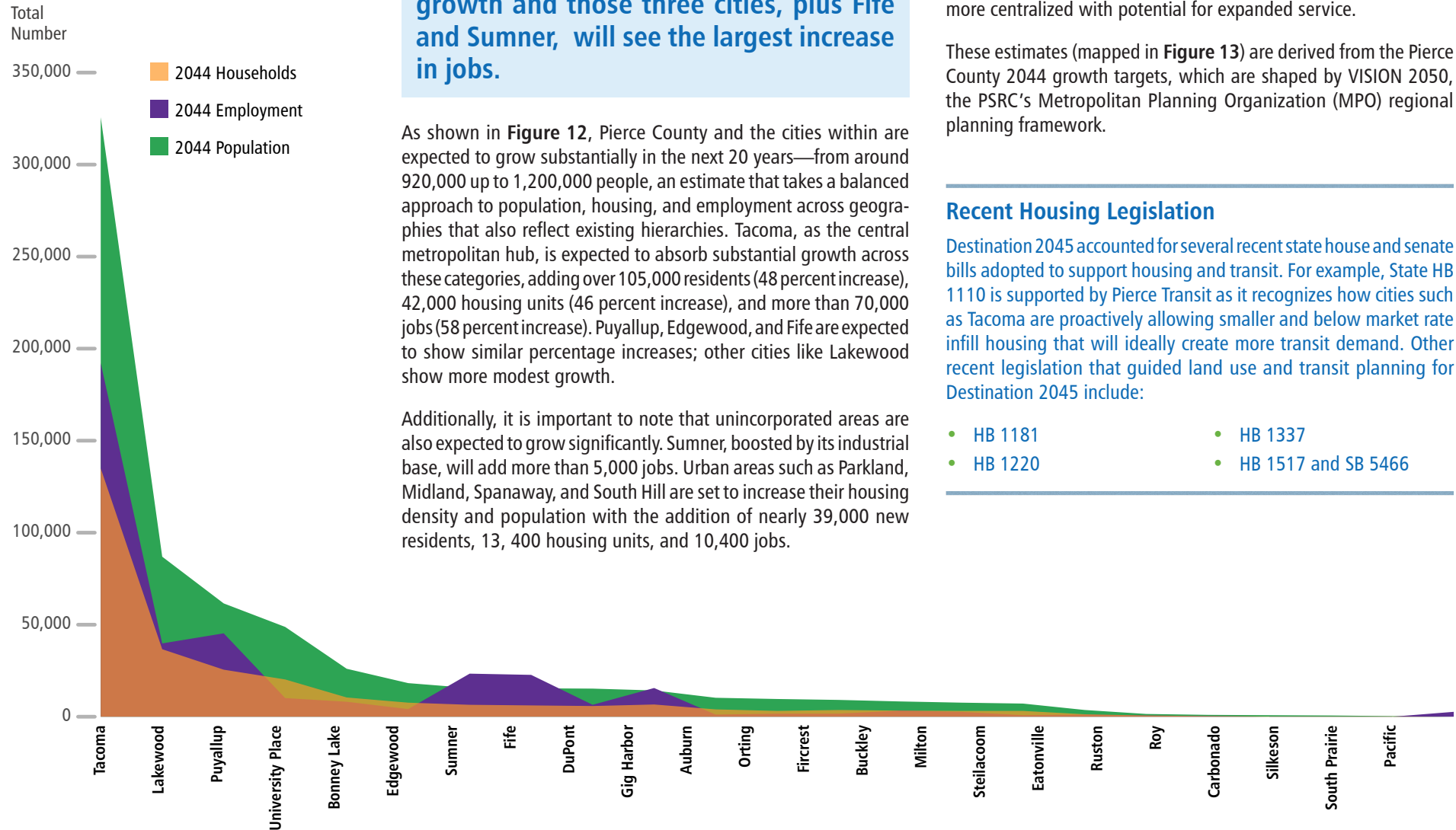
-  Tacoma City Limits
-  FLUM Corridors
- Residential Target Areas**
-  Adopted MFTE Eligible
-  Mixed Use Centers
-  FLUM - Neighborhood Commercial Nodes
-  FLUM - Multi-Family (High Density)
-  UR-3 - Urban Residential 3 Zoning District

5 City of Tacoma, [https://www.cityoftacoma.org/UserFiles/Servers/Server_6/File/cms/Planning/Affordable%20Housing/AHAS%20Planning%20Actions/Residential%20Target%20Areas%20\(Municipal%20Code%20x11\)%20062124.pdf](https://www.cityoftacoma.org/UserFiles/Servers/Server_6/File/cms/Planning/Affordable%20Housing/AHAS%20Planning%20Actions/Residential%20Target%20Areas%20(Municipal%20Code%20x11)%20062124.pdf)

Land Use Growth by City

Figure 12. Total Population, Employment, and Housing in 2044

Source(s): Pierce County Adopted Growth Targets, 2022



By 2044, Tacoma, Lakewood, and Puyallup will experience the largest population growth and those three cities, plus Fife and Sumner, will see the largest increase in jobs.

As shown in **Figure 12**, Pierce County and the cities within are expected to grow substantially in the next 20 years—from around 920,000 up to 1,200,000 people, an estimate that takes a balanced approach to population, housing, and employment across geographies that also reflect existing hierarchies. Tacoma, as the central metropolitan hub, is expected to absorb substantial growth across these categories, adding over 105,000 residents (48 percent increase), 42,000 housing units (46 percent increase), and more than 70,000 jobs (58 percent increase). Puyallup, Edgewood, and Fife are expected to show similar percentage increases; other cities like Lakewood show more modest growth.

Additionally, it is important to note that unincorporated areas are also expected to grow significantly. Sumner, boosted by its industrial base, will add more than 5,000 jobs. Urban areas such as Parkland, Midland, Spanaway, and South Hill are set to increase their housing density and population with the addition of nearly 39,000 new residents, 13,400 housing units, and 10,400 jobs.

These targets assume HCT service connecting these communities. With most jurisdictions incorporating a transit-oriented planning vision within their comprehensive plans, growth is expected to be more centralized with potential for expanded service.

These estimates (mapped in **Figure 13**) are derived from the Pierce County 2044 growth targets, which are shaped by VISION 2050, the PSRC’s Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) regional planning framework.

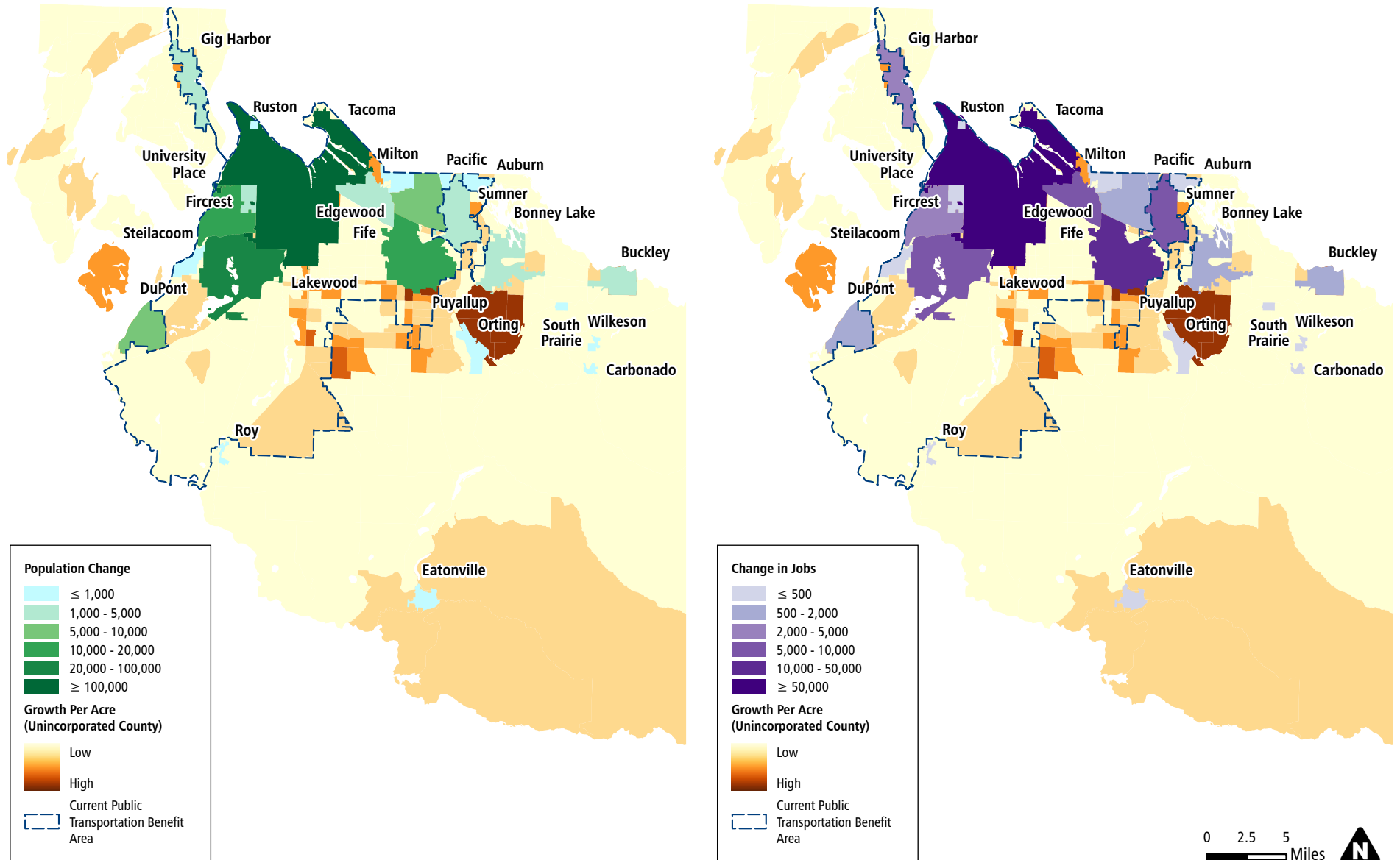
Recent Housing Legislation

Destination 2045 accounted for several recent state house and senate bills adopted to support housing and transit. For example, State HB 1110 is supported by Pierce Transit as it recognizes how cities such as Tacoma are proactively allowing smaller and below market rate infill housing that will ideally create more transit demand. Other recent legislation that guided land use and transit planning for Destination 2045 include:

- HB 1181
- HB 1220
- HB 1337
- HB 1517 and SB 5466

Figure 13. Projected Growth in Population and Employment by 2044

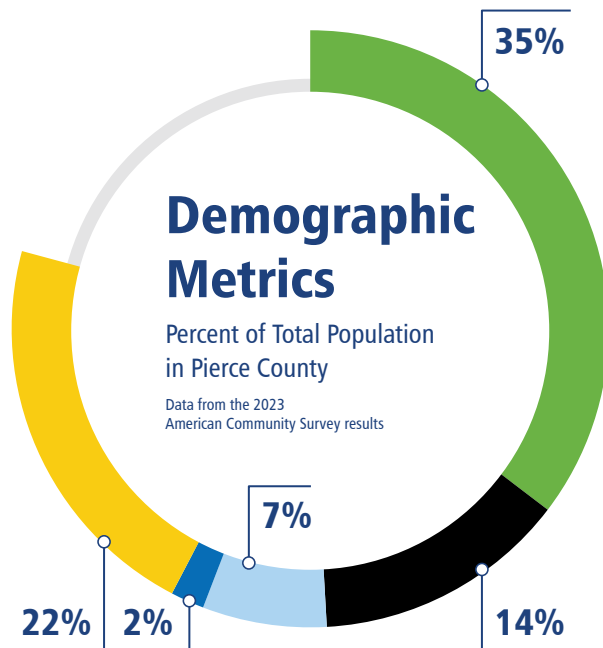
Source(s): Pierce County Adopted Growth Targets, 2022



Demographic Changes

Employment, population, and household growth are key metrics for determining the market for transit ridership. Demographic metrics should also be considered to align new transit service with growth.

- Persons of Color
- Persons Aged 65+
- Persons With Disabilities
- Zero-vehicle Households
- Persons With an Income 200% Below the Federal Poverty Level



Using data from the American Census Bureau for census block groups, metrics such as zero-vehicle households, foreign-born population density, people with disabilities, low income populations, limited English speaking households, and non-white or Hispanic population numbers are used to define priority populations.

Given that many of these metrics are interrelated, this document uses the **Transit Propensity Index (TPI)**⁸ developed as part of the Bus System Recovery Plan 2023⁹ by Pierce Transit.

The **TPI** is a quantitative metric computed to determine the propensity of a rider to take transit based on the density of three combined indicators:

- People with disabilities.
- People with low incomes (less than 200 percent of the federal poverty level).
- Zero-vehicle households.

The TPI is developed by taking the relative densities for each of these three indicators and assigning each block group a score. These scores then yield a single index that weighs each of these three indicators evenly.

The TPI within Pierce County is shown in **Figure 14**.

Propensity to take transit is more acute in seven clusters: southeast Tacoma, downtown Puyallup and South Hill, Parkland, and southeast and downtown Lakewood.



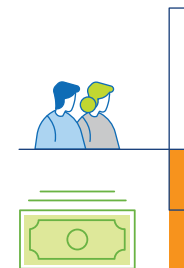
Almost 15,000 households

In the service area do not own a vehicle.



Almost 15%

Of the population is over 65 years of age. This percentage is forecast to increase over the next 20 years.



Over 25%

Of the population is below 200 percent of the federal poverty level.



Almost 15%

Of the population has a disability.

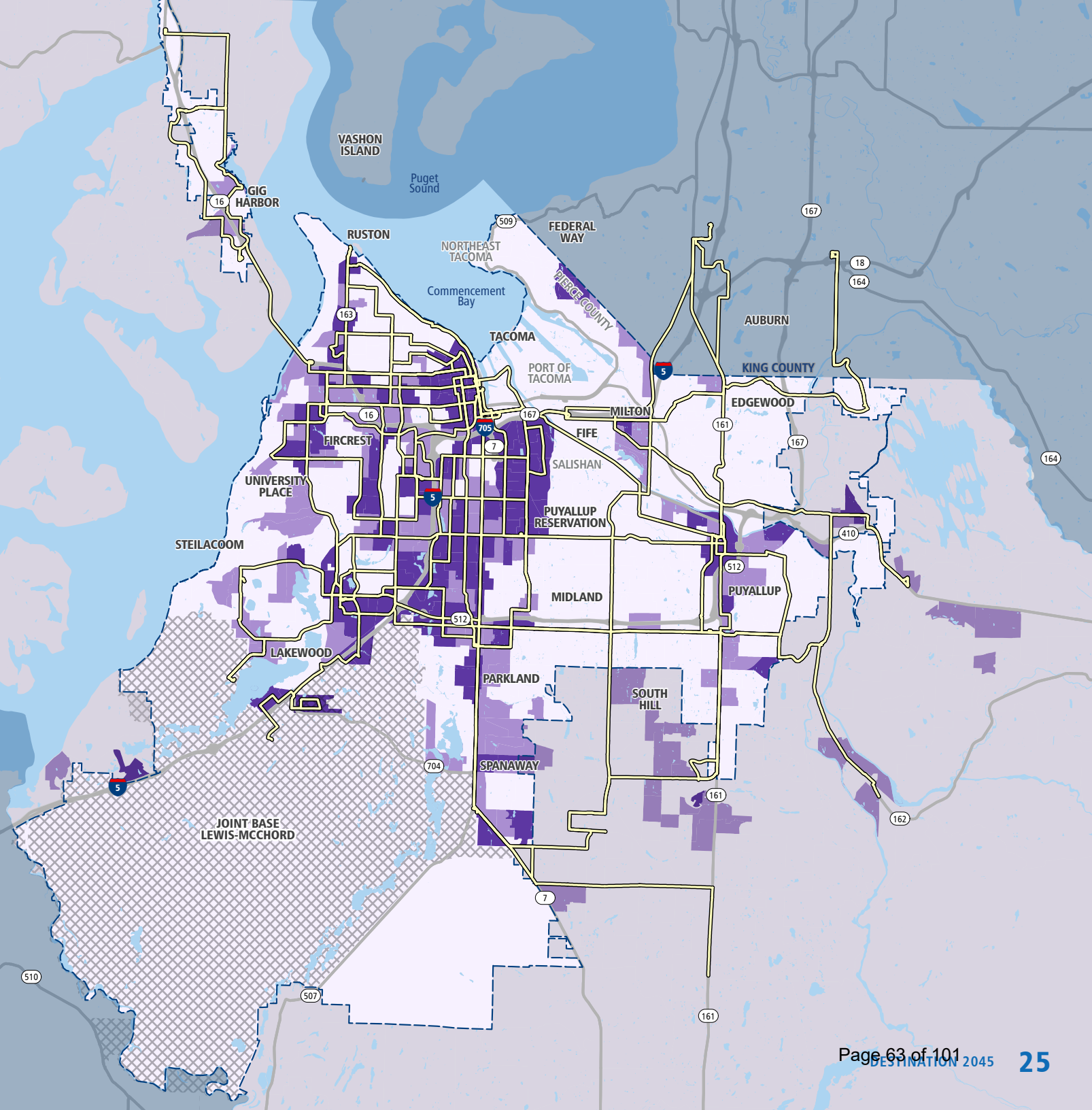
⁸ Derived from the 5-year American Community Survey results, 2021.
⁹ Pierce Transit Bus System Recovery Plan Final Report, December 2023, https://piercetransit.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/Bus-System-Recovery-Plan_Final-Report-15Dec2023.pdf

Figure 14. Transit Propensity Index Within Pierce County

Source(s): 5-year American Community Survey results, 2021.

Transit Propensity Index

- Low
- Medium
- High
- Transit Route
- Current Public Transportation Benefit Area
- County Boundary



Transportation System Change

Several HCT and regional trail projects (shown in Figure 15) are planned to serve Pierce County by 2045.

HCT provides connections to regional destinations throughout the Puget Sound region through fast and reliable transit service, such as light rail, commuter rail, and BRT. **Regional trail projects** help riders connect to the broader transit system through non-motorized paths that are safe for all ages and abilities.

Planned Projects



Extension of Link Light Rail to Tacoma Dome Station

This route would connect riders to Federal Way, SeaTac International Airport, Seattle, and north to Lynnwood and Everett. Completion of the Tacoma Dome Extension is planned for 2035.



Extension of Sounder Commuter Rail to DuPont

This route would connect riders via heavy commuter rail to Tacoma, Tukwila, and Downtown Seattle and is planned for completion by 2045.



Expansion of the Pierce County Regional Trails Network

Trail expansions as outlined in the County's Regional Trails Plan adopted in 2020.



Extension of the Tacoma Link (T Line) Light Rail West to Tacoma Community College (TCC)

This route would provide a dedicated and reliable connection from Tacoma Community College to Downtown Tacoma and regional light rail and commuter rail. Completion of the extension is planned for 2039.





Stream BRT System





Pending funding availability, Pierce Transit is planning to introduce BRT lines to Route 2 and Route 3.

Figure 15. Planned Regional Transportation Projects¹⁰





Pierce Transit

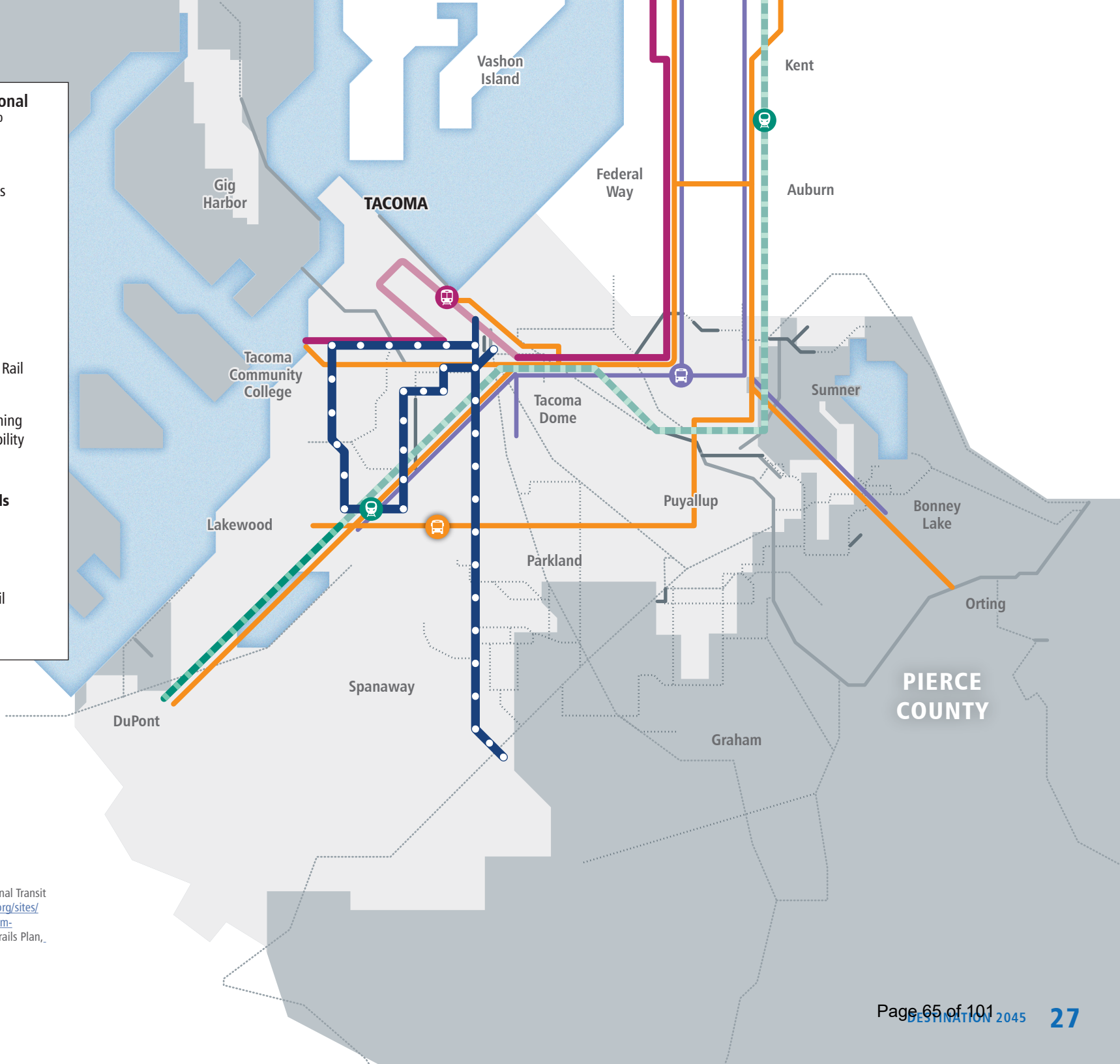
-  Pierce Transit Stream Bus Rapid Transit
-  Public Transportation Benefit Area

Current & Planned Sound Transit Projects

-  ST3 Link Light Rail
-  ST3 Sounder Commuter Rail
-  ST Express Bus
-  Proposed Shoulder-Running Buses/ Speed and Reliability Improvements

Pierce County Regional Trails Plan (PC RTP) 2020

-  Existing Connector Trail
-  Existing Regional Trail
-  Proposed Connector Trail
-  Proposed Regional Trail



10 Source(s): Sound Transit 3 The Regional Transit System Plan, <https://www.soundtransit.org/sites/default/files/project-documents/st3-system-plan-2016.pdf>. Pierce County Regional Trails Plan, <https://www.piercecountywa.gov/7049/Regional-Trails-Plan>

Technological Change

Technological advancements are transforming how transit services are delivered. Innovations such as micromobility, autonomous vehicles, and real-time information systems are reshaping service delivery, and enhancing the overall customer experience.

These technologies provide new opportunities for transit agencies to offer more efficient, flexible, and user-friendly services. Customers now expect seamless, on-demand transit solutions that can adapt to their changing needs and improve the convenience and accessibility of public transportation.

On-demand Transit

On-demand transit is emerging as a promising solution for transit agencies, offering flexible, user-responsive services that can effectively serve lower-density areas where traditional fixed route bus may be less efficient.

This innovative approach leverages technology to provide seamless, real-time rides tailored to individual needs, thereby enhancing accessibility and convenience for residents who rely on public transportation. However, the implementation of on-demand transit also comes with challenges, notably higher costs per rider served compared to conventional transit systems. Despite these costs, the adaptability and potential to meet the needs of underserved areas make on-demand transit a valuable addition to the array of public transportation options.

Runner is an on-demand transit option offered by Pierce Transit in select areas such as JBLM, Ruston, the Tideflats area, Spanaway, and Puyallup. However, historical costs to serve each rider have averaged between \$50 and \$70, compared to less than \$15 per fixed route bus rider.



Mini electric buses are new zero-emissions vehicles designed to function as compact solutions for urban environments. These are particularly useful as neighborhood circulators and as first mile/last mile connectors. With service growth and expansion, their future integration within the mode hierarchy is already on the horizon.

Autonomous Transit

Transit agencies are beginning to explore the possibility of deploying autonomous transit shuttles to better meet the needs of customers. Three case studies provide a snapshot of the current state of the industry. While Pierce Transit is tracking technological advances in the industry, it is important to note that the agency does not expect to implement autonomous service within the LRP planning horizon and recognizes that any potential implementation of a new technology would require a robust planning and outreach process.

CASE STUDY 1

CASSI at Bond Park (Cary, North Carolina)¹¹

The evaluation of autonomous transit technology has seen significant progress across various locations. In Cary, North Carolina, the North Carolina Department of Transportation tested an autonomous shuttle at Fred G. Bond Metro Park. This pilot highlighted the potential of such technology to attract visitors, with 79 percent of riders visiting the park specifically to experience the shuttle. While the technology shows promise, limitations in route design and operating conditions were noted in the pilot, indicating that further development is needed before mainstream adoption.

CASE STUDY 2

CASSI at the University of North Carolina Charlotte Campus (Charlotte, North Carolina)¹²

In a parallel effort at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte campus, a more complex pilot involved a 2.2 mile route with vehicle-to-infrastructure communications at multiple traffic signal. However, the shuttle faced challenges such as slower speeds and route constraints, leading to lower ridership compared to traditional campus shuttles. This pilot further underscored the need for technological advancements to better integrate autonomous shuttles into existing transit networks.



11 Screen capture courtesy of <https://data.townofcary.org/pages/cassi-autonomous-shuttle-bond-park/#:~:text=During%20a%2013%2Dweek%20period,automated%20shuttle%20to%20Bond%20Park.>

12 Screen capture courtesy of <https://www.ncdot.gov/divisions/integrated-mobility/innovation/cassi/Documents/cassi-ncdot-unc-charlotte-executive-summary.pdf>



Pierce Transit's Transit Centers are well positioned to serve as shared mobility hubs where transit, bicycles, pedestrians, rideshare, and other micromobility modes can converge. Establishing shared mobility hubs can improve accessibility, reduce congestion, and leverage density. Identifying and implementing smart technological integration, such as real-time information systems, integrated payment platforms, and wireless inductive charging for BEBs, can efficiently streamline transfers and the transit system's operations.

CASE STUDY 3

Ultimate Urban Circulator (U²C) (Jacksonville, Florida)¹³

Meanwhile, Jacksonville, Florida, is leading the charge with the Jacksonville Transportation Authority's Ultimate Urban Circulator Autonomous Electric Shuttle project. Beginning in 2025, this initiative will replace the outdated Skyway system with a modern, street-level autonomous vehicle network. Supported by a substantial USDOT Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity grant, the project aims to promote compact, transit-oriented development in downtown Jacksonville. The continued testing and phased implementation of this technology reflect its potential to revolutionize urban transit, while remaining under careful evaluation to meet operational and regulatory standards.



To learn more, visit the [Ultimate Urban Circulator project website](#)

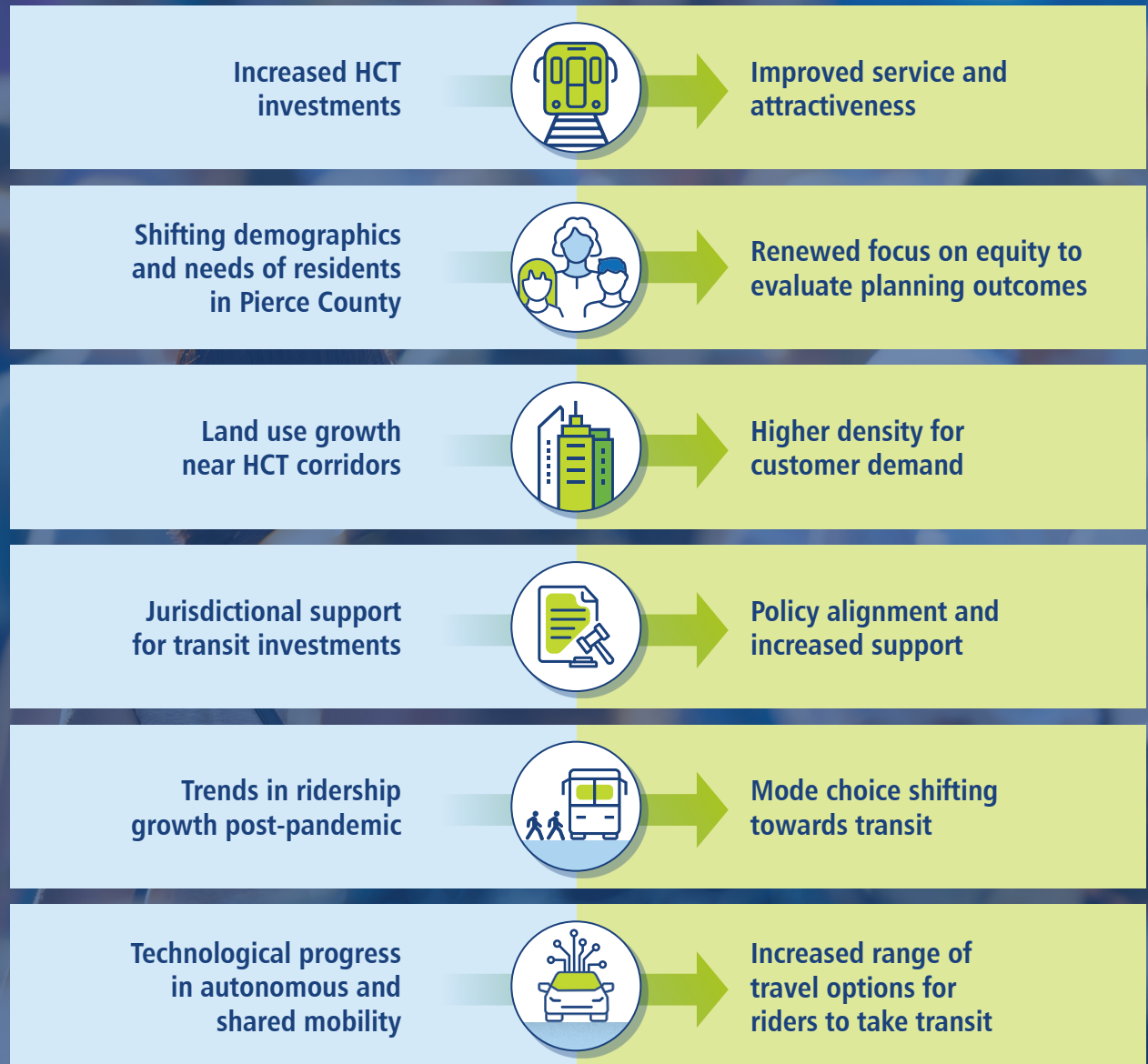
¹³ Screen capture courtesy of <https://u2c.jtafla.com/>

Summary

The factors described in the Planning Context chapter highlight the need for Pierce Transit to remain adaptable and flexible to new conditions in the future to best serve a growing community.

In general, the conditions reaffirm the need to provide good quality transit connections and to match the growth planned for Pierce County. Key findings from each factor are highlighted in Figure 16.

■ Figure 16. Planning Context Key Findings





Pierce Tran

➤ Chapter 3

OUTREACH

Engaging the community and other key stakeholders was a vital component of Destination 2045. The outreach process provided diverse community perspectives, helped build trust around the LRP outcomes, and informed the development of the growth scenarios. This chapter summarizes key insights gained through the outreach process.

700



Survey responses received (Phase 1)

JULY 2024 TO APRIL 2025

Outreach time frame

Outreach is planned through expected plan adoption in April 2025

75%

Of survey respondents are current riders



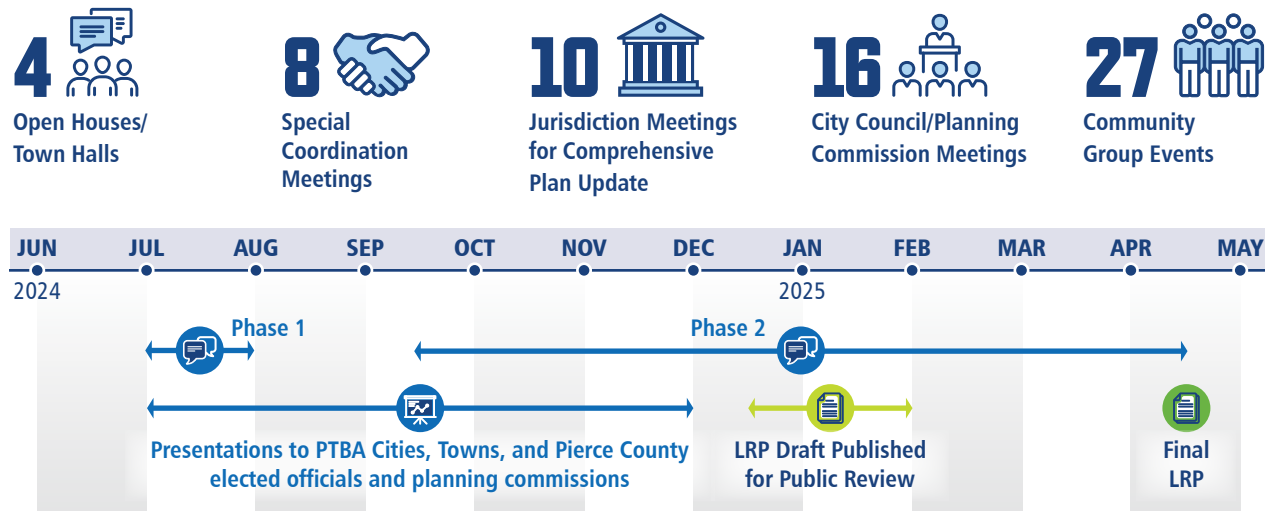
Public Involvement and Outreach

Pierce Transit conducted three phases of outreach (summarized in Figure 17), starting in the summer of 2024 and continuing into 2025 with the publication of the final LRP.

Phase 1 focused on engaging with the general public through online surveys and interactive mapping exercises to collect initial ideas and feedback on areas for improvement and innovation. Community comments were carefully considered in the development of the growth scenarios.

Phase 2 involved soliciting initial public feedback on the growth scenarios. The Planning Team also met with other key stakeholders, including the cities of Steilacoom, Lakewood, Tacoma, Milton, Puyallup, Fircrest, University Place, Edgewood, Fife, Gig Harbor, and officials from Pierce County, to ensure the LRP vision and long-term strategy for transit needs aligned with local Comprehensive Plan Updates, along with regional plans.

Figure 17. Public Involvement and Outreach Process



Phase 1 Outreach

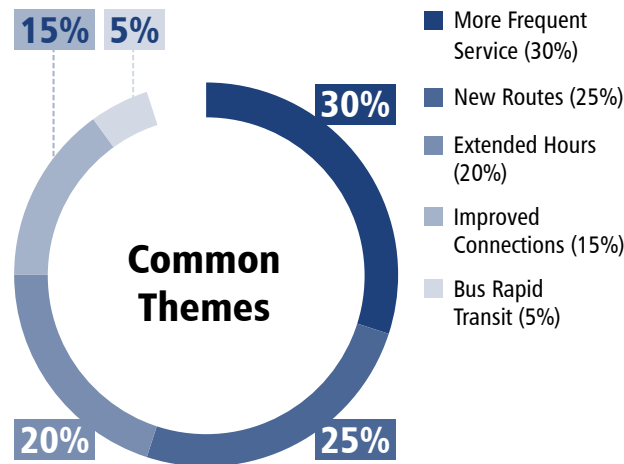
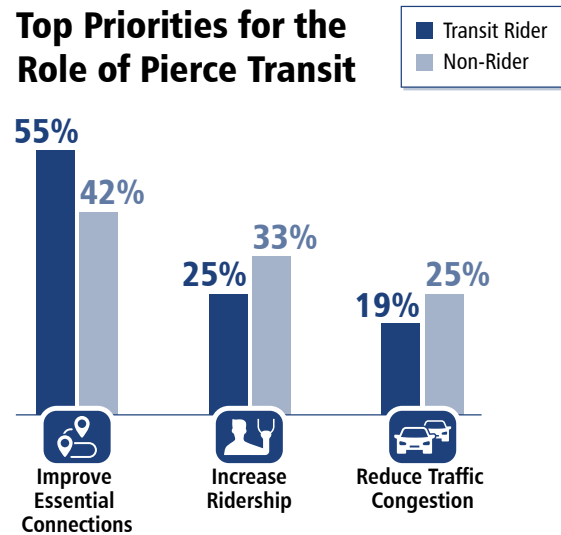
In addition to several public outreach events that took place over the summer of 2024, Pierce Transit conducted an online survey in July to request public input on agency priorities for Destination 2045 and specific location-based or route-based improvements using an interactive mapping tool. The results from Phase 1 outreach are illustrated in Figures 18 and 19.


The overwhelming majority of survey respondents self-identified as current transit riders. Key findings included:

- Improving essential connections is considered the top priority amongst riders and non-riders, followed by increasing ridership and reducing traffic congestion.
- The top three concerns mentioned in responses included more frequent service, new routes, and extended hours.
- Location-based comments indicate a need for improved service in growing communities, particularly those around the southeast boundary of the PTBA, such as Bonney Lake, Frederickson, Graham, Spanaway, and South Hill. Enhanced connections to local and regional amenities and institutions was also a commonly cited concern.

Figure 18. Key Findings from Phase 1 Outreach Survey (July 2024)

Top Priorities for the Role of Pierce Transit



 Answering the question, "Tell us where you would like to see new or expanded transit service over the next 20 years," respondents added location markers and comments (mapped in Figure 19) to indicate potential areas for new or improved transit service.

Proctor District, Hilltop, and Point Ruston (Tacoma)
New or improved routes to support local shopping, employment, and tourism in these Tacoma neighborhoods.

Lakewood Station
Better connectivity and more frequent service to the Lakewood Station to support regional commuters and local transfers.

Educational Institutions
Service improvements near Pierce College (Fort Steilacoom and Puyallup campuses) and connections to schools, such as the Gates High School in the Franklin Pierce School District.

JBLM
A need for enhanced bus service to JBLM to reduce congestion on surrounding highways and to assist military personnel and families without access to private vehicles on base.



Figure 19. Responses to Interactive Survey Map, Collected During Phase 1 of Outreach (July 2024)

Source(s): Phase 1 Outreach Online Survey Results

- Expanded Service
- ▲ New Service
- Other Suggestion
- Current Public Transportation Benefit Area
- County Boundary

University Place and Chambers Bay
Better service to University Place and Chambers Bay, particularly for recreational access and local connectivity.

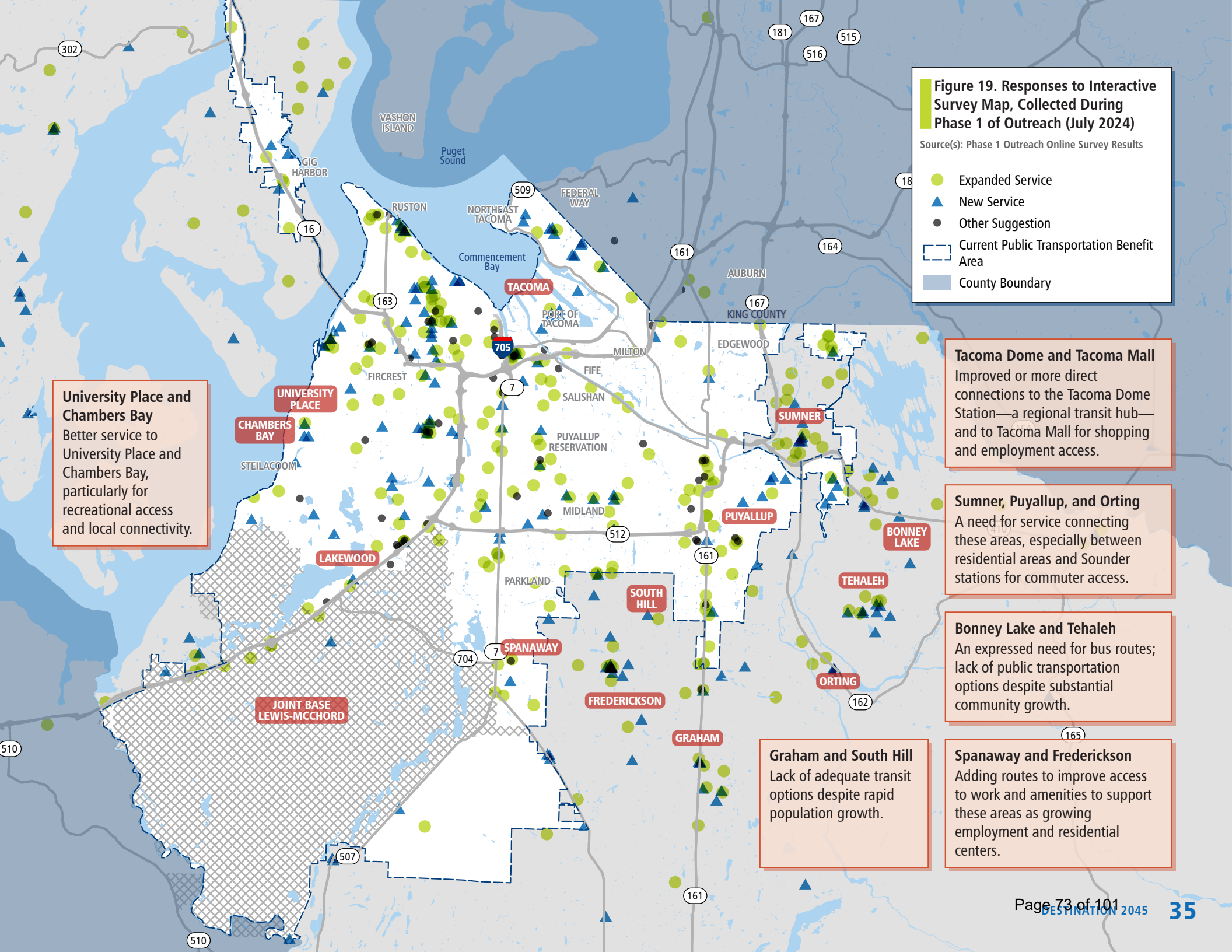
Tacoma Dome and Tacoma Mall
Improved or more direct connections to the Tacoma Dome Station—a regional transit hub—and to Tacoma Mall for shopping and employment access.

Sumner, Puyallup, and Orting
A need for service connecting these areas, especially between residential areas and Sounder stations for commuter access.

Bonney Lake and Tehaleh
An expressed need for bus routes; lack of public transportation options despite substantial community growth.

Graham and South Hill
Lack of adequate transit options despite rapid population growth.

Spanaway and Frederickson
Adding routes to improve access to work and amenities to support these areas as growing employment and residential centers.



➤ Chapter 4

SCENARIOS FOR FIXED ROUTE SYSTEM GROWTH

Pierce Transit developed four scenarios for gradual transit service growth to understand how different levels of service could connect communities in Pierce County, given land use changes, demographic changes, ridership patterns, and technological advances. These scenarios help to visualize the potential impacts and benefits of various fixed route service levels and highlight the overall need for transit to accommodate future growth in housing, population, and jobs in the region.

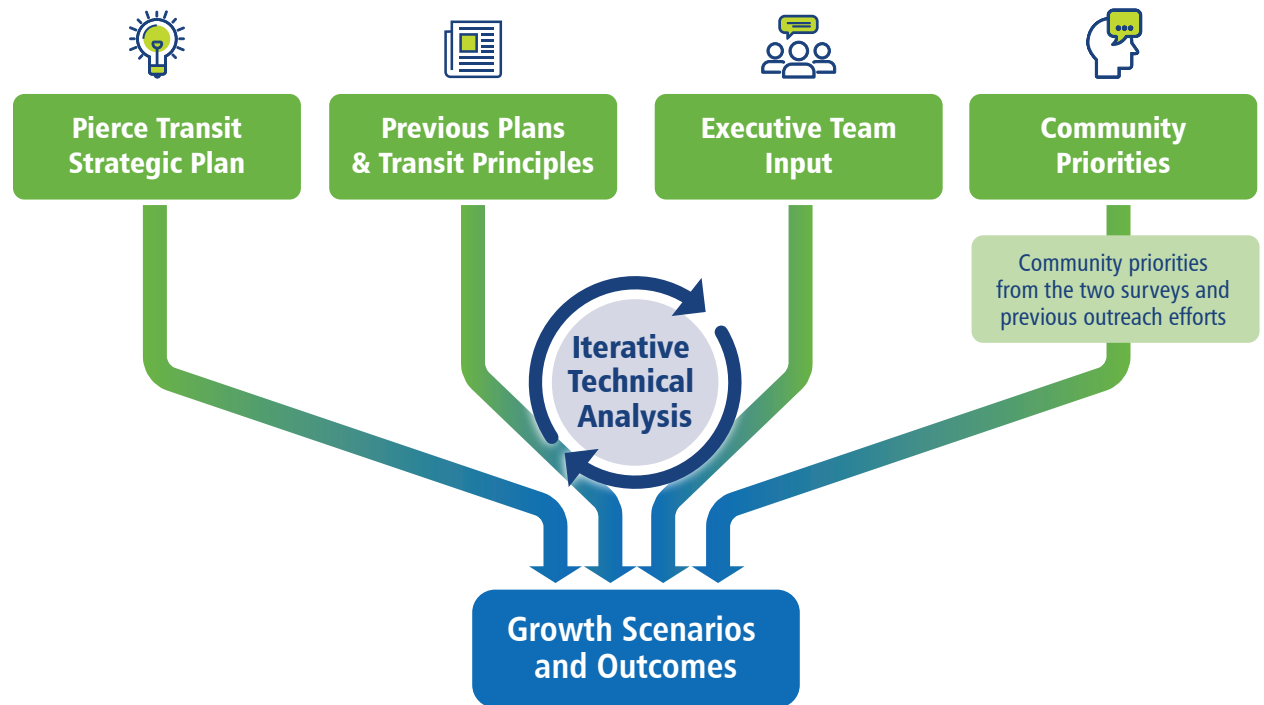
Scenarios for Growth

The scenario development process leveraged information highlighted in the Planning Context and Outreach sections of this plan, along with additional technical analysis to allocate appropriate levels of transit service.

Previous plans, such as the inaugural Destination 2040, provided an initial network expansion plan, along with community feedback, Executive Team input, and the Pierce Transit Strategic Plan. Distinct service types developed for the Destination 2045 Long Range Plan show how land use context guides transit service levels. For each service scenario, this section highlights the service assumptions, the transit network alignments, and potential outcomes of each scenario.

Figure 20 summarizes key components that fed into the development of the scenarios and outcomes for evaluation.

■ Figure 20. Growth Scenarios and Outcomes Development Process



Service Types

The Pierce Transit growth scenarios are based on three distinct service types that are designed to serve different needs: Stream BRT, Fixed Route Bus, and Innovative Services. Figure 21 provides a summary of these three types.

The service types defined in Destination 2045 provide long-term guidance on how service may be provided over time. More-detailed guidance on near-term service changes can be found in the updated Service Hierarchy, System Performance and Standards documented in **Appendix A**.

Figure 21. Pierce Transit Future Network Service Types

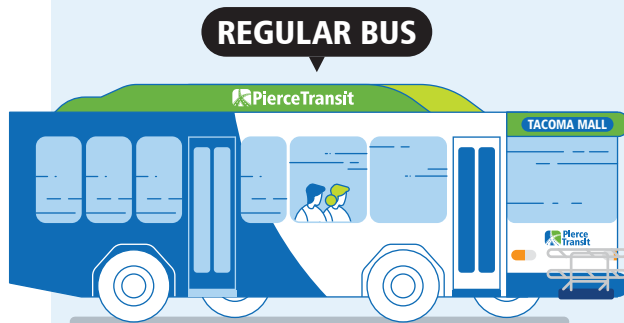
Fixed Route Bus

Fixed Route - Regular Bus

Traditional fixed route service spanning the PTBA.

Fixed Route - Fast, Frequent & Reliable

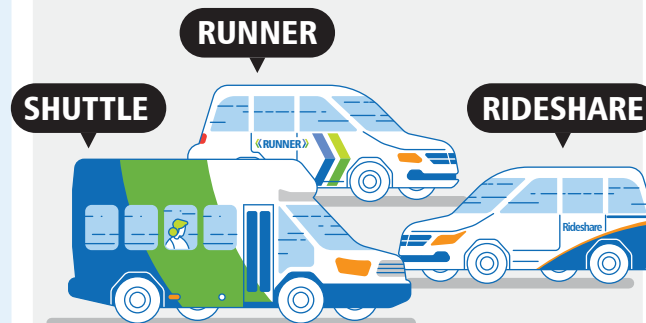
Faster and more reliable fixed route service for specific routes, based on targeted S&R improvements. Aligns with the “Core” route classification typology.



Innovative Services

Flexible, On-demand

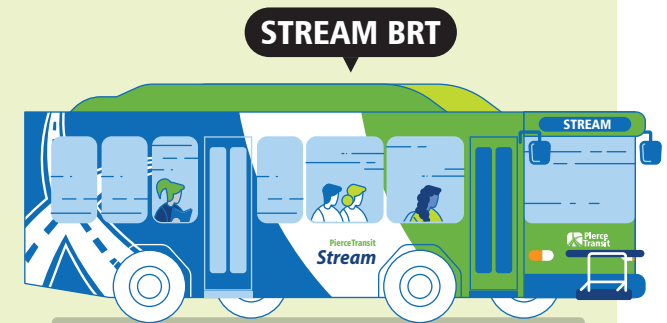
Innovative services include Runner, Rideshare, and SHUTTLE paratransit. Innovative services provide equitable, sustainable, and first mile/last mile connections.



Stream BRT

Rapid, High-Capacity, Very Frequent

BRT service with dedicated infrastructure and operational upgrades to provide high-capacity rapid transit service. Aligns with the “High Capacity” route classification typology.



Fixed Route Service



Fixed Route Bus

Fixed route bus service is a traditional form of public transit that operates buses along predetermined roadways with designated stops and scheduled timetables.

Routes are typically planned to connect key areas such as residential neighborhoods, commercial centers, and transit hubs. Fixed route services are integral to the PTBA's transit networks, offering consistent and accessible transportation options.

Fast, Frequent, and Reliable Network (FFRN)

New FFRN service will provide higher frequency, more reliable transit for targeted fixed routes that serve critical connections within the PTBA.

This improved service is achieved through S&R improvements identified in the PTBA, and are consistent with the S&R Framework identified in this chapter. Enhancements associated with this service include quicker deployments compared to the dedicated higher cost infrastructure associated with BRT. The final routes defined in the FFRN will be identified through ongoing service performance and land use evaluation. The routes shown in the different growth scenarios are based on the current understanding of operating conditions and future projections.

Innovative Services



Runner

Pierce Transit Runner is on-demand public transportation within dedicated microtransit zones that allows customers to book rides straight from a smartphone.

Each service has its own zone or designated curb-to-curb pick-up/drop-off spots where a rider can travel within the zone, plus make first mile/last mile connections between a rider's starting point and other transit services. In 2024, Pierce Transit offered Runner services in six zones: Gig Harbor, JBLM, Puyallup, Ruston, Spanaway, and Tideflats. Runner is designed as a supplementary service to fixed routes with the intent to provide critical first mile/last mile connectivity. As such, the future growth scenarios will incorporate changes to Runner zones based on the time of implementation.



Rideshare

Formerly known as Vanpool, the Rideshare program provides an economical and ecofriendly commuting alternative for groups traveling to similar destinations.

Rideshare groups generally consist of three to 15 individuals sharing a commute with a round trip commute distance-based pricing model. To accommodate hybrid work schedules, a part-time rider service is available, allowing commuters with consistent in-office days to join a rideshare group and pay a daily fare based on the round trip mileage. This program significantly reduces commuting costs and fosters environmental sustainability by encouraging a mode shift away from single-occupancy vehicles.



SHUTTLE Paratransit

The SHUTTLE Paratransit service is a shared-ride, door-to-door transportation option designed for individuals who, due to disabilities, are unable to utilize regular fixed route bus services.

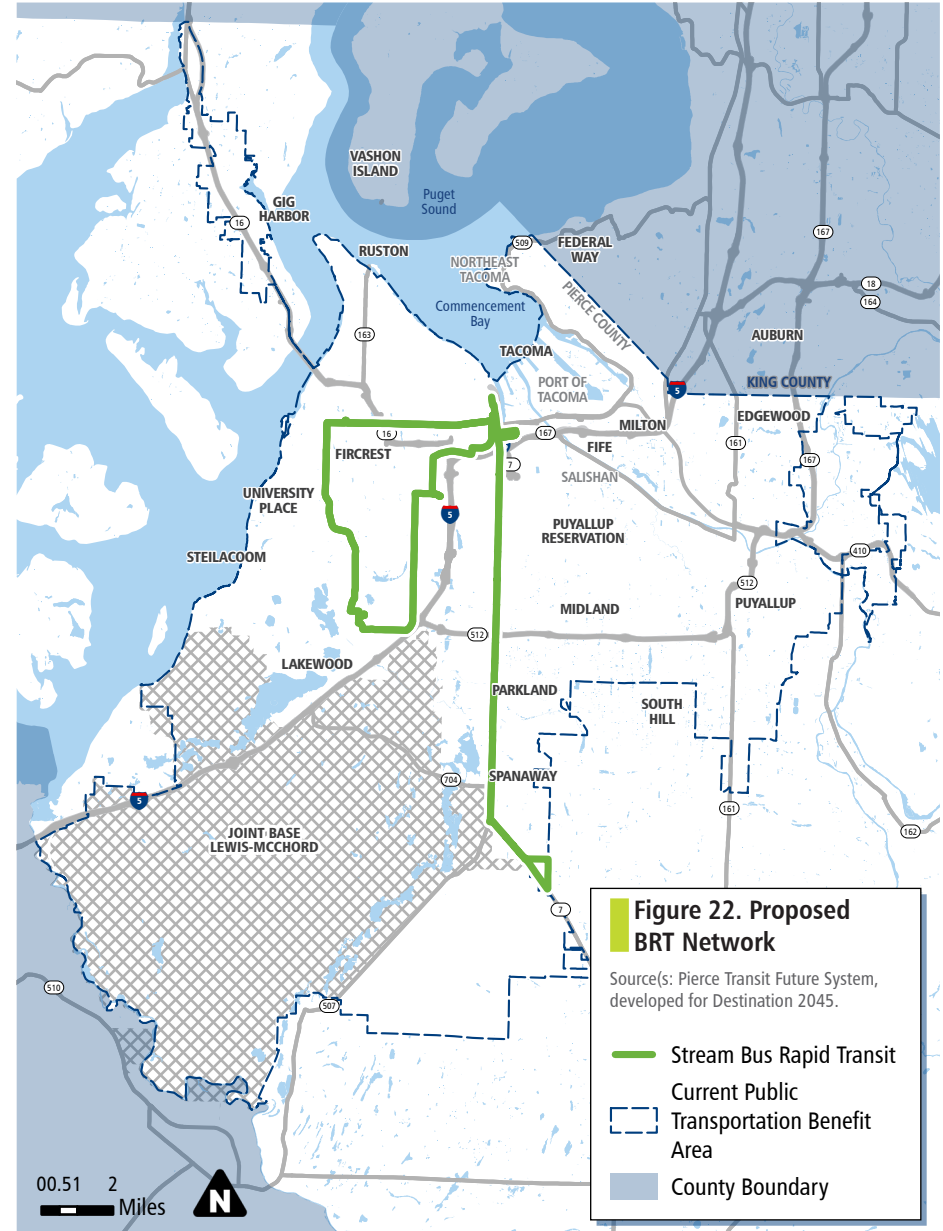
Operating within Pierce Transit's standard service area and hours, SHUTTLE ensures accessible transit solutions for eligible riders. This is an application-based service with eligibility criteria.

Stream BRT



Stream BRT is a high-capacity public transportation system designed to deliver fast, efficient, and cost-effective services by integrating features typically associated with light rail or streetcar systems.

Key components of BRT will include dedicated bus lanes that allow buses to operate free from general traffic congestion, traffic signal priority to minimize delays at intersections, and off-board fare collection to expedite boarding processes. Additionally, BRT systems often feature elevated platforms for level boarding, enhancing accessibility and reducing dwell times at stations. These design elements collectively enable BRT to provide reliable and swift transit solutions, making it an attractive alternative to more expensive rail-based systems. Stream BRT adheres to the agency's service hierarchy standards of "High Capacity." **Figure 22** highlights Pierce Transit's future BRT network.



Scenario A – Growth to 600,000 Annual Service Hours

Scenario A assumes the smallest growth in service, with 20 percent more annual Service Hours for fixed route and BRT by 2045.

This scenario (shown in **Figure 23**) would exceed the current funding available to Pierce Transit and would require additional revenue sources to increase to this level of service. The focus of this scenario is to expand the hours that transit operates to provide more options for people to travel on weeknights and on weekends. Additionally, Scenario A improves frequency throughout the day on weekdays for a few routes in the system.

Key Features

- Stream BRT Implemented for Route 1
- Later service for more productive routes on weekdays and weekends
- 30-minute all day weekday frequency for select routes



Key Metrics

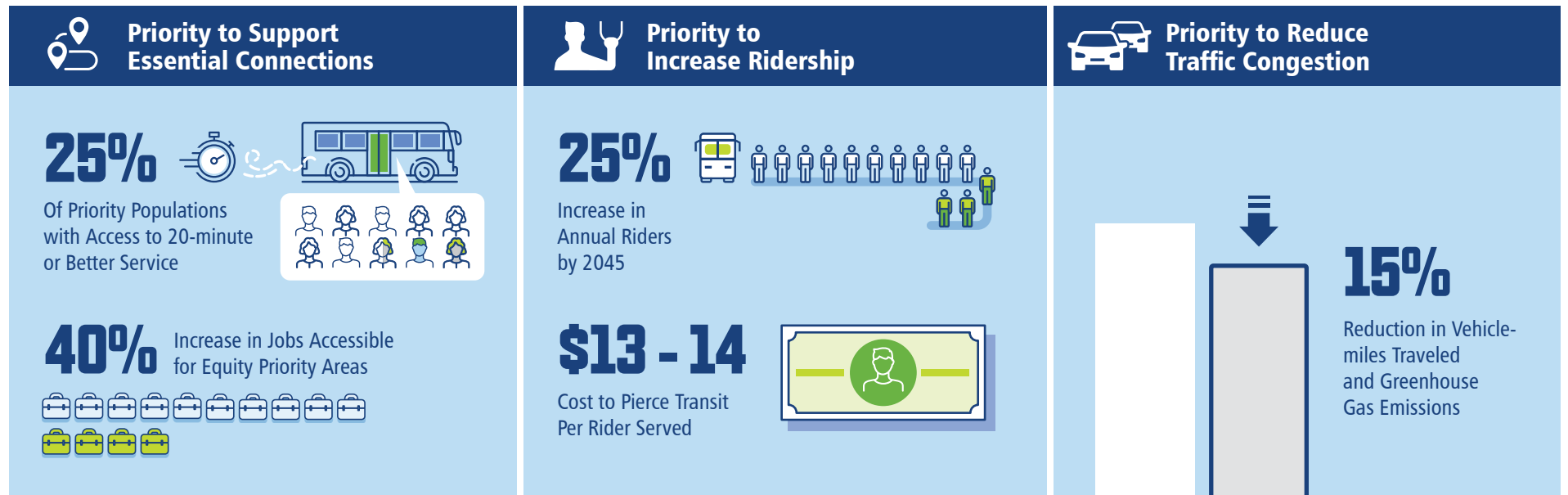
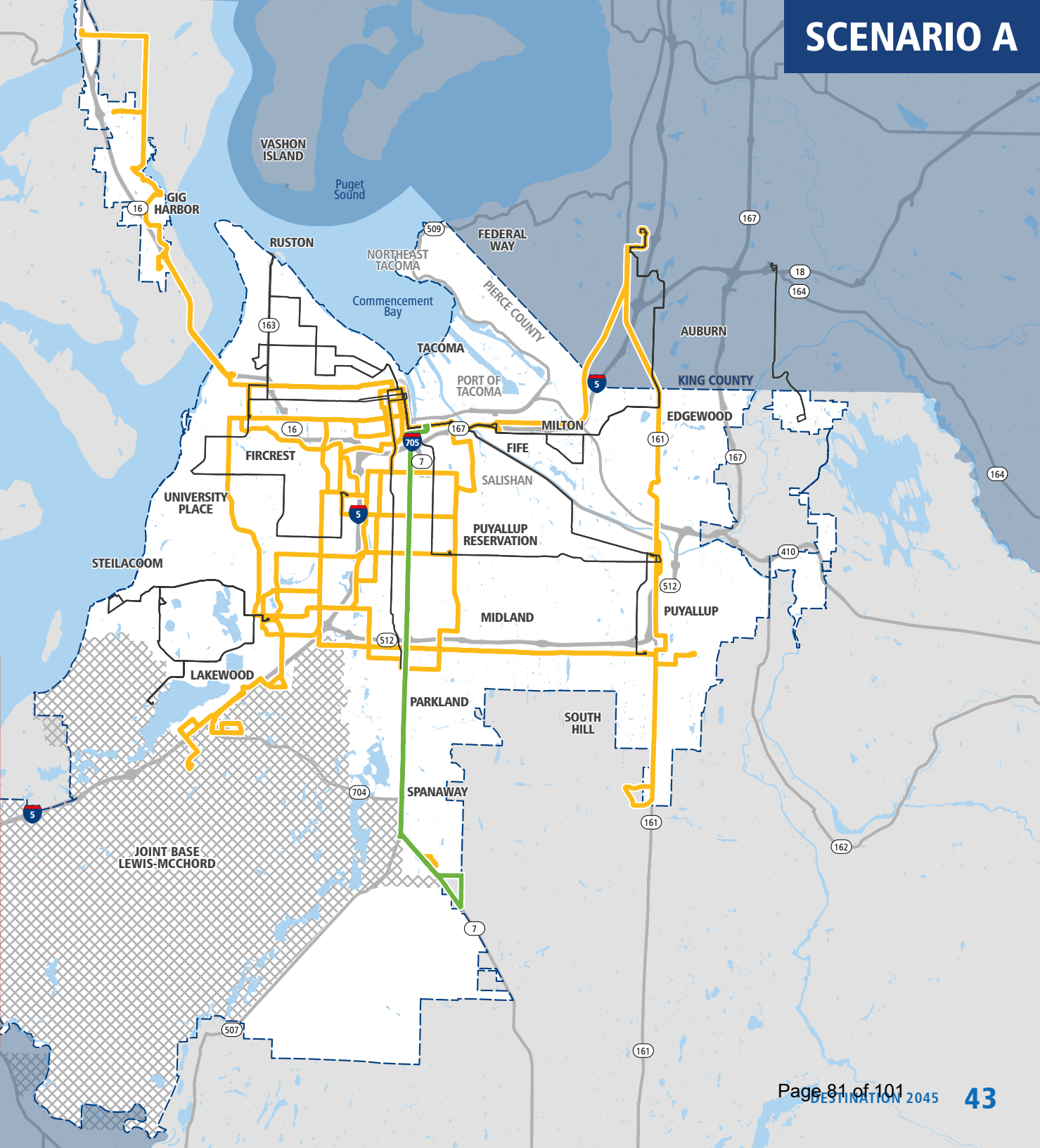
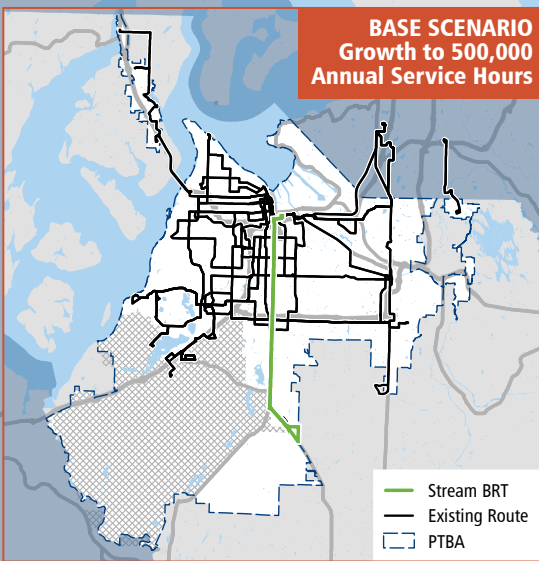


Figure 23. Scenario A System Map

Source(s): Pierce Transit Future System, developed for Destination 2045.

- Stream Bus Rapid Transit
- Extended Hours and/or More Frequent
- Existing Route Unchanged
- Current Public Transportation Benefit Area
- County Boundary

1. Please note that any expansion of the service area would require a vote by residents of those communities to rejoin the PTBA through sales taxation.
2. This map shows proposed fixed route service and does not show Runner microtransit or SHUTTLE paratransit that are also part of the Pierce Transit network.



Scenario B – Growth to 650,000 Annual Service Hours

Scenario B assumes a moderate growth in service, with 30 percent more annual Service Hours for fixed route and BRT by 2045.

This scenario (shown in **Figure 24**) would exceed the current funding available to Pierce Transit and would require additional revenue sources to increase to this level of service. The focus of this scenario is to improve frequency throughout the day on weekdays and weekends for the most productive routes, while also expanding the hours of service for a few routes in the system.

Key Features

- Improvements from Scenario A
- Later service for additional routes
- 30-minute all day Saturday frequency for select routes
- New routes to Lakewood, Port of Tacoma, and Puyallup



Key Metrics









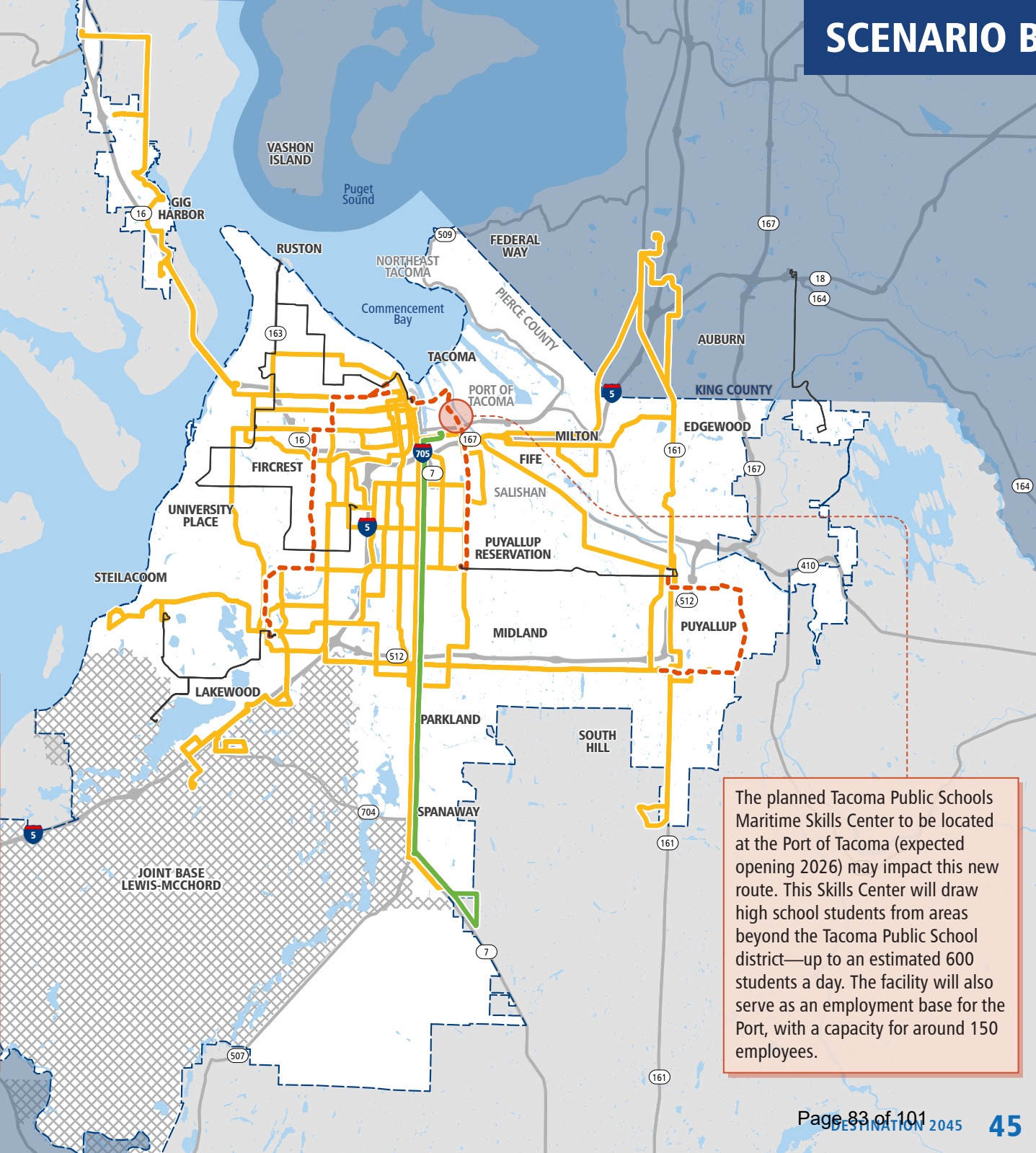
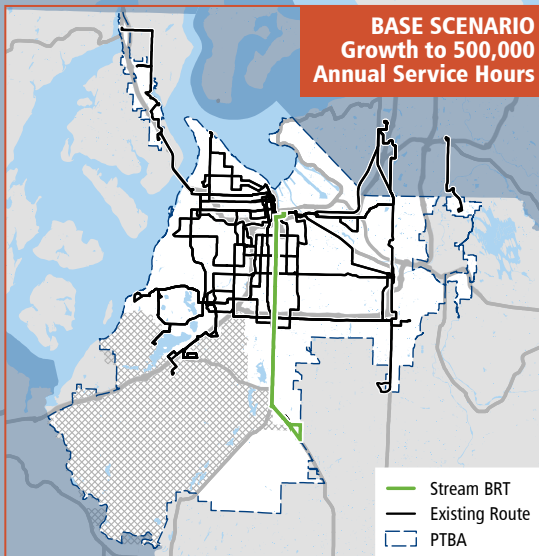
 Priority to Support Essential Connections	 Priority to Increase Ridership	 Priority to Reduce Traffic Congestion
<p>30% </p> <p>Of Priority Populations with Access to 20-minute or Better Service</p> <p>40% Increase in Jobs Accessible for Equity Priority Areas</p> 	<p>40% </p> <p>Increase in Annual Riders by 2045</p> <p>\$13 - 14 </p> <p>Cost to Pierce Transit Per Rider</p>	<p>25% </p> <p>Reduction in Vehicle-miles Traveled and Greenhouse Gas Emissions</p>

Figure 24. Scenario B System Map

Source(s): Pierce Transit Future System, developed for Destination 2045.

- Stream Bus Rapid Transit
- - - New Fixed Route
- Extended Hours and/or More Frequent
- Existing Route Unchanged
- Current Public Transportation Benefit Area
- County Boundary

1. Please note that any expansion of the service area would require a vote by residents of those communities to rejoin the PTBA through sales taxation.
2. This map shows proposed fixed route service and does not show Runner microtransit or SHUTTLE paratransit that are also part of the Pierce Transit network.



The planned Tacoma Public Schools Maritime Skills Center to be located at the Port of Tacoma (expected opening 2026) may impact this new route. This Skills Center will draw high school students from areas beyond the Tacoma Public School district—up to an estimated 600 students a day. The facility will also serve as an employment base for the Port, with a capacity for around 150 employees.

Scenario C – Growth to 735,000 Annual Service Hours

Scenario C assumes a larger growth in service, with almost 50 percent more annual Service Hours for fixed route and BRT options by 2045.

This scenario (shown in **Figure 25**) would exceed the current funding available to Pierce Transit and would require additional revenue sources to increase to this level of service. Beyond the improvements incorporated from Scenarios A and B, the focus of this scenario is to provide extensive service on weekends, with many routes operating until 10 PM or midnight. Additionally, this scenario would make significant improvements in weekday and weekend frequency, with most routes operating at least every 30 minutes and many other routes operating every 15 or every 20 minutes throughout the weekday and weekend.

Key Features

- Improvements from Scenarios A & B
- Stream BRT Implemented for Route 2 or 3
- Route 4 becomes part of the FFRN
- 20-minute weekday frequency for the more productive routes
- Later service and more frequent service for other local routes
- New connections to Auburn and Ruston
- Expansion of the Pierce Transit service area into Frederickson

Key Metrics

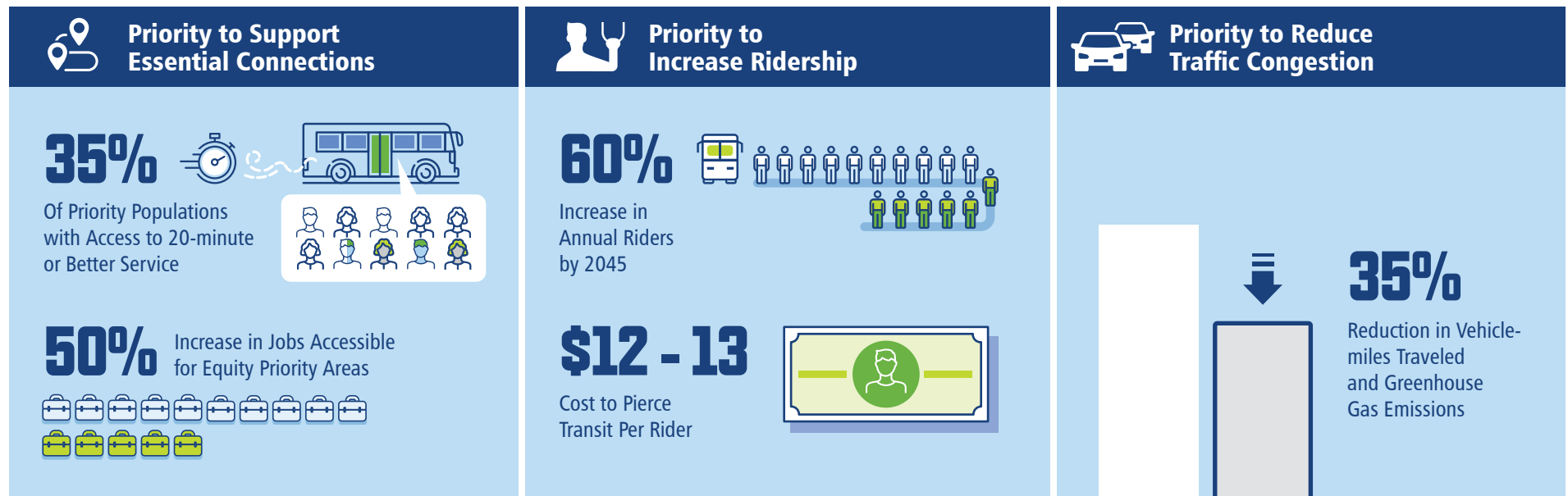
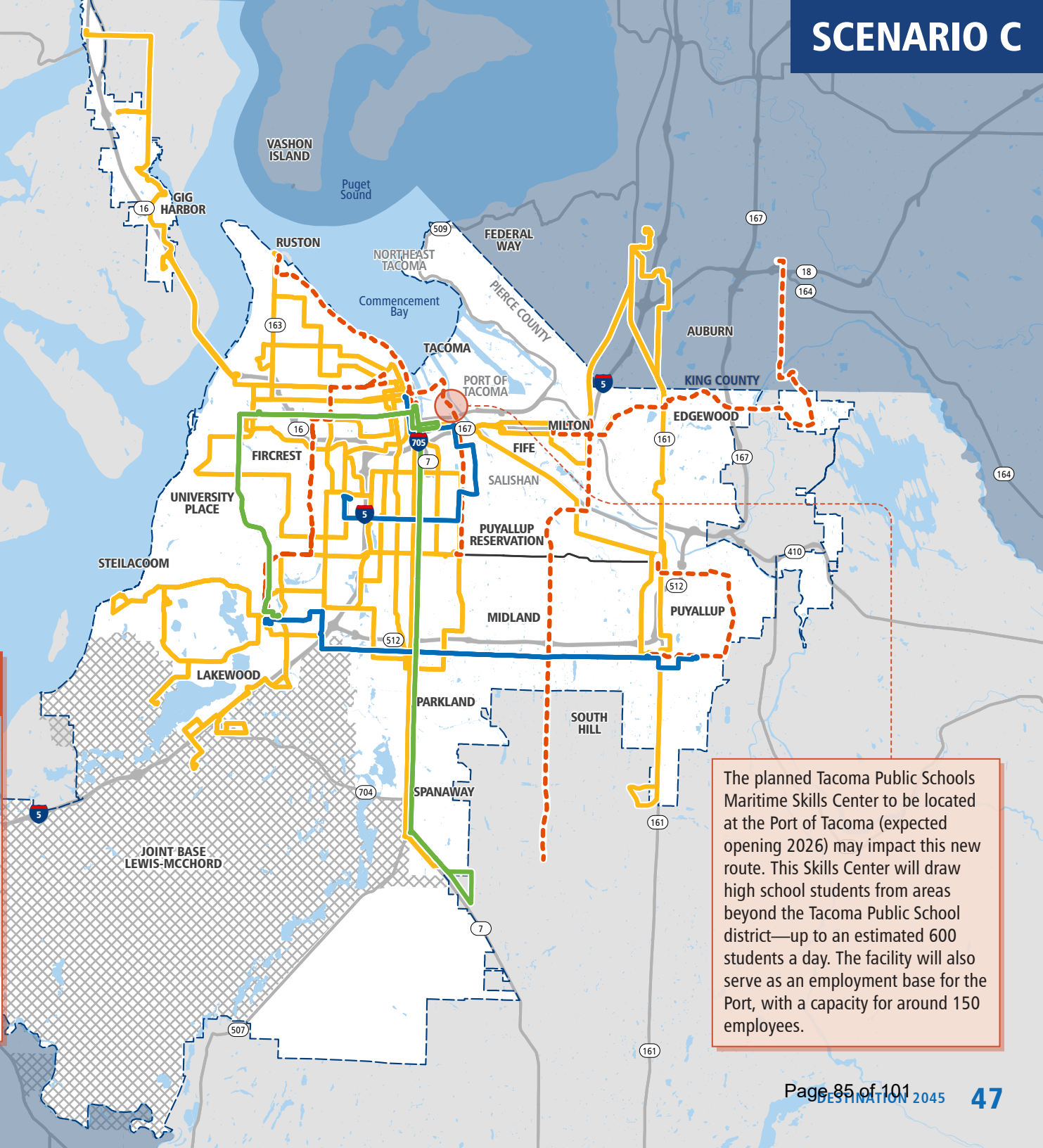
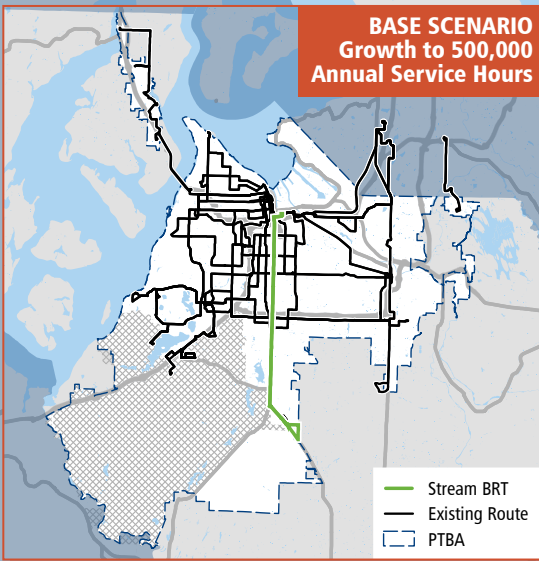


Figure 25. Scenario C System Map

Source(s): Pierce Transit Future System, developed for Destination 2045.

- Stream Bus Rapid Transit
- New Fast, Frequent, and Reliable Route
- New Fixed Route
- Extended Hours and/or More Frequent
- Existing Route Unchanged
- Current Public Transportation Benefit Area
- County Boundary

1. Please note that any expansion of the service area would require a vote by residents of those communities to rejoin the PTBA through sales taxation.
2. This map shows proposed fixed route service and does not show Runner microtransit or SHUTTLE paratransit that are also part of the Pierce Transit network.



The planned Tacoma Public Schools Maritime Skills Center to be located at the Port of Tacoma (expected opening 2026) may impact this new route. This Skills Center will draw high school students from areas beyond the Tacoma Public School district—up to an estimated 600 students a day. The facility will also serve as an employment base for the Port, with a capacity for around 150 employees.


Scenario D – Growth to 900,000 Annual Service Hours

Scenario D assumes the largest growth of service, with an almost doubling of fixed route and BRT options by 2045.

The scenario (shown in **Figure 26**) also assumes an expansion of the current Pierce Transit service area into communities such as Frederickson, Orting, and Sumner. This scenario would exceed the current funding available to Pierce Transit and would require additional revenue sources to increase to this level of service. The focus of this scenario is to establish a network of frequent services across the county, while also expanding coverage through new connections and into new communities.

Key Features

- Improvements assumed in Scenarios A, B, and C
- Expansion of the Pierce Transit Service area into Frederickson, Graham, Orting, and Sumner
- New connections from Fife, Lakewood, Puyallup, and Tacoma to the new service areas
- Stream BRT implemented for both Routes 2 and 3
- Route 202 becomes part of the FFRN

 Scenario D was identified as the preferred growth scenario during Phase 2 outreach.

Key Metrics

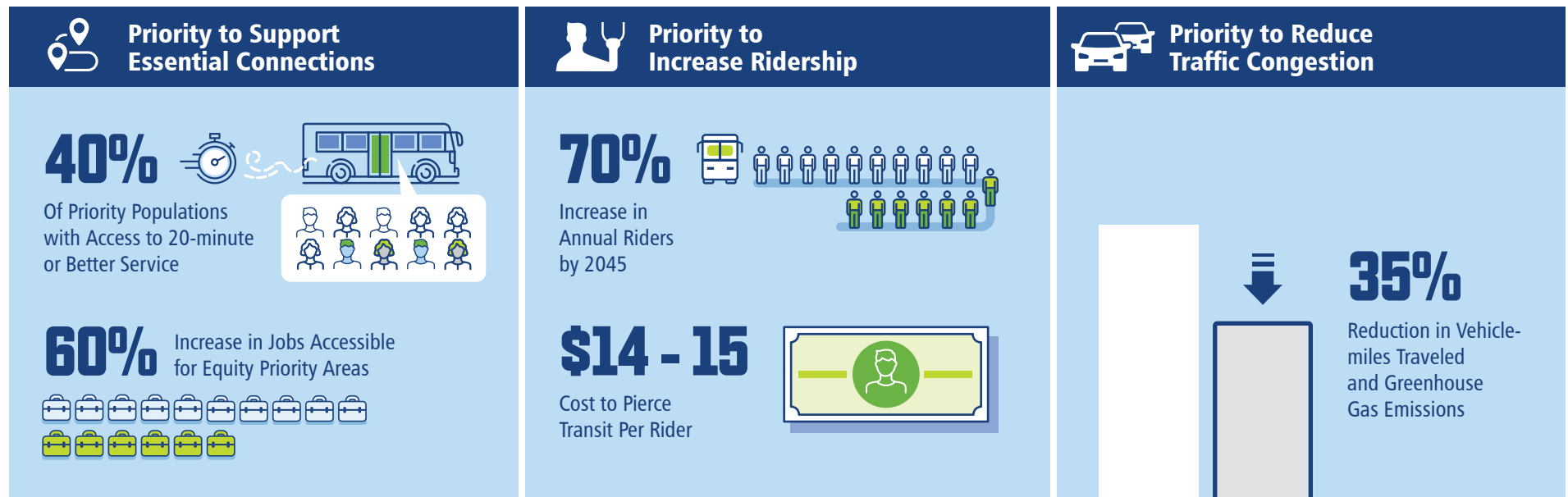
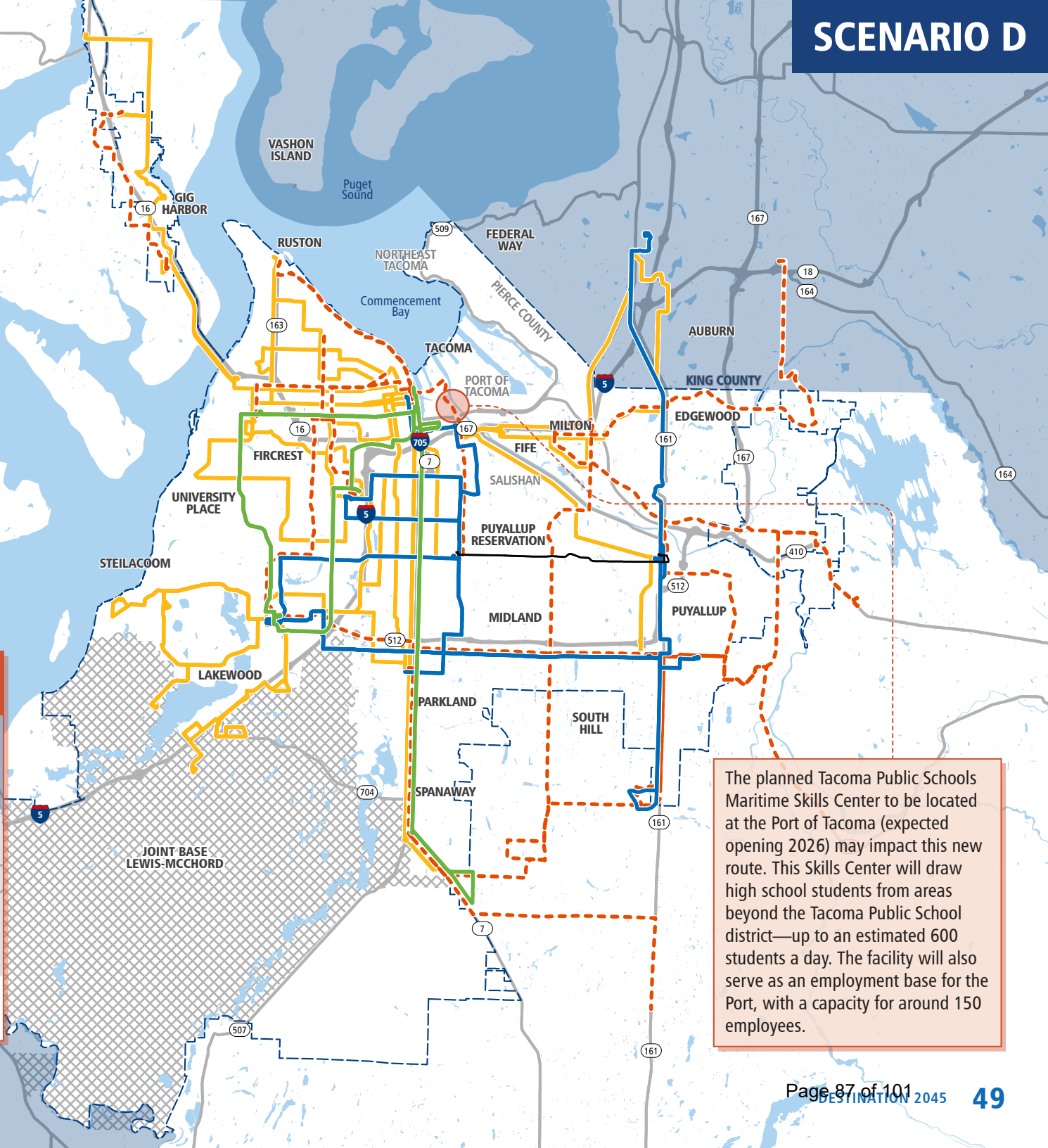
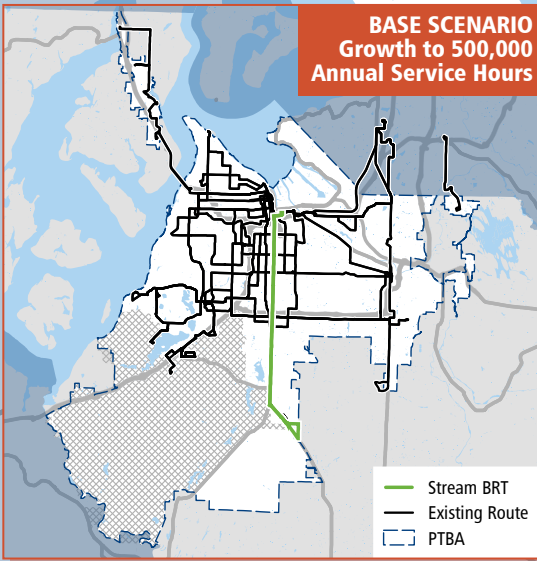


Figure 26. Scenario D System Map

Source(s): Pierce Transit Future System, developed for Destination 2045.

- Stream Bus Rapid Transit
- New Fast, Frequent, and Reliable Route
- New Fixed Route
- Extended Hours and/or More Frequent
- Existing Route Unchanged
- Current Public Transportation Benefit Area
- County Boundary

1. Please note that any expansion of the service area would require a vote by residents of those communities to rejoin the PTBA through sales taxation.
2. This map shows proposed fixed route service and does not show Runner microtransit or SHUTTLE paratransit that are also part of the Pierce Transit network.



The planned Tacoma Public Schools Maritime Skills Center to be located at the Port of Tacoma (expected opening 2026) may impact this new route. This Skills Center will draw high school students from areas beyond the Tacoma Public School district—up to an estimated 600 students a day. The facility will also serve as an employment base for the Port, with a capacity for around 150 employees.

Speed & Reliability Framework

The corridor S&R improvements detailed in this framework can help enhance system performance and provide faster, more reliable transit service at lower cost compared to BRT.

Recognizing that some people avoid transit due to delays caused by traffic congestion, improving the speed and reliability of bus service can help encourage potential riders to switch from using personal vehicles to public transit for trips.

Currently, investments in BRT development come with high initial planning, design, and construction costs, which can result in longer implementation schedules. Modern advances in transit encourage a mix of services to provide targeted benefits and reduce reliance on BRT alone to provide quicker service. S&R improvements offer an effective alternative for fast and reliable transit that requires minimal and lower cost interventions. The FFRN routes defined in the growth scenarios will rely on S&R improvements to provide a faster and more reliable transit network with a lower cost and implementation time frame compared to full BRT.

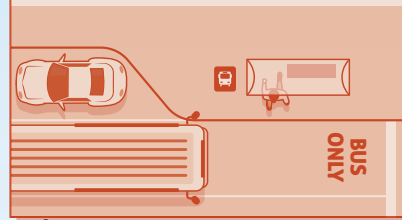
The S&R framework established in the LRP provides a range of different interventions which can be combined to suit specific contexts and improve surface transportation system performance. However, it is important to note that S&R improvements require significant coordination with local jurisdictions and evaluation of potential locations using traffic congestion and transit reliability data.

The Interventions Include:

- Bus Bulbs
- Dedicated Bus Lanes
- Fleet Modernization
- Adaptive Transit Design
- Multi-Depot Vehicle Scheduling
- All-Door Boarding
- Off-Board Fare Collection
- Bus Islands
- Bus Stop Balancing and Optimization
- Real-Time Information Systems
- Queue Jumps
- Turn Restrictions
- Transit Signal Priority

Bus Bulbs

Bus bulbs are curb extensions that allow buses to stop in the travel lane without pulling over to the curb. This design reduces both delays caused by merging in and out of traffic and passenger loading times. Bus bulbs also provide more space for people waiting to board and can shorten pedestrian crossing distances.



Dedicated Bus Lanes

Allocating exclusive lanes for buses minimizes interference from other vehicles, leading to faster and more predictable service. For instance, the RapidRide J Line project in Seattle includes dedicated transit lanes to enhance bus speed and reliability.

Fleet Modernization

Upgrading to newer vehicles with advanced technologies can improve reliability.

Adaptive Transit Design

Combining fixed route and demand-responsive transit services allows for flexibility in meeting varying passenger demands, particularly in suburban areas and during off-peak times. This approach can enhance both speed and reliability.

Multi-Depot Vehicle Scheduling

Optimizing the scheduling of vehicles across multiple depots can improve service reliability by ensuring that buses are deployed efficiently to meet demand. Research into incorporating service reliability into multi-depot vehicle scheduling has shown promising results.



All-Door Boarding

Permitting passengers to board through all bus doors reduces boarding times and helps maintain schedules. This practice is part of King County Metro’s RapidRide strategy to improve efficiency.

Bus Islands

Bus islands are platforms situated between the travel lane and a bike lane or parking lane, that allow buses to stop without merging into the curb lane. This setup minimizes delays and enhances safety for cyclists and pedestrians by reducing conflicts.

Queue Jumps

Queue jump lanes are short, dedicated lanes at intersections that allow buses to bypass traffic queues. Paired with specialized traffic signals, they enable buses to proceed ahead of general traffic, reducing delays at congested intersections.

Turn Restrictions

Implementing turn restrictions for general traffic at certain intersections can reduce delays for buses traveling straight through. By limiting left or right turns during peak hours, buses experience fewer interruptions, leading to more consistent travel times.

Transit Signal Priority (TSP)

TSP involves adjusting signal times to favor buses, therefore reducing delays and leading to more predictable service. This reduces travel times and improves transit experience. The Tacoma Link Light Rail currently deploys TSP (or utilizes TSP) at intersections downtown and in the Stadium District.

Off-Board Fare Collection

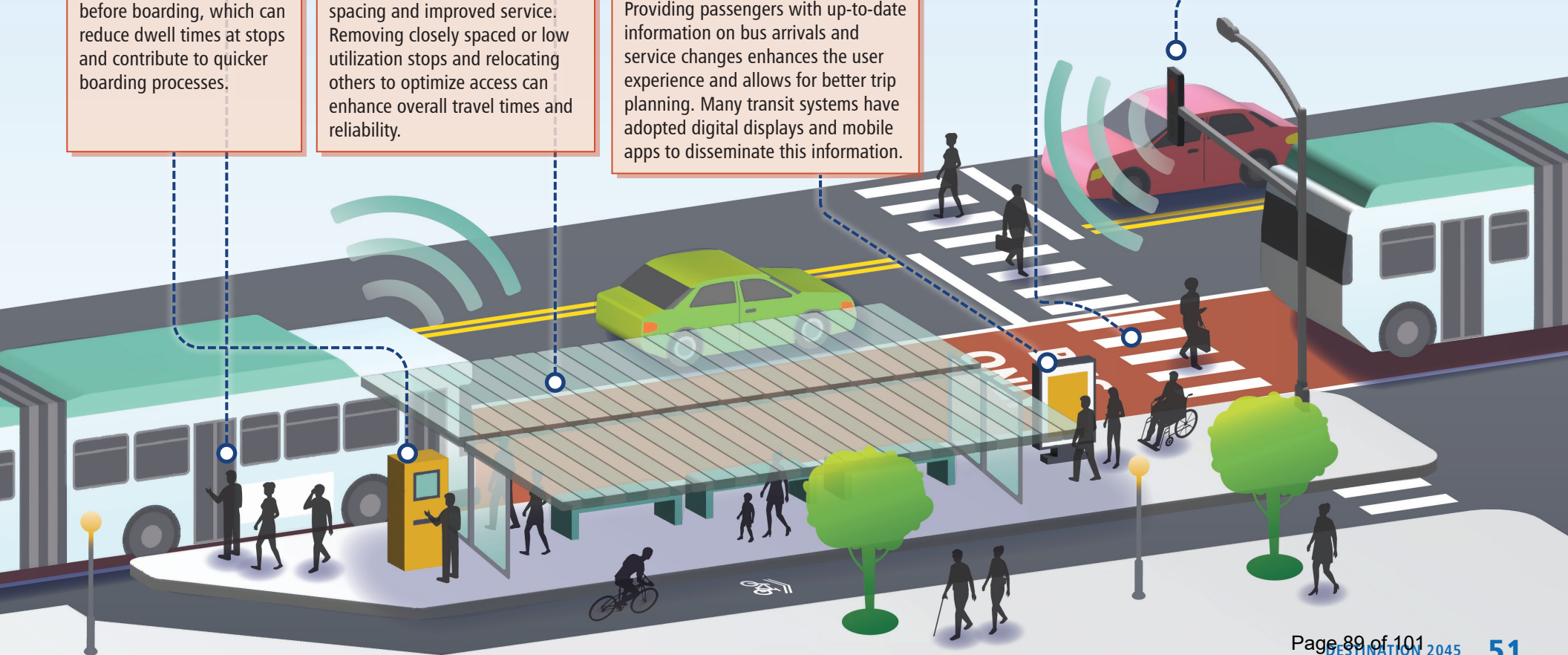
Providing fare payment systems at transit stations allows passengers to pay before boarding, which can reduce dwell times at stops and contribute to quicker boarding processes.

Bus Stop Balancing and Optimization

Evaluating and adjusting the number and location of bus stops can lead to more consistent spacing and improved service. Removing closely spaced or low utilization stops and relocating others to optimize access can enhance overall travel times and reliability.

Real-Time Information Systems

Providing passengers with up-to-date information on bus arrivals and service changes enhances the user experience and allows for better trip planning. Many transit systems have adopted digital displays and mobile apps to disseminate this information.



➤ Chapter 5

CAPITAL NEEDS

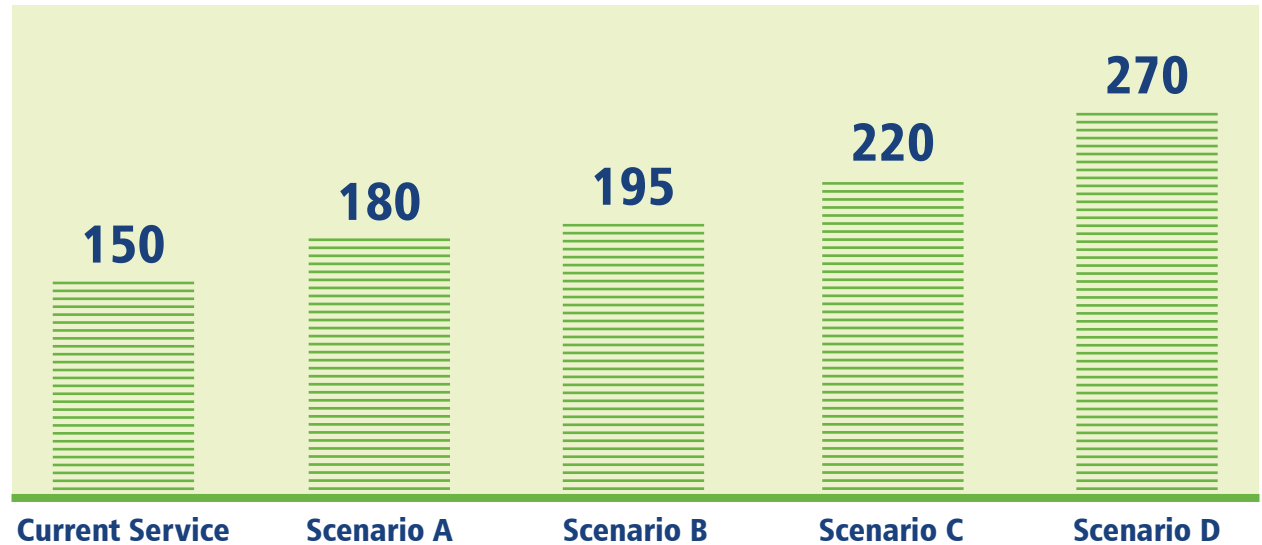
System growth and other improvements will require an increase in capital spending. In addition to fleet expansion, maintenance and operations needs also come with challenges associated with fleet electrification, staff recruitment and retention, and other capital infrastructure, highlighting the importance of careful planning around revenues and expenditures to achieve the LRP's vision.

Fleet Expansion

To implement the enhanced transit services outlined in Destination 2045, Pierce Transit must adjust its fleet composition and expand its size to support increased service frequency and extended operating hours. The agency recognizes the need not only for expansion but for replacement as well across the categories of Hybrid Electric Buses (HEBs), Battery Electric Buses (BEBs), and Compressed Natural Gas Buses (CNGs).

Pierce Transit will assess its fleet requirements annually through the TDP to ensure alignment with service goals and operational demands. **Figure 27** illustrates the additional fixed route bus needs for each scenario through 2045 which includes replacement and expansion.¹⁴ In addition, expansion of the other innovative services will require a higher number of paratransit and other supporting vehicles. Runner and Rideshare program expansion and design will vary based on demand and identified needs. This comprehensive fleet strategy is designed to meet the evolving transportation needs of the community while supporting environmental sustainability objectives.

Figure 27. Fleet Needs by Scenario¹⁵



¹⁴ Developed as an estimate for Destination 2045.


¹⁵ Current Service value does not include the standard 25 vehicles in reserve.

Zero Emissions Fleet Transition

Pierce Transit operates one of the cleanest bus fleets in the nation. In 2024, around 80 percent of its buses ran on compressed natural gas; 13 percent were hybrid-electrics; and 5 percent were battery-electrics. Only 2 percent of the fleet operated on diesel.

Pierce Transit aims to fully transition to a zero emissions bus fleet, with specific goals set for the coming decades. Agency plans include converting its fleet to BEBs or hydrogen fuel cell buses.

While the initial cost of transition may be high, the phased maintenance and operations cost will be lower than existing fossil fuel costs. To support this transition, Pierce Transit has secured significant funding, including a \$14.8 million Federal Transit Administration grant awarded in July 2024. This grant will facilitate the purchase of additional BEBs and the installation of new charging infrastructure, advancing the agency's electrification efforts.

 The agency aims to convert 20 percent of its bus fleet to electricity by 2030 and achieve full fleet electrification by 2042.

Considerations for a Clean Energy System



Procurement of Electric Buses

BEBs have high initial capital costs plus extended manufacturing lead times, so procurement will need to be phased.



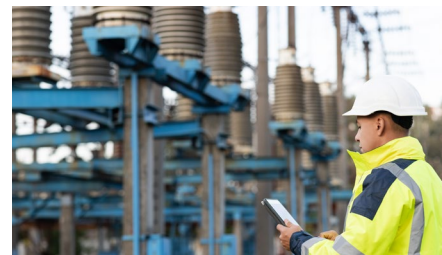
Charging Infrastructure

The design, construction, and installation of charging infrastructure can add significant expense, the amount of which can vary based on site-specific requirements.



Facility Upgrades

This includes electrical capacity enhancements and space modifications, such as increased power demands leading to accommodations of transformers and electrical panels.



Electrical Grid Infrastructure

Collaboration with utility providers is essential to ensure the local grid can support the additional load from bus charging activities.



Training and Workforce Development

Operators and maintenance personnel need specialized training to manage and service BEBs and their associated systems.



Contingency Planning

Similar to current operations, maintaining an inventory of spare parts specific to BEBs is critical to minimizing downtime during maintenance.

Maintenance & Operations Needs

Maintenance and operations needs will change significantly through 2045, due to fleet expansion associated with the different scenarios, the transition to a zero emissions fleet, and increased labor needs.

Fleet Expansion

The current Maintenance and Operations Base will not support the necessary fleet expansion to meet potential 2045 service levels. Several short-term capital projects have been identified in the TDP. Some of the potential long range Maintenance and Operations Base improvements in Lakewood associated with the growth scenarios include:

- West Base Building and Site Improvements.
- Building 1 Improvements.
- South Base Parking for Vehicles.
- Miscellaneous Improvements.

Workforce Needs

Maintaining a qualified workforce plays a key role in Pierce Transit's maintenance and operations needs. Recruitment and retention actions center on four key areas:

Skill Assessment

Identify existing skill gaps among employees, particularly in areas related to electric vehicle technology and maintenance.

Training Programs

Implement specialized training for operators and maintenance staff to handle electric vehicle-specific systems, such as high-voltage components and battery management.

Just Transition Policies

Develop strategies to protect workers whose roles may be affected by new technology to ensure job security and fair compensation.

Hiring Initiatives

Recruit additional staff to manage the increased workload from fleet expansion and the specialized needs of electrical vehicle maintenance.



KEY NEEDS WILL INCLUDE:

- Maintenance and service of fixed route fleet and additional innovative services fleet.
- Increase in number of Journey Level Mechanics and Transit Operators with specialized knowledge for a new zero emissions or electric fleet.
- Increased need for additional staff parking.
- Charging infrastructure for all-electric fleet transition.

Fixed Route Corridor S&R Upgrades

The previous section established a S&R Framework in association with the FFRN. The different S&R interventions are relatively low-cost interventions but will require significant coordination with local jurisdictions and an assessment of appropriate targeted needs for each route.

As an estimate, \$3 to 5 million per mile is a reasonable projection to undertake a set of interventions that will result in significant transit speed and reliability upgrades. Several existing routes (highlighted in Table 1 and mapped in Figure 29) have been identified as potential candidates for S&R upgrades.

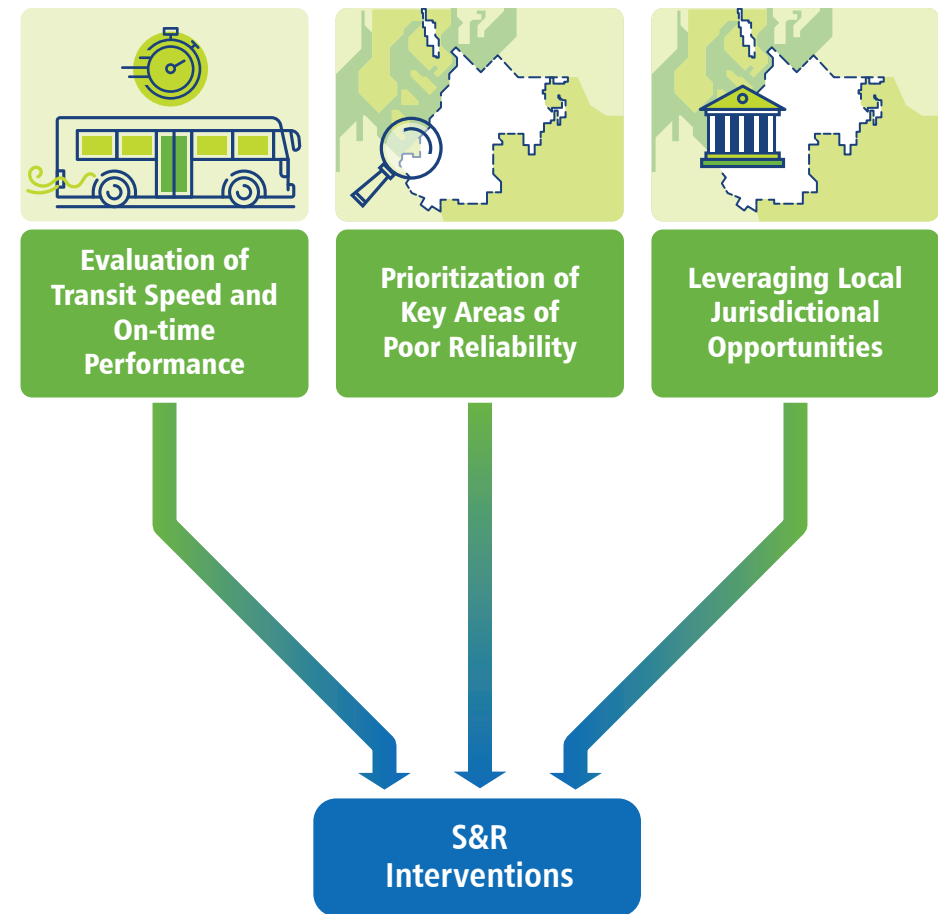
■ Table 1. S&R Upgrade Cost by Route in the FFRN¹⁶

Route Number Name	Route Length ¹⁷	Cost Estimate
4 S 112th St	12 miles	\$36 - 60 Million
41 56th St / Salishan	10 miles	\$30 - 50 Million
54 Parkland	11 miles	\$21 - 35 Million
202 72nd St	7 miles	\$54 - 90 Million
402 Meridian / Federal Way	18 miles	\$33 - 55 Million

Implementing S&R interventions requires a process (shown in Figure 28) that analyzes contextual opportunities and operational deficiencies. Using system performance data can help identify areas of need to make improvements. This process requires coordination with local jurisdictions to facilitate infrastructural improvements that can make routes more reliable.

Performance and reliability can be impacted by the route operations. For example, dwell time data indicate the time spent at specific stops. If this contributes to delays, S&R elements, such as all-door boarding, off-board fare collection, and bus stop design can reduce stop times for routes and improve performance. Performance and reliability is also directly affected by the infrastructure and traffic volume on a given route. Additionally, specific portions of a route may contribute to greater delay. Portions like intersections may perform poorly overall or during peak congestion periods. To improve performance, targeted spot improvements, such as bus bulbs or TSP at the most congested intersections, can alleviate bottlenecks.

■ Figure 28. Process to Identify S&R Interventions



¹⁶ Developed as an estimate for Destination 2045.

¹⁷ The final routes defined in the FFRN will be identified through ongoing service performance and land use evaluation. The routes shown in the different growth scenarios are based on the current understanding of operating conditions and future projections.

**ROUTE 54
PARKLAND**
11 Miles
\$33 - 55 Million

**ROUTE 41
56TH ST / SALISHAN**
10 Miles
\$30 - 50 Million

**ROUTE 202
72ND ST**
7 Miles
\$21 - 35 Million

**ROUTE 402
MERIDIAN /
FEDERAL WAY**
18 Miles
\$54 - 90 Million

**ROUTE 4
S 112TH ST**
12 Miles
\$36 - 60 Million

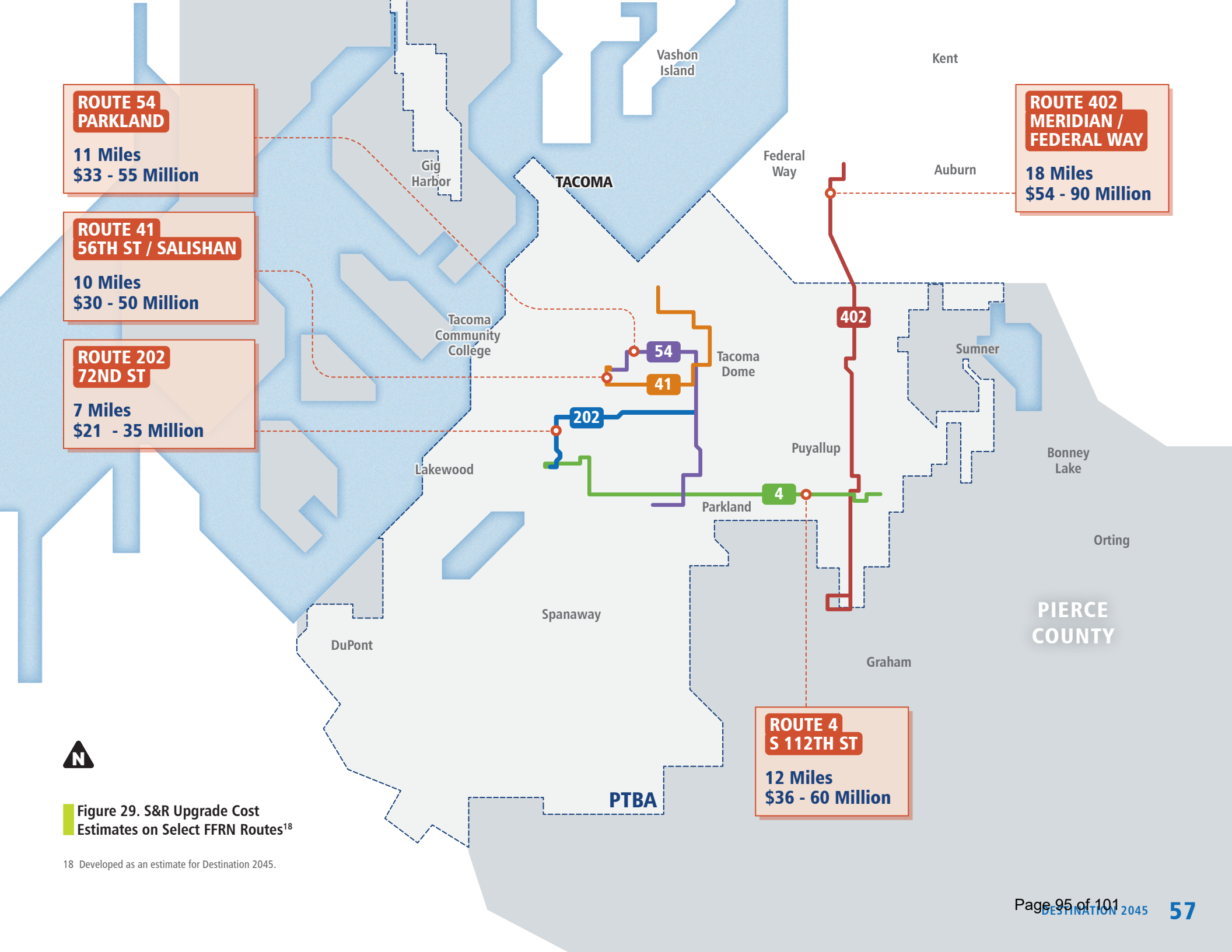


Figure 29. S&R Upgrade Cost Estimates on Select FFRN Routes¹⁸

¹⁸ Developed as an estimate for Destination 2045.

➤ Chapter 6

IMPLEMENTATION & NEXT STEPS

Destination 2045 outlines a vision for expanding both services and infrastructure to meet the growing transportation needs of Pierce Transit. Achieving these objectives will require additional funding. This chapter describes existing revenue sources, funding challenges and considerations, and highlights strategies to close the gap.

Current Funding Structure

Based on current funding, Pierce Transit will only be able to achieve annual Service Hours of 540,000 by 2045, far below the Service Hours envisioned for each of the growth scenarios. To achieve the agency’s aims, significant changes in funding structure are required. A detailed look at necessary revenues and projected expenditures is provided in Appendix H.

Existing Revenue Sources



Local Sales Tax: Pierce County imposes a 0.6% sales tax dedicated to transit.



Federal and State Grants: These grants contribute to capital projects but typically require a local matching fund component.

Challenges & Considerations

Service Expansion Limitations

Each growth scenario comes with underlying cost assumptions. Pierce Transit anticipates reaching the maximum service capacity under its existing funding model at 540,000 Service Hours. Further enhancements, such as increased bus frequencies or new routes, will demand additional financial resources. It is important to note that Scenarios C and D include areas outside the current PTBA and any anticipated revenue is contingent on a voter-approved expansion of the PTBA through annexation.

Capital Project Dependencies

Service improvements are closely tied to capital investments. For instance, augmenting bus services necessitates procuring additional vehicles and constructing new facilities. While grants can offset some capital expenses, securing the requisite local matching funds remains a significant hurdle without bolstering revenue streams.

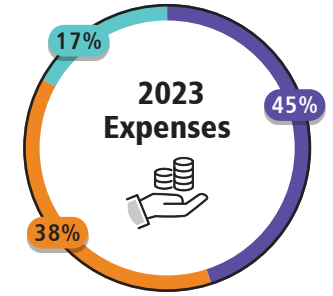
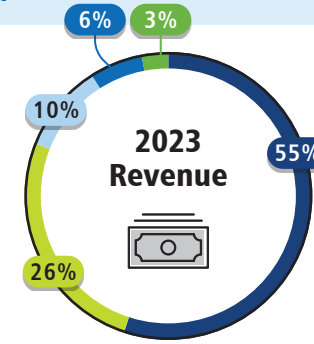


Revenue and Expenditure for Growth Scenarios

In 2023, Pierce Transit’s main sources of funding came from sales tax and contracted services. The largest expenditures were employee wages and benefits, along with maintenance and operations.¹⁹

Revenue to operate existing services and fund capital needs is derived from a range of sources. More than half (55 percent) of this revenue comes from sales taxes collected within the PTBA, the Pierce Transit service area. The second highest source of funding is from contracting out services, namely to Sound Transit; and the last funding source is State and Federal grants.

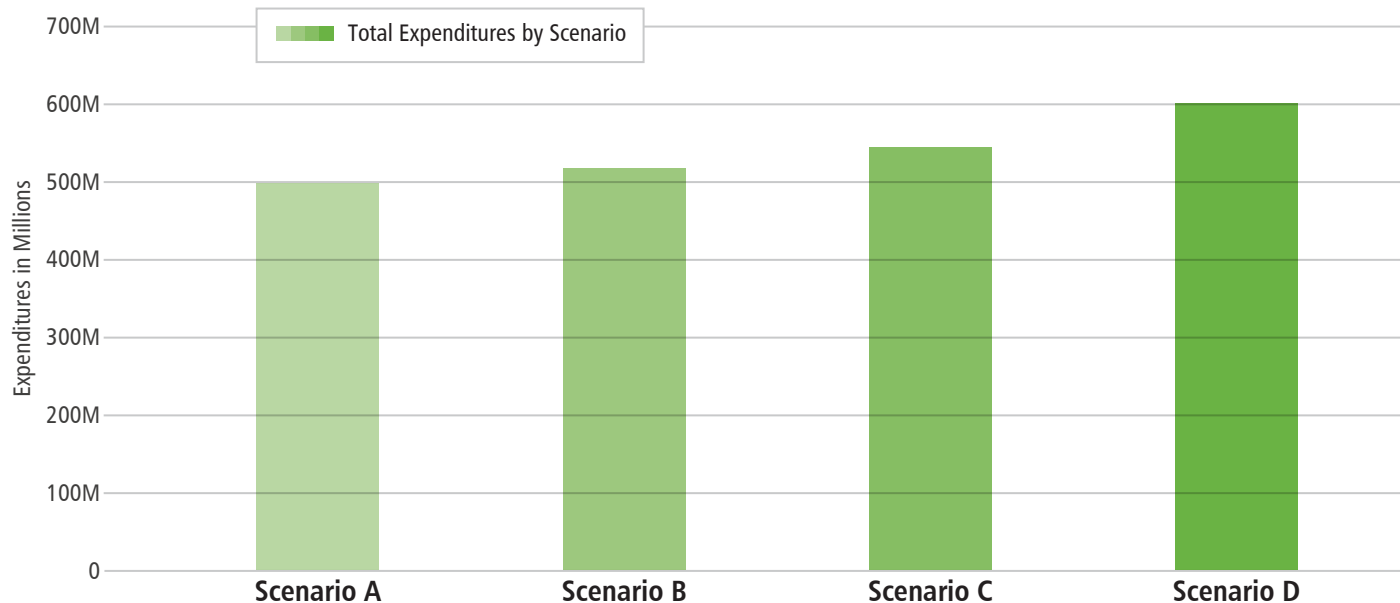
In 2023, a little less than half (45 percent) of Pierce Transit’s expenditures were spent on wages for operators, mechanics, and other staff. The next largest expense is maintenance and operations. The four growth scenarios set forth a vision for growth, which will necessitate a substantial increase in labor costs. Figure 30 shows the estimated annual expenditures for each of the growth scenarios.²⁰




- Sales Tax
- Contracted Service
- Grants
- Other
- Fares

- Wages
- Maintenance & Operations
- Benefits

Figure 30. Predicted Expenditures through 2045 by Sales Tax Rate and Growth Scenario



 With an increase to 0.9 percent sales tax, full funding for scenarios A and B can be achieved through sales tax growth alone, but not for Scenarios C and D. Other funding options and sources such as grants will need to be assessed to realize growth through 2045.

¹⁹ Pierce Transit 2023 Annual Report.
²⁰ Developed as an estimate for Destination 2045.

Funding Strategies



Pierce Transit uses a variety of funding sources to pay for capital and operating expenses. While sales tax revenue and government grants make up most of the agency's current funding, Pierce Transit is exploring different methods to meet increasing funding demands for the future.

Farebox Revenues

Passenger fares are a direct source of funding, though they typically cover only a small portion of operating expenses.

Public-Private Partnerships

Collaborations between government entities and private companies can facilitate the financing, construction, and operation of transit projects by leveraging private investment to advance public infrastructure.

Bond Issuances

Transit agencies may undertake debt financing to raise capital for large-scale projects, with repayment typically sourced from future revenues or dedicated taxes.

Innovative Financing Mechanisms

Alternative funding strategies, such as value capture (e.g., tax increment financing, special assessment districts, joint development), leveraging real estate assets, naming rights and sponsorship, can be used to generate additional revenue streams.

Federal and State Funding

The Federal Transit Administration offers several grant programs that provide financial assistance to transit agencies in the form of formula grants based on land use density and specific capital investment needs, such as rail systems or BRT. The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law passed in 2021 represents the largest federal investment in public transportation in U.S. history. States contribute to public transit through various mechanisms, including dedicated taxes, general fund allocations, and state-administered grant programs. The "Survey of State Funding for Public Transportation" provides comprehensive data on each state's financial involvement in transit. In Washington State, public transportation benefit areas are special taxing districts that can fund transportation at a local level. WSDOT provides support and oversight for local transit agencies within these areas.

Local Funding

Local funding is received from cities and counties in the form of a sales tax dedicated specifically for transit, property taxes or tolls, and congestion pricing.



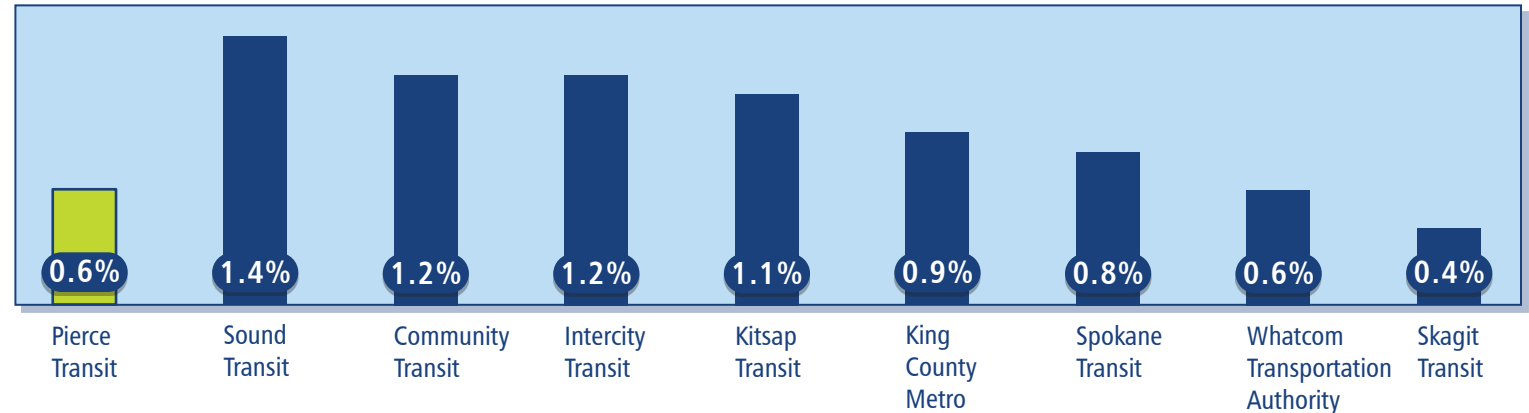
Transit Agency Sales Tax Revenues

Under RCW 82.14.045, public transportation benefit areas, cities, and counties in Washington State are authorized to impose a local sales and use tax of up to 0.9 percent to fund public transportation services, subject to voter approval.

Agencies can also access additional funding from voter-approved measures. For instance, in November 2024, voters in the City of Seattle approved an eight-year \$1.55 billion property tax transportation levy to fund transportation projects, including transit enhancements. Tacoma established a transit benefit district funded by a 0.1 percent sales tax increase, approved by voters in 2015, dedicated to street improvements and transit services.

Figure 31 shows the different sales tax rates of peer transit agencies in Washington State.

Figure 31. Sales Tax Rates by Peer Transit Agency in Washington²¹



King County Metro

Imposes the full **0.9 percent sales tax**, which constitutes a significant portion of its operating revenue.

Community Transit

Levies a **1.2 percent sales tax** within its service area, exceeding the standard 0.9 percent cap through additional voter-approved measures.

Pierce Transit

Imposes a **0.6 percent sales tax** within its PTBA to support its bus operations.

Skagit Transit

Collects a **0.4 percent sales tax**, which accounted for over 59 percent of its funding in 2023.

Intercity Transit

Collects the maximum **0.9 percent sales tax** in addition to a voter approved 0.3 percent measure.

Sound Transit

Levies **1.4 percent sales tax** revenue. This rate comprises an initial 0.9 percent approved in earlier measures and an additional 0.5 percent authorized by voters in 2016. Sound Transit also has other revenue sources, such as a percentage of the Motor Vehicles and Excise Tax and Property Tax.

Kitsap Transit

Levies a **0.8 percent sales tax** revenue. In addition, a 0.3 percent revenue is levied for passenger-only ferry service.

Spokane Transit Authority

Spokane Transit Authority has implemented a **0.8 percent sales tax** within its service area to fund transit services. This rate includes a **0.2 percent increase** approved by voters in 2016.

Whatcom Transportation Authority

Whatcom Transportation Authority in Bellingham levies a **0.6 percent sales tax** revenue.

²¹ Developed for Destination 2045.



The Road Ahead

Destination 2045 proposes a phased strategy for rolling out service and capital enhancements, contingent on securing necessary funding.

Pierce Transit is committed to ongoing community engagement to align investment decisions with public priorities and determine the most effective pathways for advancing transit services in the region. To realize the ambitious goals set forth in the LRP, Pierce Transit must explore and secure additional revenue sources, with a focus on potential sales tax adjustments to support both operational and capital project needs.