

# 2019

# Transit Integration Report



Puget Sound Regional Council

November 2019





EVERETT TRANSIT



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Puget Sound Regional Council



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## 2019 Transit Integration Report / November 2019

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# Introduction



**The 2019 Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) Transit Integration Report focuses on the transformative investments coming to the region over the next five years that will dramatically change how residents and visitors are able to get around on public transit. It also focuses on the pressures of a growing region and how transit agencies are partnering with one another, local jurisdictions, and other stakeholders to increase system efficiency and make the system easy to use for customers.**

The Transit Integration Report fulfills reporting requirements in RCW 35.58.2796(2(a)), requiring the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) to “develop an annual report summarizing the status of public transportation system coordination” in King, Pierce, and Snohomish counties. The report also fulfills reporting requirements of the Puget Sound Transit Coordination Grant identified in RCW 47.66.110(6). Grant recipients are highlighted with .

This report continues to document the efforts of transit agencies and other regional transportation stakeholders as they coordinate to improve transportation system performance and lay the groundwork for significant expansion of the region’s transit network over the next several years. Many stories include future steps that stakeholders will take to continue coordination. These stories are marked with .

## A Collective Vision for Building the Regional Transit System

Central Puget Sound is growing—and so is congestion. The four-county region added 188 people a day last year. Commute times have been rising for years, with one in eight workers now spending an hour or more traveling to their jobs.

The region has made a commitment to providing a transformative, multimodal transportation system with fast, reliable connections between regional centers and surrounding communities. As these mass transit projects come online, the region’s transit vision, articulated in PSRC’s Regional Transportation Plan, calls for all transit investments and services to be integrated into one easy-to-use network that makes regional and local destinations convenient to get to and is accessible to everyone.

The nine transit agencies in the region coordinate to achieve this collective vision on a wide variety of fronts, including infrastructure planning and design, providing service, integrating fares and customer information, engaging with local communities, and funding operations and capital needs.

The region’s transit network has transformed over the last 10 years. Fast ferries now connect downtown Seattle to Bremerton and Kingston. Link light rail whisks customers from Angle Lake in south King County to the University of Washington. Eight bus rapid transit routes provide frequent and efficient service on high-ridership corridors in King and Snohomish counties.

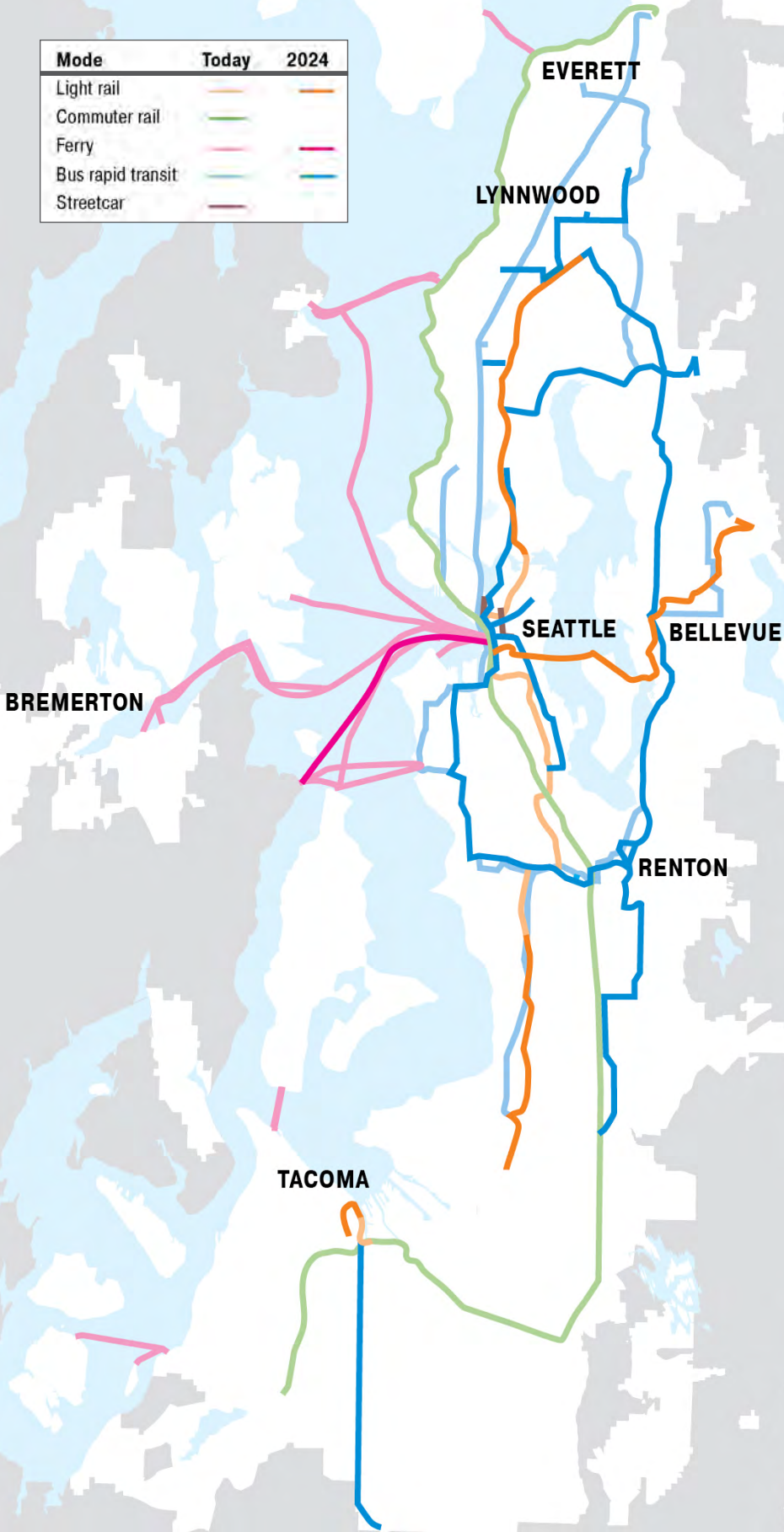
This is just the beginning. The region has made a commitment to major investments in the transit network out to 2040.

Ensuring the success of these investments requires continued coordination between all of the transit agencies, local jurisdictions, and other stakeholders to help achieve the collective vision of a fast and easy-to-use integrated transit system. This vision underscores the need to work with partner agencies to identify key issues and take steps to resolve them. Transit integration is a foundation for continuous improvement.

The 2019 Transit Integration Report highlights the large expansion of the regional transit system, with a focus on preparing for the investments scheduled to open over the next five years. The stories in the report reflect some of the challenges the region is facing in delivering a transit system that is efficient and accessible. Stories are organized in the following categories: The Next Five Years, Implementation, and Improving System Performance.

# Regional High-Capacity Transit System Map, Today and 2024

Mode	Today	2024
Light rail		
Commuter rail		
Ferry		
Bus rapid transit		
Streetcar		





## Looking Forward Over the Next Five Years

Over the next five years a number of significant new transit investments will dramatically change options and travel patterns for the region's residents. Transit agencies across the region will implement high-capacity transit investments in rail, bus, and ferry modes that will allow a growing number of people to travel fast and reliably across the region. This expansion begins with Kitsap Transit's 2020 opening of its Southworth to downtown Seattle passenger-only ferry (POF) service, completing implementation of its three cross-sound fast ferry POF routes.

Sound Transit is working diligently to extend light rail to the north, south, and east. With each light rail opening, transit agencies along the corridor will coordinate bus system restructures designed to feed passengers into the light rail system and more efficiently bring customers to their destinations in the surrounding communities.

Among the bus transit investments, four of the region's agencies are implementing nine new bus rapid transit (BRT) lines, including the introduction of new BRT brands by Pierce Transit and Sound Transit along with additional RapidRide and Swift lines in King and Snohomish counties. This significant expansion of transit in the region is expected to provide faster and more reliable trips for existing customers, attract new riders, and encourage transit-oriented development (TOD) near new and expanded transit hubs. As the region's high-capacity transit network expands over the next five years, it will increasingly tie the region together with interconnecting service, taking significant steps in the development of the fully integrated transit network anticipated in the Regional Transportation Plan.

**Highlighted below are some of these projects and the benefits they bring to the growing region.**

## Providing Fast Connections Across the Sound



Passenger-only ferry service across Puget Sound has experienced rapid ridership growth in recent years in response to new routes provided by Kitsap Transit and added service provided by King County Metro and Kitsap Transit.

King County took the lead in partnership with Washington State Ferries (WSF) in redeveloping and funding the passenger-only terminal facility at Pier 50, adjacent to Colman Dock, which opened to the public in the summer of 2019. The new terminal facility was greatly improved with a sheltered waiting area for 500 passengers. ADA improvements include a tactile pathway, signage for the visually impaired, and a staff call button. A dynamic mes-

saging system moves passengers through the facility, providing wayfinding, fares, and schedule information. A pedestrian bridge connects the passenger-only terminal with the Washington State Ferries terminal. Four passenger-only ferry routes operate from Pier 50: King County's Vashon Island and West Seattle routes and Kitsap Transit's Bremerton and Kingston routes.

King County and Kitsap Transit are considering the feasibility of expanding the passenger-only terminal facility to support the growing network of passenger-only ferry service. Kitsap Transit has taken the lead in exploring expansion options and is working with King County to determine preferred options before the initiation of preliminary design and environmental review.

Kitsap Transit is planning for implementation of the agency's third route from Southworth to downtown Seattle, planned for 2020. In 2019 the state Legislature authorized funding for PSRC to study future POF route and terminal locations. The study will look broadly at future capacity needs for existing POF routes, as well as potential routes from the 12 counties bordering Puget Sound. The study is expected to help agencies identify long-term POF terminal needs in downtown Seattle, as well as other locations where POF may be viable.

# Expanding Light Rail North, East, and South

## 2021: Starting the Expansion North from University of Washington Station

Three new light rail stations will open at Northgate, Roosevelt, and the U District. Northgate Station, an already active transit hub with 5,200 daily bus boardings, will be the line's northern terminus for three years. Ninety-two percent of customers accessing the station will arrive by transit, walking, or biking by 2030, requiring coordination by stakeholders to ensure that multimodal access is seamless and efficient in this high-density, mixed-use community. In addition to restructuring the bus network, a pedestrian and bicycle bridge is planned to increase the station's walkshed and improve bicycle access from important destinations and neighborhoods west of I-5.



## 2022: Expanding Service in Tacoma

Sound Transit is more than doubling the length of Tacoma Link. The project starts with a relocated Theater District station and adds six new stations. These connect to popular destinations such as the Stadium District, Wright Park, and major medical facilities before reaching the new Hilltop neighborhood terminus.

## 2023: Expanding East Across Lake Washington

The East Link Extension is a 14-mile, 10-station light rail extension that will connect Seattle and Overlake in Redmond via the I-90 floating bridge, Mercer Island, and Bellevue. The East Link Extension is projected to carry between 43,000 and 52,000 riders per day by 2026 through one of the most congested corridors in the region. Extending Link light rail east of Lake Washington is expected to be the catalyst for restructuring the eastside bus network.







### **2024: Continuing Expansion North, East, and West**

Nine new stations will open in 2024 to expand existing Link lines: two each in Federal Way, Shoreline and Redmond, and one each in Mountlake Terrace, Lynnwood, and Kent/Des Moines.

#### **Lynnwood**

After the Northgate extension opens in 2021, the Lynnwood Link Extension will bring light rail into Snohomish County, serving four stations: Shoreline South/145th, Shoreline North/185th, Mountlake Terrace, and Lynnwood City Center.

Customers will be able to board light rail in Snohomish County and arrive in downtown Seattle in less than 30 minutes. By offering reliable travel time in this part of the region, Community Transit and King County Metro can reinvest their bus service hours to more efficiently connect Link with local residential, employment, and shopping areas.

#### **Redmond**

The Downtown Redmond Link Extension adds two new light rail stations in 2024 in southeast Redmond, serving Marymoor Village near Marymoor Park, and the downtown Redmond residential and retail core. These two stations open a year after the completion of East Link to Overlake.

#### **Federal Way**

This project extends light rail from Angle Lake Station in the city of SeaTac to the Federal Way Transit Center. The 7.8-mile extension includes three stations: Kent/Des Moines near Highline College, South 272nd Street, and the Federal Way Transit Center. With this light rail extension, not only will King County Metro reinvest in bus service to improve local transit options, but Pierce Transit will serve Link light rail for the first time at the Federal Way Transit Center.

## Bringing the Region Together Through Bus Rapid Transit

Bus rapid transit (BRT) in the region began in 2009 with the opening of Community Transit's Swift Blue Line. The Swift Blue and Green lines and King County Metro's six RapidRide lines—implemented between 2010 and 2014—feature enhanced reliability and service for customers. These services have strong branding, enhanced passenger amenities, and other features not consistently available on standard bus services, including real-time bus arrival signage and off-board fare collection.



Regional expansion of BRT is currently being planned, with nine new routes expected to open by the end of 2024 in King, Pierce, and Snohomish counties. These BRT routes will connect dense population and employment centers and other transit modes such as light rail. Coordination with stakeholders along these corridors is essential to delivering maximum benefit by increasing bus reliability for customers and sharing the costs of improvements.



Effective BRT involves agencies working closely with stakeholders along the corridor to develop roadway improvements and service enhancements to increase speed and reliability. The combination of dedicated bus-only lanes, business access and transit (BAT) lanes, improved fare collection systems, smart traffic signals, and access improvements allows BRT to provide significant travel time savings to more people along the corridor.

### RapidRide

The six existing RapidRide lines in King County provide about 67,000 rides every weekday—nearly 70% more than the bus routes that served the same areas before RapidRide. Peak-hour travel on RapidRide is up to 20% faster, saving about five minutes per trip.

King County Metro plans an aggressive expansion of the RapidRide system to deliver reliable, convenient, high-quality transit options on corridors experiencing rapid growth. By 2024, King County Metro will have implemented five new RapidRide corridors. Through a combination of transit service improvements, capital investment, and design treatments, these corridors will build on the success of existing RapidRide service to help meet local and regional transportation goals.



The RapidRide network will support an integrated transportation system that functions seamlessly with other transportation elements as well as regional transit projects, such as Sound Transit's Link light rail expansion. The RapidRide network expansion will build on successful partnerships King County Metro has established with local jurisdictions in the delivery of its capital elements. Agencies will strategically leverage project funds, partnerships, and the joint pursuit of grant funding opportunities.

## Stride

Sound Transit is adding its first BRT service connecting to light rail and to communities north, east, and south of Lake Washington along two corridors in King and Snohomish counties. In 2024, Stride BRT service will operate along I-405 and SR 518 between Burien and Lynnwood and along SR 522/523 between Shoreline and Bothell.

To provide reliable service on some of the most congested corridors in the state, Sound Transit is working with WSDOT and local jurisdictions to design and build projects that will improve speed and reliability, including building upon WSDOT's I-405 Master Plan with roadway improvements for faster travel.

## Pacific Avenue/SR 7

The first BRT route in Pierce County will provide faster and more reliable service along Pacific Avenue and SR 7 from downtown Tacoma to Spanaway. This 14.4-mile corridor is currently served by Pierce Transit's Route 1, which, year after year, has the highest ridership in the agency's system, representing approximately 20% of total fixed route ridership system-wide.

The future BRT route will also serve Tacoma Dome Station, a multi-modal hub connecting customers to Sounder, Tacoma Link, Sound Transit and Intercity Transit Express bus routes, along with Greyhound intercity bus and Amtrak rail service.





Sound Transit's ST3 System Plan included a \$60 million contribution to Pierce Transit to enhance service through speed and reliability improvements along the corridor.

The project is currently in environmental review and preliminary engineering with final design to be finished in 2021. The anticipated completion of construction of the new BRT route is summer 2023, with revenue service beginning that September.



## Swift

The Swift Green Line opened in 2019, the second in Community Transit's Swift BRT network. This route connects the employment center around the Boeing plant and Paine Field in Everett with the Canyon Park technology center. Coordination between Community Transit, the cities of Everett, Mill Creek, and Bothell, Snohomish County, WSDOT, and the FTA ensured that capital improvements provide maximum benefit for riders and the transit agency along this corridor.

Local jurisdictional partnerships have ensured that on-street technologies and sidewalk improvements provide efficient service for the route. Partnerships with Boeing and other transit agencies at Seaway Transit Center are highlighted in the stories below.

Planning is also underway for the agency's next Swift BRT service, the Orange Line. Linking Edmonds Community College to Mill Creek, the Orange Line will connect to light rail at Lynnwood Transit Center by its planned opening date in 2024.

Community Transit is also planning for extension of the Swift Blue Line to join light rail at the Shoreline North/185<sup>th</sup> station, also opening in 2024.

# Implementation

As the previous section of this report noted, transit agencies in central Puget Sound are greatly expanding transit services that will make it faster and easier to travel around the region. These investments are made possible through continued cooperation between the implementing transit agencies as well as other stakeholders. The following stories highlight how agencies collaborate to make the transit system easy to use so customers can make the most of the region's investments.

## Increasing the Use of ORCA (One Regional Card for All)



The introduction of ORCA in 2009 has been one of the region's foremost transit integration success stories. ORCA allows customers to seamlessly use public transportation provided by Community Transit, Everett Transit, King County Metro, Kitsap Transit, Pierce Transit, Sound Transit, Washington State Ferries, and the City of Seattle. For customers,

ORCA allows cash-free fare payments, free transfers between agencies, and programs that make transit more affordable. For transit agencies, ORCA reduces the costs associated with fare collection, maintenance, and revenue allocation.

Transit agencies are working to make ORCA more available to customers throughout the region by expanding modes that accept ORCA, additional marketing and card distribution for youth and low-income riders, and working together to develop the next generation of the ORCA system.

### Seattle Center Monorail Joins ORCA

In October 2019, the Seattle Center Monorail joined the ORCA system to provide service between downtown Seattle's Westlake Center Mall and Seattle Center. Customers using ORCA to pay for the monorail experience the same benefits as those who use the rest of the transit system.

Bringing ORCA to Monorail is one of the many efforts from the city and other transit agencies to make using transit easy and efficient for customers. ORCA simplifies transit use, making it faster, more affordable, and more convenient for riders to incorporate the monorail into their daily commutes and special outings to the thousands of events and activities at Seattle Center and surrounding neighborhoods.







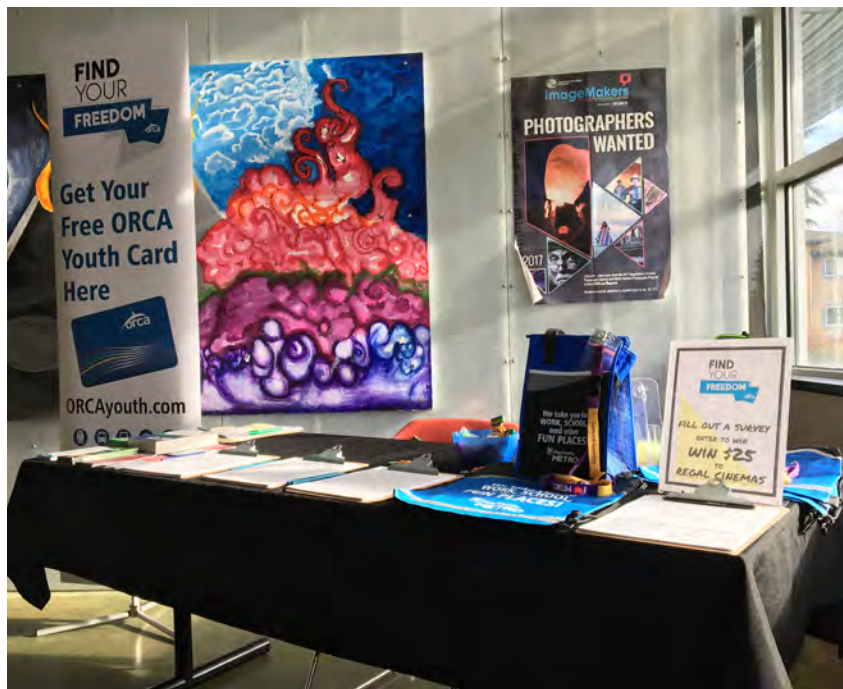
## Marketing the Benefits of ORCA to Youth



The Regional ORCA Marketing and Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Project is a partnership between King County Metro, Sound Transit, Pierce Transit, Community Transit, Everett Transit, and the City of Seattle. The project is funded through the Puget Sound Transit Coordination Grant. These agencies focus on growing transit ridership and operational efficiency across the region by increasing ORCA card use by people who face barriers to using ORCA. Continued grant funding through 2019 has allowed the partners to continue the successful 2017 Regional Marketing Campaign and conduct a new marketing campaign focused on high school students called the ORCA Youth Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Grant.

Some students in the region receive ORCA cards to get to and from school. However, if the school district does not provide these, or students don't meet their requirements, accessing ORCA can be confusing and difficult. ORCA Youth cards provide ages 6-18 with reduced-price trips on all of the region's transit services. ORCA Youth cards are not available at ticket vending machines or other typical ORCA retailers, such as grocery and convenience stores. Youth must provide proof of age by mail or in person at customer service centers to obtain a card.

King County Metro, Pierce Transit, and Community Transit are using this grant to market ORCA youth to high schoolers in their respective counties. The agencies worked together to develop promotional materials and strategies. Each agency took a different approach to distributing the cards to their target populations. More information on each agency's program is provided below.



### King County

In summer 2018 King County Metro contracted with the nonprofit Hopelink to distribute \$10 pre-loaded ORCA Youth cards and transit education materials to high school students in King County. The partnership sought to improve teen ridership on ORCA-participating transit agencies and to increase the number of teens using ORCA Youth cards as fare media. By using ORCA Youth cards, teens receive almost half off the usual adult fare, in addition to the usual benefits of using an ORCA card. Transit agencies see the benefit of



reducing cash fare media. In addition to providing preloaded ORCA Youth cards along with resources and education on trip planning and more, the free cards encouraged teens to try transit, whether for the first time or for trips they might not have used it for in the past.

Eleven school districts, 35 high schools, and 35 youth-serving organizations worked with Hopelink and King County Metro to distribute over 6,000 ORCA Youth cards and educational resources. ORCA Youth cards and materials were distributed through Hopelink-staffed tables at school lunches and events, individual enrollment through school counseling or administrative offices, and client enrollment through youth and community services organizations.

To lower barriers to participation, Hopelink and King County Metro developed a simplified enrollment form for the ORCA Youth card, removed the proof of age and guardian signature requirements, and used a single “birth date” per grade level for all participants. This allowed each student to receive their ORCA Youth card immediately and drastically reduced administrative costs, since it was not feasible to process individual requests for more than 6,000 students.

### **Snohomish County**

Community Transit targeted high schools along key transit corridors to increase the number of ORCA cards used by youth. In addition to their own service area, Community Transit also implements the ORCA Youth TDM Campaign on behalf of Everett Transit (City of Everett).

Using an internal outreach team, the agency identified three different opportunities to distribute pre-loaded ORCA Youth cards and transit resources to 8,723 high school students:

- Freshman orientation - A total of 1,550 ORCA cards were distributed to freshmen at their new student orientation at five high schools. An information table was available for distribution and questions, and any left-over cards were given to school counselors to distribute.
- Alternative high schools - A total of 562 ORCA cards were distributed to this audience at four high schools. Meetings were held with school counselors to provide education on transportation options, as well as the details of the ORCA cards. These high schools do not have any school-provided transportation, so all grade levels were given an ORCA card by school counseling staff.
- High performing schools - A total of 6,611 ORCA cards were distributed to this audience. These high schools received cards for their Freshman class, and the schools with the highest ORCA card ridership received ORCA cards to distribute to their entire student body.

### **Pierce County**

Pierce Transit aimed to distribute pre-loaded cards to students with limited English proficiency by identifying and conducting outreach to various schools, locations students frequent (e.g., Boys and Girls Clubs, Star Center, Metro Parks), and human service agencies that could distribute cards to students.

Using a team of five staff members, the agency contacted 33 different schools, clubs, and agencies. Pierce Transit also conducted a focused social media campaign on Facebook and LinkedIn. Through direct outreach at these locations and social media pushes, over 9,000 cards were distributed.



*Following up on the connections made with the participating school districts and schools, there is a unique opportunity to build long-term relationships between the transit agencies and youth in the region. By reinforcing these relationships, transit agencies could more quickly and reliably reach students and their families with education and resources. Through sustained relationships with school districts, information could be more quickly and effectively communicated.*



## Increasing Access and Affordability for Riders With Low Incomes

People living in low-income households face a higher burden when making transportation choices, as they often pay a higher percentage of their income for transportation. Such households may also lack the means to own a vehicle. Public transit can reduce the burden of costs associated with vehicle ownership. However, full price fares may still be unaffordable for many customers. Qualified customers pay reduced fares on public transit systems with ORCA LIFT programs.

Launched in 2015 by King County Metro and building on the low-income ORCA fare program established by Kitsap Transit, ORCA LIFT is a national model for providing reduced fares for customers with low incomes. The ORCA LIFT card is valid for reduced fares on Community Transit, Everett Transit, King County Metro, King County Water Taxi, the Seattle Streetcar, Sound Transit, and Kitsap Transit.



Since 2016, Sound Transit has supported outreach in Snohomish and Pierce counties to make it easier for low-income riders to get ORCA LIFT cards for discounted fares on ST Express and Sounder services. In July 2019, Community Transit and Everett Transit began offering a low-income fare for eligible riders who use ORCA LIFT. Through the ORCA LIFT program, agencies use the same income qualification and verification process, extend the reduced low-income bus fare to existing ORCA LIFT riders, and waive the ORCA card fee for new customers. This allows eligible customers to receive the discounted fare for travel to more places in Snohomish County, including the Swift bus rapid transit network.



The 2019-2020 Transit Coordination Grant is being used to fund a project focused on expanding access to affordable transit. The grant includes several programs for customers in King, Pierce, and Snohomish counties in various stages of implementation.

As an example, the grant is providing a \$10 incentive to new and renewing ORCA LIFT customers in Pierce, King, and Snohomish counties. This will help Community Transit and Everett Transit promote the recent expansion of ORCA LIFT. The two transit agencies partnered with Washington State Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS), an authorized ORCA LIFT enrollment agency. With DSHS customer service offices in Lynnwood, Everett, Monroe, and Arlington, 432 new ORCA LIFT cards were distributed in July 2019.



*This grant funds a multi-pronged expansion of transit assistance to low-income residents throughout the region, building on recent successful program models and employing new approaches to reach additional low-income transit customers. This project will boost enrollment in ORCA LIFT, making transit more affordable and accessible for populations that need it most.*

### Developing the Next Generation of ORCA

The ORCA fare card has dramatically changed how people in the central Puget Sound region pay for transit. It helps them transfer seamlessly between agencies and board buses, trains, and ferries faster. Customers like the convenience of having a single card that can be used on multiple modes and agencies for travel.

However, the system that started in 2009 is beginning to show its age. Customers dislike the time and process it takes to load products and value onto cards. The fare payment industry has advanced into new technologies that are more adaptable for the growing transit system.

The transit agencies that comprise the ORCA system have been working together to design and develop the next generation of ORCA (next gen ORCA). By the end of 2022, this improved system will provide customers with convenient, flexible, and secure fare payment. The system will be designed to accept innovative ways of paying for transportation and accommodate new modes as the regional transportation network expands. Next gen ORCA will make it easier for customers by providing them with many fare purchase options (including web, retail, vending, and mobile solutions) and by supporting immediate availability of purchased products and value.

Agencies are paying close attention to customer needs to ensure that this new system is flexible and allows for the incorporation of new technologies into the future. This means that additional transit agencies or transportation providers may be able to join the ORCA system, providing even more seamless connections throughout the region.



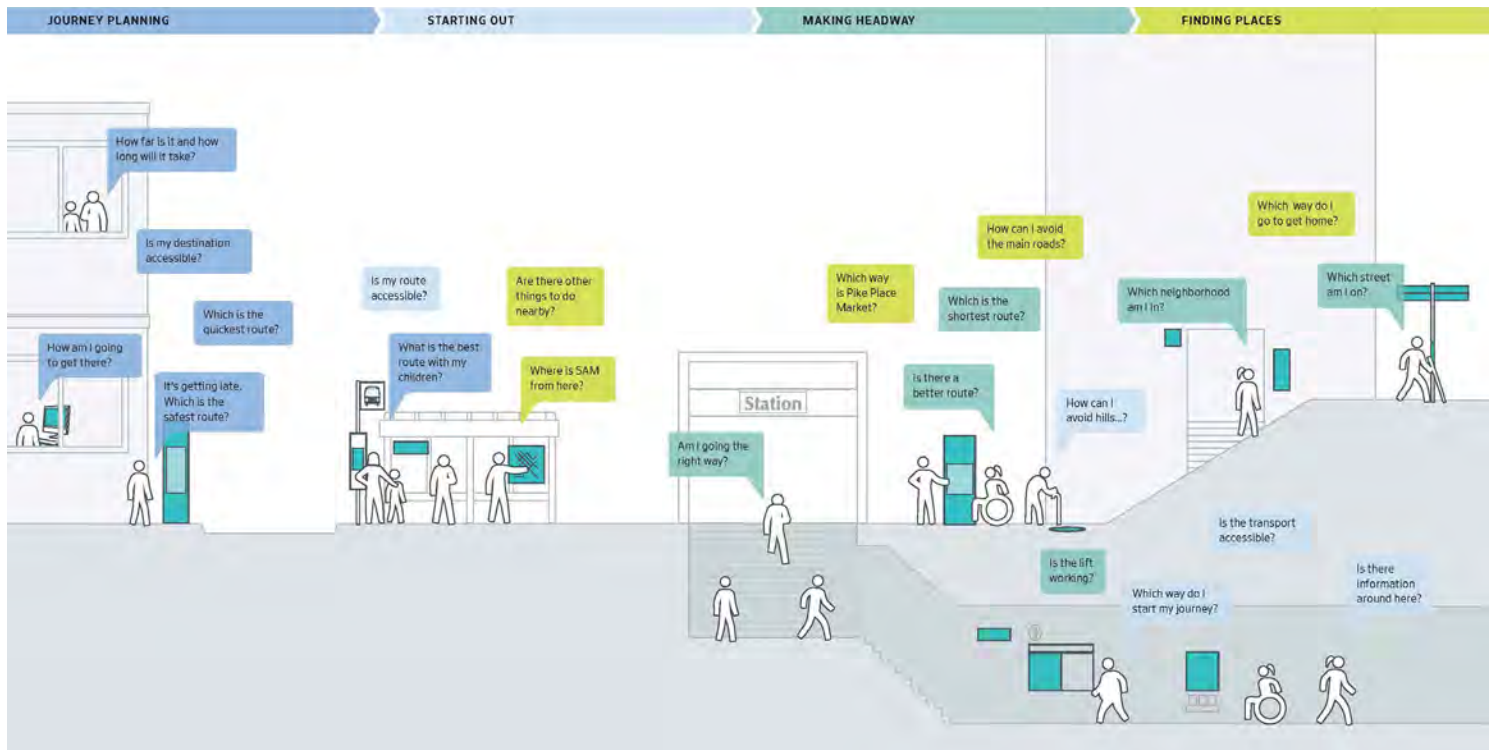
## Wayfinding and Downtown Seattle Pilot

Providing customers with accurate information for walking, transit, and accessibility options greatly impacts their ability and willingness to use these investments. The lack of a coordinated wayfinding strategy and system often means that people are less likely to explore walking routes on their own, including routes to bus, train, and ferry hubs, and first- or last-mile journeys.

Without coordination, multiple individual systems cause duplicative and disconnected information, and crowding of public spaces.

Funded by the Puget Sound Transit Coordination Grant, the City of Seattle has been working with King County Metro and Sound Transit, with input from Community Transit, Everett Transit, and Pierce Transit.

A consultant team used feedback from the transit agencies, Seattle, and the community to develop a pedestrian wayfinding strategy and design. It includes touchpoints on-street and within transit hubs for full journey support





Pilots are currently underway at the Jackson and Westlake hubs in downtown Seattle. They are meant to support these major hubs that were impacted by changes in tunnel operations. The pilots will test the design and product concepts to determine their value to transit, the city, and businesses.



*The planning and design phases are complete. Agencies are now working to deploy the first phase of signs at the Westlake and Jackson hubs in 2019 and 2020. Signs will be installed on sidewalks, inside Link stations, and at select bus stops in the pilot areas. After installation, the system of information will be evaluated for user satisfaction and design refinements. Transit agencies and jurisdictions will also evaluate their ability to incorporate a regional wayfinding approach with their local partners.*

*The wayfinding strategy considers how implementation could be expanded and coordinated with transit information needs. Long-term and short-term strategies for integration with partner agency projects and standards are being considered to facilitate design consistency.*

## **Beyond the Borders: Special Needs Transportation Connecting to Pierce Transit Service**



Many residents in our region live or travel outside of local transit service boundaries, leaving them without access to any public transportation options. In Pierce County, the Beyond the Borders transportation program, operated by the Pierce County Human Services Department, serves eligible riders living or traveling in areas east and south of Pierce Transit's service area boundary who have no other transportation options.

This grant-funded program delivers more than 15,000 boardings annually and takes residents to local and regional bus and rail services, as

well as medical appointments, employment, shopping, and other crucial destinations. The service is free for people with disabilities, seniors 65+, youth aged 12-17, and those who identify as low-income.

Beyond the Borders has two Connector routes operating as deviated fixed service in busier suburban corridors. They run on a 45-minute schedule Monday through Friday. The Sumner/Bonney Lake route connects to Sound Transit service at Sumner Station while the Spanaway/South Hill route has connections to Pierce Transit in both South Hill Puyallup and Spanaway.

For eligible riders who do not live near the two Connector routes, a shared-ride demand response service links customers to services within the Beyond the Borders service area or to an ADA shuttle or fixed route bus stop. This service transports customers to the region's robust transit network. However, for some riders, especially those with special needs, multiple transfers can create extra hardships.

In order to assist these riders, Pierce Transit and Beyond the Borders collaborated to create the Boundary Expansion Project. Customers who are eligible for both Pierce Transit's ADA SHUTTLE and Beyond the Borders can now travel directly to their destination if it is no more than 5-7 miles into Pierce Transit's service area. This eliminates the need for the rider to change vehicles when connecting with the service.



Pierce Transit realizes savings as they no longer have to send out a high-cost ADA vehicle to pick up riders. Not having to wait for connections saves both agencies time. Pierce Transit subsidizes Beyond the Borders for the extra miles. This makes it more efficient for both agencies, improves the customer experience, and coordinates resources to reduce transportation costs.

Started as a pilot in 2016, the project has gained ridership each year. In 2018, 815 trips were taken. Through June of 2019, the project already had completed 854 trips and is on track to double the trips provided in the previous year. More than half of the customers taking advantage of the program are traveling multiple days a week for dialysis treatment, a service not widely available in the Beyond the Borders service area where they live. Avoiding the transfer between Beyond the Borders and Pierce Transit shuttles greatly reduces their commute times and disruptions to and from medical treatments.



## Seaway Transit Center Coordination Between Agencies and Shuttle Partner

The region's transit agencies aim to provide quick and reliable service to customers' preferred destinations. However, there are often reasons a bus or train cannot go directly to that destination, creating a transfer between agencies or modes.

Recently, Community Transit partnered with Boeing and regional transit agencies to create a hub-and-spoke approach to getting thousands of employees to work in the Southwest Everett Manufacturing and Industrial Center in Snohomish County. Community Transit previously provided service along a perimeter road around the factory, but the new approach has allowed the agency to redistribute those bus service hours.

Thanks in part to a WSDOT Regional Mobility Grant, Community Transit built the new Seaway Transit Center across the street from the Boeing Everett main entrance. The facility opened in March 2019, providing 13 bus bays for easy connections between multiple routes provided by Community Transit, Everett Transit, King County Metro, Sound Transit, and shuttle routes from Boeing.

Among the routes serving Seaway Transit Center is Community Transit's new Swift Green Line BRT, which runs buses in and out of the facility every 10 minutes on weekdays and carries riders to the new Paine Field commercial air terminal two miles to the south.

Recognizing the benefits of more employees taking transit to work, Boeing invested in its employee shuttle service and altered its routes to serve the Seaway Transit Center. This arrangement drops workers off closer to their work locations than previously.



## Transit Coordination Between Kitsap County and Olympic Peninsula Partners

People often travel through multiple jurisdictions to get to their final destinations. Taking transit and deciphering transit agency boundaries can be confusing, time-consuming, and costly. Transportation integration is imperative to everyone who uses public transit. In rural areas where transportation options and frequency are more limited, these partnerships are vital to ensure the public has connections and options that are reliable.

Kitsap County is a major employment hub for residents of the Olympic Peninsula, so partnering transit agencies work hard to ensure manageable daily commutes and connections for workers living in the outlying areas. Kitsap Transit works regularly with agencies such as Mason Transit, Jefferson Transit, and Clallam Transit, beginning at the executive level. Regular meetings are held between the agency executives to discuss long-range growth plans, partnership ideas, and to share general information about the transportation challenges in the region. These same conversations happen at the staff level as well, but they typically deal with immediate service and challenges.



The south end of Kitsap County abuts with Mason County where Mason Transit provides regular bus services and Worker/Driver services into Kitsap County. Kitsap Transit and Mason Transit collaborate to ensure the timing of routes works well for people needing to transfer between the systems. Mason Transit's connecting service begins in Belfair and travels into Bremerton, ending at the ferry terminal. This allows customers to arrive at Puget Sound Naval Shipyard for work, take a Washington State Ferry, a Kitsap Transit fast ferry, or a Kitsap Transit vehicle, all while alleviating congestion along one of the busiest highways in south Kitsap County, SR 3.

In the northern part of the county, Kitsap Transit links to and provides space for Jefferson Transit and Clallam Transit at the North Viking Transit Center. This allows customers to make easy and timed connections throughout the tri-county area and to King County destinations, if they wish, via Washington State Ferries and Kitsap Transit's fast ferry. Kitsap Transit has also coordinated transit center space for the Clallam Transit service that connects to the Bainbridge Island Ferry Terminal from Port Angeles. Schedules between the agencies are coordinated and timed to ensure efficient service for customers.



# Improving Performance of the Transit System as the Region Grows: Issues Beyond the Region

## Coordinating on Permit-Based Parking Management Strategies

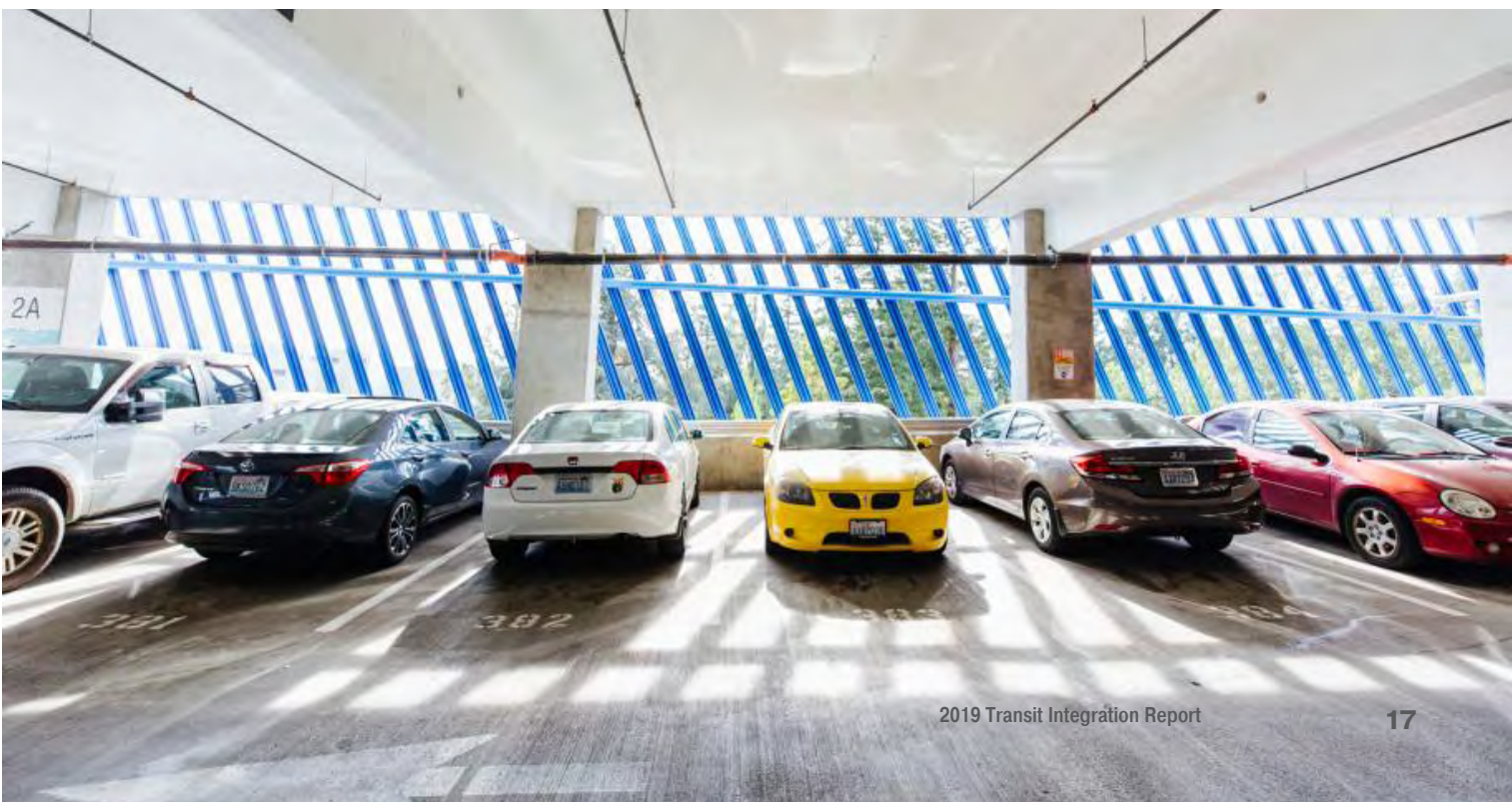


Park and rides that fill very early in the morning create many challenges. For riders, it means arriving early at a park and ride not out of convenience or need, but simply to get a parking space. Riders without this flexibility may not have access to the regional transit system, creating concerns for those unable to use the region's most popular park and rides. For transit agencies, it can lead to buses and trains crush-loaded by the artificial peak of early arrivals, which are then forced to bypass riders down the line. For local jurisdictions, it can mean congested local streets surrounding these facilities.

Parking demand management strategies, including pricing, can improve the customer experience by providing riders certainty about parking availability and greater flexibility when they use transit. Managing demand can also improve regional mobility by getting more transit riders per parking space, shifting demand to underutilized park and rides, and increasing non-auto access to transit.

Transit agencies and WSDOT are actively coordinating to make the best use of existing facilities and the approximately 18,000 new parking stalls planned by transit agencies in the coming decades. Sound Transit and King County Metro have had high-occupancy vehicle (HOV) permit parking in place at 24 of the region's most utilized park and rides since 2016 and 2017, respectively. In 2019, the state administrative code was updated to formally allow for free HOV permits to be available at WSDOT owned park and ride lots, further building on this system and creating regional cohesion.

To continue to manage the limited parking capacity at the region's most utilized park and rides, agencies are at various stages of expanding permit programs to include paid permits for drivers who drive alone to park and rides. Each agency with park and rides operates in a different authorizing environment and on different timelines. But all agencies share the goals of providing a reliable option to ride transit for customers who cannot arrive at park and rides before they are typically full, encouraging more efficient use of the transportation network, and creating a more consistent user experience regardless of which agency owns a park and ride.



Sound Transit is providing a new single-occupancy vehicle (SOV) permit parking option for people driving alone to transit while also expanding the number of facilities where transit riders can utilize HOV permits free of charge.

King County Metro will also be expanding their permit parking program to include an option for paid SOV parking permits at park and rides with high utilizations in late 2019.

Pierce Transit began issuing optional reserved parking permits under a pilot program at the highly utilized Tacoma Dome Station in June 2019. SOV parking permits are available for a monthly fee, and monthly HOV

permits are available at no charge for two or more transit riders arriving at the garage together in a single vehicle.

These agencies are or will be providing discounted SOV parking permits to customers eligible for ORCA LIFT.

WSDOT is coordinating with these and other agencies to provide support for pilot projects at state-owned park and rides. The outcomes of these pilots could justify further updates to the Washington Administrative Code.

Sound Transit, King County Metro, and Pierce Transit have collaborated to provide consistent messaging about these changes to customers, but there are more regional opportunities to expand the reach of these new parking options, as well as challenges. These agencies' paid SOV permit parking cannot be used at WSDOT-owned park and rides because state law does not allow managing demand through pricing.

WSDOT owns several of the most-used park and rides in the region, including Eastgate and Ash Way. Although HOV permits are available for carpool customers, these lots still face challenges associated with high utilization rates that could be addressed with more management.

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*The region's transit system relies on effectively getting customers to and from transit. As the region invests in additional transit and park and ride facilities, the ability to effectively manage these investments as a cohesive region is paramount for their success. Pricing is an essential part of effective management. A change to state legislation is needed to begin using this management strategy at WSDOT-owned park and rides. Puget Sound transit agencies have been and will continue working alongside WSDOT, the Washington State Transit Association, and the state Legislature to address this issue, in the hope of improving performance at these facilities.*







## Performance of High-Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) System and Impact on Transit on North I-5 Corridor

The region's HOV lanes are designed to maximize the movement of people. Because they are reserved for carpools, vanpools, buses, motorcycles, or any vehicle carrying two or more people, they usually move more people than general-purpose lanes. Studies show that HOV lanes encourage commuters to travel together.

Some of the region's transit agencies, including King County Metro, Community Transit, and Sound Transit, rely on HOV lanes to efficiently connect thousands of daily customers to their destinations. As the region continues to make large investments in the transit network, the HOV system is an important component to keep the region moving.

As the region grows, traffic, including in the HOV lanes, continues to increase. Although the current HOV lanes provide some benefit, overcrowding is greatly impacting system performance, especially during peak commute times. A progress report<sup>1</sup> released by WSDOT in 2018 shows that 10 of 12 corridors studied in central Puget Sound were not meeting performance standards.



The increased travel times make traveling in HOV lanes unpredictable for transit customers, many of whom may shift travel modes away from transit, further congesting the system. When HOV lanes fail to provide a reliable speed advantage for transit and rideshare vehicles, those modes become less desirable and more single-occupancy vehicles fill the highway.

To address the declining speed and reliability of the HOV lanes, in 2015 Community Transit and Sound Transit made a multimillion-dollar investment in schedule maintenance. However, the agencies are unable to continue to make these investments as performance of the system continues to decline. In 2017, the HOV lanes these agencies use on I-5 north between Everett and Seattle met WSDOT's performance standards only 12%-18% of the time during peak hours, compared to 26%-36% in 2015.

Another obstacle to performance of the system is HOV lane violators. While many of the vehicles using the HOV system carry large numbers of people, such as buses and full carpools, others have two people in them or are solo drivers violating the law. In fact, HOV violations are common along I-5, leading to new legislation in 2019 to increase fines for HOV violators. Increased enforcement and heightened penalties can have an impact on how often violations occur.



*To provide the most reliable transit possible and encourage the most efficient use of the region's investments, WSDOT has been working with the transit agencies and other stakeholders in the I-5 Partnership to identify possible approaches to provide near-term improvements in HOV system performance and transit speed and reliability, including lane management policies and other measures.*

<sup>1</sup> [https://www.wsdot.wa.gov/publications/fulltext/LegReports/17-19/HOV\\_LaneAccessRuleMakingProgressReport.pdf](https://www.wsdot.wa.gov/publications/fulltext/LegReports/17-19/HOV_LaneAccessRuleMakingProgressReport.pdf)



## Need for Additional Transit Lane Enforcement in Congested Areas

Downtown Seattle has seen several changes over the past year, from the opening of the SR 99 tunnel and removal of the Alaskan Way Viaduct to the end of joint bus-rail operations in the downtown transit tunnel. The City of Seattle has been developing a number of projects to assist the regional transit system in moving people safely and efficiently.

Transit-only lanes—lanes dedicated to transit vehicles or other vehicles turning right—are meant to improve travel times for transit vehicles and make riding transit a more attractive option. Designated transit lanes have the potential to provide faster connections for customers to and from their destinations. In Seattle, there are over 31 miles of designated transit lanes used by King County Metro, Sound Transit, Community Transit, and Pierce Transit buses.

The transit-only lanes in Seattle, and throughout the region, can efficiently move transit vehicles carrying up to 90 passengers, but they are effective only when clear of other traffic. This depends on how well drivers of other vehicles obey traffic laws. When compliance drops, enforcement can greatly reduce the number of traffic lane violators and keep transit moving.

As Seattle continues to install more transit-only lanes to preserve mobility and increase quality of service, there are more transit lane violations. For example, in January 2018 the City of Seattle conducted an observation of transit-only lane violations at a major downtown intersection, 4<sup>th</sup> and Battery. Throughout this study, there were an average of 361 violations per day of the transit-only lanes. This is one of many locations with high violation rates. These incidents reduce the effectiveness of the regional transit system and decrease safety for drivers and transit operators.



SOURCE: SDOT



The Seattle Department of Transportation is working with the Seattle Police Department to increase enforcement of transit lane violations by identifying areas with high rates of violations and increasing education about transit-only lanes. However, manual enforcement continues to be difficult and costly for the city.

In highly congested areas, police often do not have space to pull over violators. Even when there is space, manual enforcement still negatively impacts the flow of traffic through the travel lane, exacerbating the public safety and mobility problems caused by the violation in the first place. Manual enforcement is also challenging, resource intensive, and potentially hazardous for the officers, who must navigate through heavy traffic to the violator's vehicle.

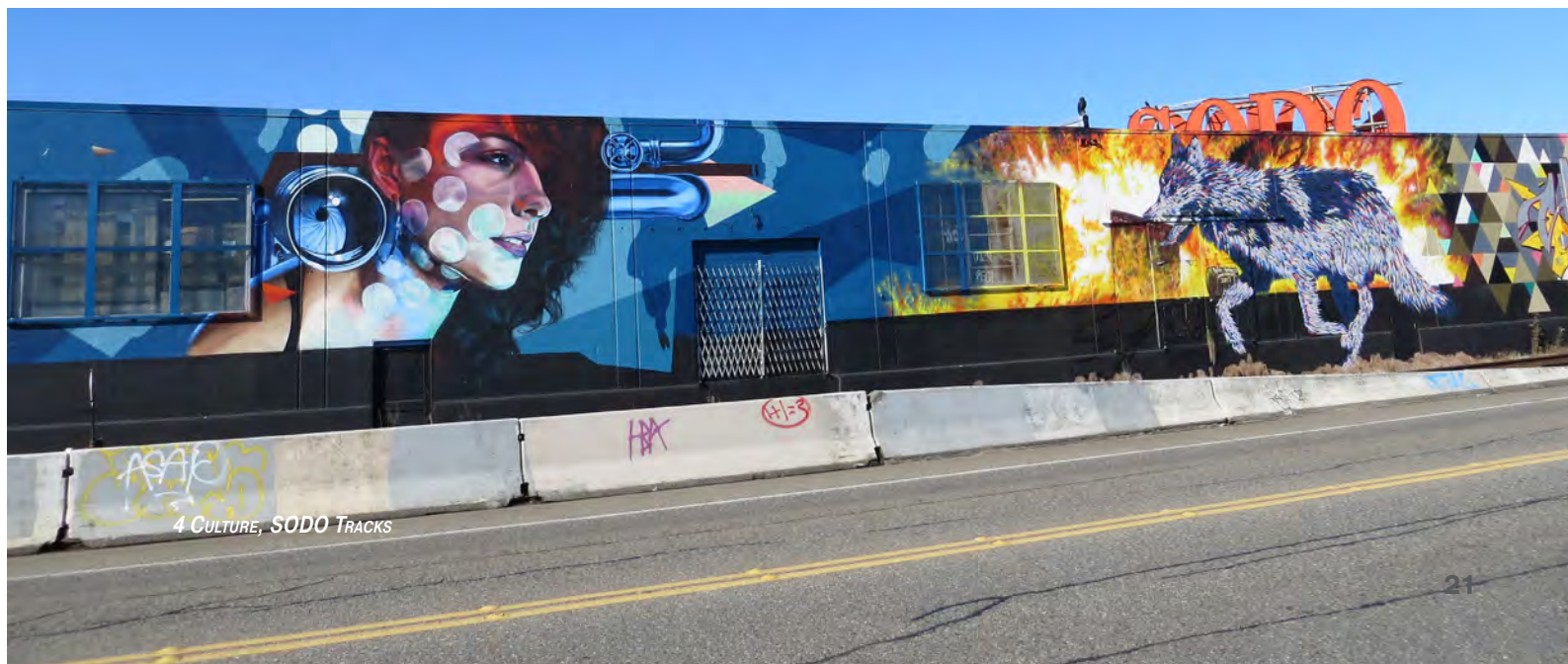
Automated enforcement—using cameras to identify and ticket violators—would eliminate these issues. Existing statute does not permit cities to use automated enforcement for transit lane violations, however. Under RCW 46.63.170, automated traffic safety cameras may be used for stoplight, railroad crossing, or school speed zone violations only. Local governments must prepare an analysis of proposed automated enforcement locations prior to enacting an authorizing ordinance and must report annually on the number of infractions and traffic accidents at each location once automated enforcement cameras are installed.

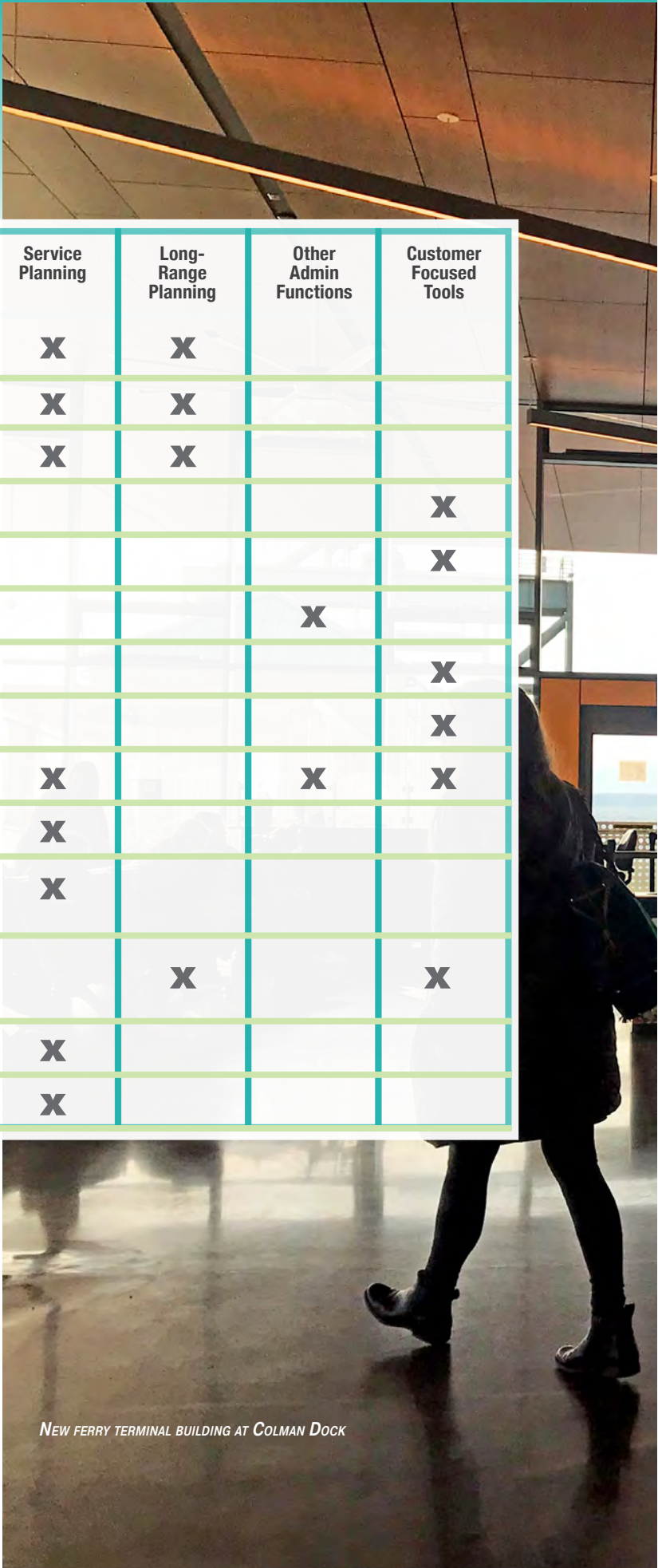
During the 2018 legislative session, legislation was introduced to give local governments authority to conduct automated enforcement of transit lane violations, but it did not pass. This authorization is necessary for the City of Seattle to address the mobility concerns posed by the increasing number of violations. Supporters of the legislation will seek this authority again during the 2020 session.



## NEXT STEPS

*The City of Seattle is continuing to collaborate on education and manual enforcement to decrease violators in transit-only lanes. However, the limitations of manual enforcement mean that violators will continue to disrupt transit service, which affects travelers across the region. The city is continuing to pursue ways to make transit-only lanes as effective as possible.*





<b>MATRIX</b>	<b>Marketing Efforts</b>	<b>Aligning Fare Structures</b>	<b>Service Planning</b>	<b>Long-Range Planning</b>	<b>Other Admin Functions</b>	<b>Customer Focused Tools</b>
Ferry Expansion			X	X		
Expanding Light Rail			X	X		
Bus Rapid Transit (BRT)			X	X		
Seattle Center Monorail		X				X
Regional ORCA Marketing	X					X
ORCA LIFT	X	X			X	
ORCA Next Gen Update						X
Coordinated Wayfinding						X
Beyond the Borders			X		X	X
Seaway Transit Center			X			
Kitsap County and Regional Partners			X			
Regional Parking Management		X		X		X
HOV System			X			
Transit Lane Enforcement			X			





4 CULTURE, SODO TRACKS



Puget Sound Regional Council

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