

## **Pierce Transit Local Transit Measure: FAQ**

### **What is the proposed measure?**

Pierce Transit is putting forward a ballot measure which, if approved by voters, would provide funding to expand and maintain existing transit service and implement proposed improvements within the current Pierce Transit service area. The proposed plan would add new routes and special event service, reduce wait times between buses, extend service hours, improve regional connections, expand paratransit and make buses and paratransit fare-free for seniors, making it easier for people to get around their neighborhoods and communities.

### **Would this expand Pierce Transit into new cities?**

No. The proposed plan would improve and expand service only within Pierce Transit's current service area. It would not add new cities or areas to the Pierce Transit district. Changes to the service area require a separate process, determined by elected officials and voters. [Watch here](#) for more information about how boundaries are changing.

### **What service improvements would the plan include?**

If approved by voters, the proposed plan would:

- Add four new bus routes serving Northeast Tacoma, the Port of Tacoma, East Tacoma, Central Tacoma and the Puyallup area.
- Add seasonal waterfront connectors and special-event service for fairs, sports events and festivals.
- More routes will run more often, including no hourly waits between buses on weekdays.
- Extend service later into the evening on weekdays, Saturdays and Sundays.
- Improve local transfers and regional connections.
- Expand paratransit service.
- Make buses and paratransit fare-free for eligible seniors, age 65 and older.

### **I don't ride the bus. Why does this matter to me?**

Local transit affects the whole community, whether you ride public transit or not. Buses connect workers to jobs and employers to workers, help local businesses reach customers and give more people another way to travel, which can ease traffic and competition for parking.

Transit provides independence for seniors, students and people with disabilities who may not drive. These are often the very people you rely on, or who rely on you. Strengthening local transit strengthens the community for riders and non-riders alike.

### **How would people who don't ride benefit?**

Even occasional riders and non-riders can feel the effects of a stronger transit system:

- **Less congestion:** more travel options can mean fewer cars competing for the same roads and parking.
- **A stronger local economy:** easier worker-to-job connections and better access for customers support local businesses.
- **Support for people you know:** reliable service helps your neighbors, coworkers, aging parents and kids get where they need to go.
- **Easier big events:** proposed seasonal and special-event service for fairs, sporting events and festivals can reduce traffic and parking hassles on busy days.
- **A better-connected region:** improved links to rail and other services help the whole transportation network work more smoothly.

### **What seasonal and special-event services would the plan add?**

If approved by voters, the proposed plan would:

- Add seasonal waterfront connectors serving Gig Harbor and the Tacoma-Ruston waterfront and Point Defiance area.
- Provide a flexible pool of funding for service to fairs, sporting events, festivals, concert series and other community events.
- Allow Pierce Transit to work with communities and event partners each year to determine which events and destinations the service would support.

The specific events, routes, schedules and stops would be determined annually based on community needs, available resources and coordination with event partners. Potential examples include service associated with the Washington State Fair, sporting events, festivals and summer concerts to ease traffic for everyone, whether you ride public transit or not.

This service would provide another transportation option on high-attendance days when traffic and parking demand may be greater than usual.

## **How much would it cost?**

If approved by voters, the measure would change Pierce Transit's sales tax rate from 0.6% to 0.9% – an additional 0.3%, or 3 cents per \$10 spent on qualifying purchases in the Pierce Transit service area.

For example, that is:

- 3 cents on a \$10 sandwich
- 6 cents on a \$20 sweater
- 24 cents on \$80 worth of electronics
- 68 cents on a \$225 piece of furniture

## **How does the cost add up for a household?**

The proposed change applies only to purchases that are already subject to sales tax. Those are things like dining out, clothing and electronics. It does not apply all at once. Because the change is tied to what a household actually buys, the amount depends on individual spending rather than a flat annual charge. Many of the largest costs in a typical household budget are not taxed at all (see below), so a significant share of everyday spending would be unaffected.

## **What is not taxed?**

Sales tax does not apply to rent or mortgage, groceries or most healthcare, and it also does not apply to other essentials like gas and utilities. Because housing, food, healthcare and fuel make up a large part of most household budgets, much of what a household spends each month would not be affected by this change.

## **Why is Pierce Transit considering this now?**

Pierce Transit's primary source of funding is a 0.6% sales tax that has not changed since 2002. That is about half the rate of peer transit agencies in Washington. As Pierce County grows and costs rise, this measure is one way the community could fund the more frequent service, new routes and longer hours residents have asked for.

## **What would happen if the measure were not approved?**

Pierce Transit projects that, without additional revenue, it could maintain current service for a limited period by using available reserves. However, using reserves to cover ongoing operating costs would not be sustainable.

Under current financial projections, starting in 2027, the agency would begin planning for cost-cutting measures that would prioritize maintaining services. Service reductions could begin as early as 2031. The timing and scale of any reductions would depend on future sales-tax revenue, inflation, operating costs and other financial conditions.

### **Would seniors and youth ride free?**

If approved by voters, seniors age 65 and older would ride buses fare-free. Seniors who qualify for SHUTTLE paratransit would also ride fare-free. Youth age 18 and under already ride free, and that benefit would continue. Reduced bus fares for riders with disabilities or low incomes would also continue.

### **How would this affect my everyday household?**

Whether a household rides often, occasionally or not at all, local transit affects the community it's part of. This measure is about connecting workers to jobs, students to school and neighbors to the places they need to reach. The proposed plan benefits daily routines. More frequent buses and longer service hours can matter for households juggling work shifts, school and evening classes, medical appointments, errands and caregiving. In many of these situations, an extra 30 or 60-minute wait or a route that stops running too early can make transit hard to rely on. Congested roads make getting around your neighborhood more difficult. More transit running more often benefits everyone.

### **With the cost of living rising, is transit really affordable?**

In a high-cost environment, public transit is one more affordable way to get around. It's a practical option alongside owning, maintaining and fueling a vehicle. Gas, insurance, parking and upkeep add up, and a car isn't an option for everyone.

If approved by voters, the proposed plan would expand lower-cost transportation options with more routes, more frequent buses, longer hours and expanded paratransit. That means more affordable ways to reach work, school, healthcare and home.

### **How would paratransit and accessibility be affected?**

The proposed plan would expand paratransit service, including a larger service boundary where new bus routes are added and later hours that match extended bus route schedules. Information regarding eligibility is available in accessible formats on the [SHUTTLE website](#).



### **When would voters decide?**

November 3, 2026 in the election.

### **When would the changes take effect?**

If approved by voters, the new sales tax would take effect April 1, 2027. Service improvements would phase in over time, beginning in 2027 and expected to be complete by 2032.

### **Where can I learn more?**

Visit [PierceTransit.org/more-transit](https://PierceTransit.org/more-transit) for the plan overview, plan specifics, route map and cost details. Questions or feedback can be sent to [ballot@piercetransit.org](mailto:ballot@piercetransit.org). Translation in 200+ languages is available at **253.581.8000**.

