



WTA

CONNECTING
PEOPLE TO
OPPORTUNITY

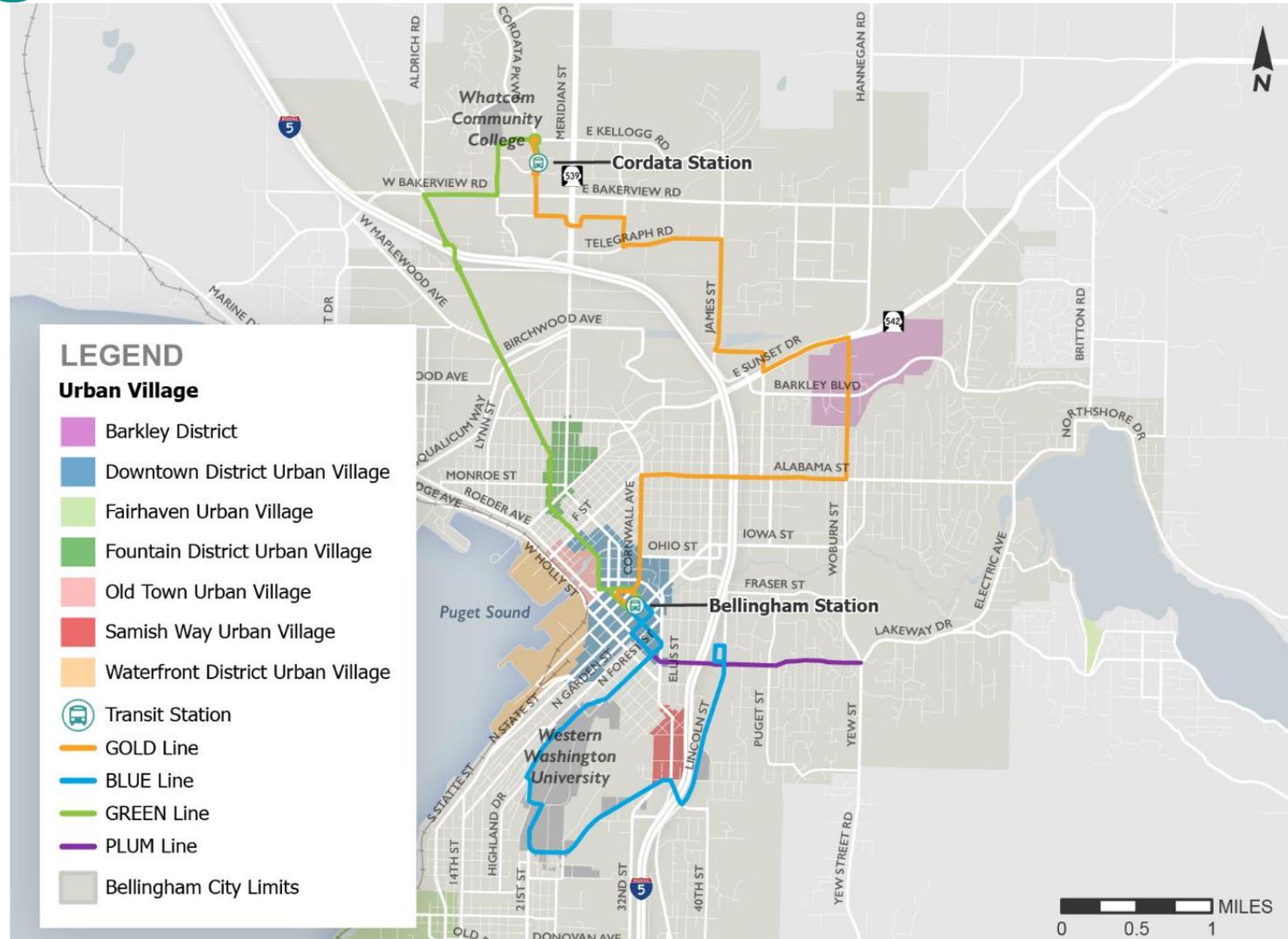
RAPID TRANSIT LPA

CTAG 2.12.26

Outline

1. Existing Go Lines Overview
2. Challenges, Opportunities, & Project Need
3. Work to Date
4. Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA)
5. Next Steps and Schedule

Existing Go Line Service



Purpose of Project

- Support New Housing and Employment in Urban Villages and Corridors
- Increase the Attractiveness of Transit, Walking and Biking
- Grow the Capacity of the Transportation Network

Challenges

- Increasing congestion
- Decreasing service reliability
- Low density development along corridors
- Limited right-of-way
- Corridors are circuitous
- Ineffective/limited transit signal priority

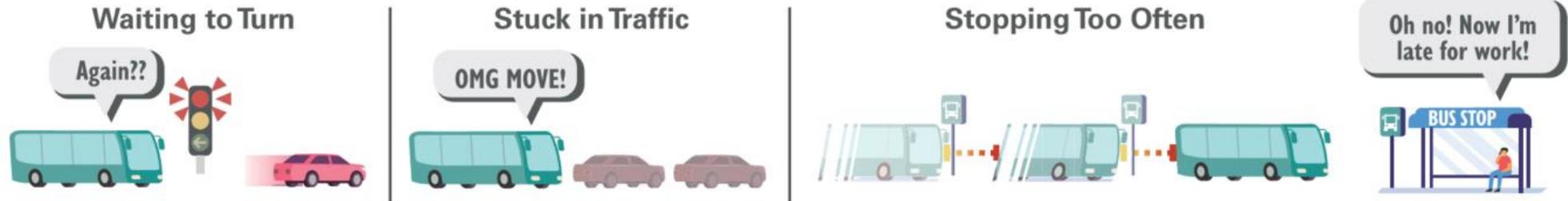
Opportunities

- Concentration of destinations along key corridors
- Transit-supportive City policies
- City investments in bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure
- Urban Villages are attracting new housing and investment

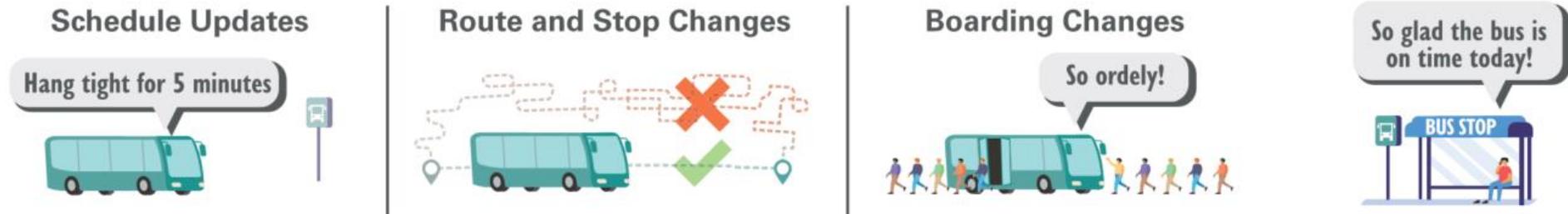
Project Need

- Current Go Lines are not frequent and reliable enough for many travelers
- Physical and operational improvements needed to improve frequency and reliability
- Slow boarding process causes delays
- Go Line mid-route transfers difficult

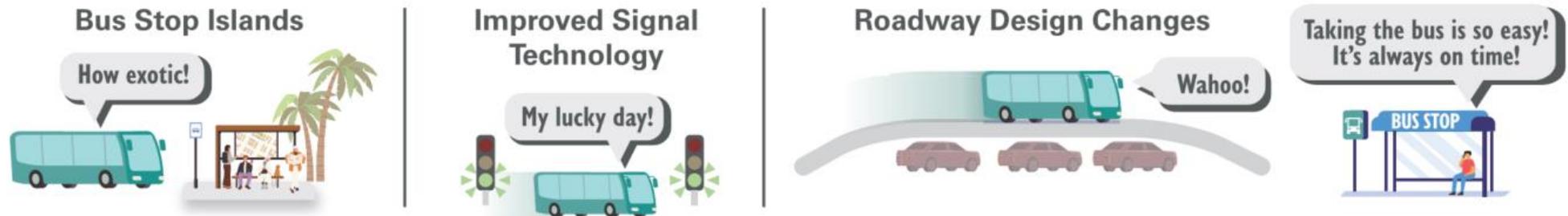
What is the current problem with bus service?



What is WTA doing to maintain bus service?



What can WTA and the City of Bellingham do together to provide high frequency bus service?



Work to Date

2022-2023

Rapid Transit Feasibility Study—Completed Summer 2023

- Rapid Transit Study project website with feedback opportunities 2022–2023
- Technical Advisory Committee with representatives from the City of Bellingham, WTA, WCOG, WWU, Whatcom Community College, Talbot Group, and Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) October 2022–June 2023
- WTA Rapid Transit Feasibility Study published July 2023
- Adopted by WTA Board September 2023

2023-2024

LPA Phase 2a—Completed December 2024

- Rapid Transit Study project website with feedback opportunities 2023–2024
- Project Steering Committee with representatives from the City of Bellingham, WTA, WCOG, WWU, and Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) March–November 2024
- Stakeholder meetings with City of Bellingham and WWU May and June 2024
- Interviews with Downtown Business Partnership, Bellingham School District, Whatcom Community College, and the Whatcom Council on Aging August 2024
- Discussion group with invited local developers and business owners (also open to the public) November 2024

2025-2026

LPA Phase 2b—January 2025–present

- Rapid Transit Study project website with feedback opportunities 2024–present
- Project Management Group with representatives from the City of Bellingham, WTA March 2025–present
- Project Steering Committee (same as LPA Phase 2a) April 2025–present
- Preliminary LPA Recommendations April 2025
- Presentation of Preliminary LPA Recommendations to City of Bellingham and WTA Board May and June 2025
- Stakeholder workshops with City of Bellingham, WTA, WCOG, WWU, and WSDOT to develop Locally Preferred Alternative and to develop Memorandum of Understanding between WTA and City of Bellingham June and October 2025
- Public engagement to begin in early 2026

Feasibility Study

MEASURE	GOLD			GREEN/BLUE		
	1	2	3	1	2	3
 Reduce Transit Conflicts with Other Modes	★			★	★	★
 Pedestrian Access	★			★	★	★
 Increase Transit Speed and Reduce Run Time	★	★		★	★	★
 Increase Ridership	★	★		★	★	★
 Transit-Supportive Land Use	★	★	★	★	★	
 Non-Motorized Oriented Design	★	★	★	★	★	
	★ 11.3 TOTAL			★ 14 TOTAL		

Outreach Feedback

- **Frequency and reliability** are the highest priorities
- **Safety and comfort** improvements are important
- **Attracting new riders is difficult** with driving being easy
- **Critical to balance the needs** transit and bike riders
- **City's plan updates provide policy support** for transit improvements

Selection of Enhanced Go Lines

Expanded and Enhanced High Frequency Transit Service



Bus Rapid Transit



Enhanced Go Lines

Enhanced Go Line Features



**Increased
Frequency**



**Transit Spot
Improvements**



**Advanced
Transit Signal
Priority**



**Enhanced
Bus Stops**



**Ped & Bike
Infrastructure**



**Transit
Supportive
Land Uses**

Enhanced Bus Stops

- Tier 1

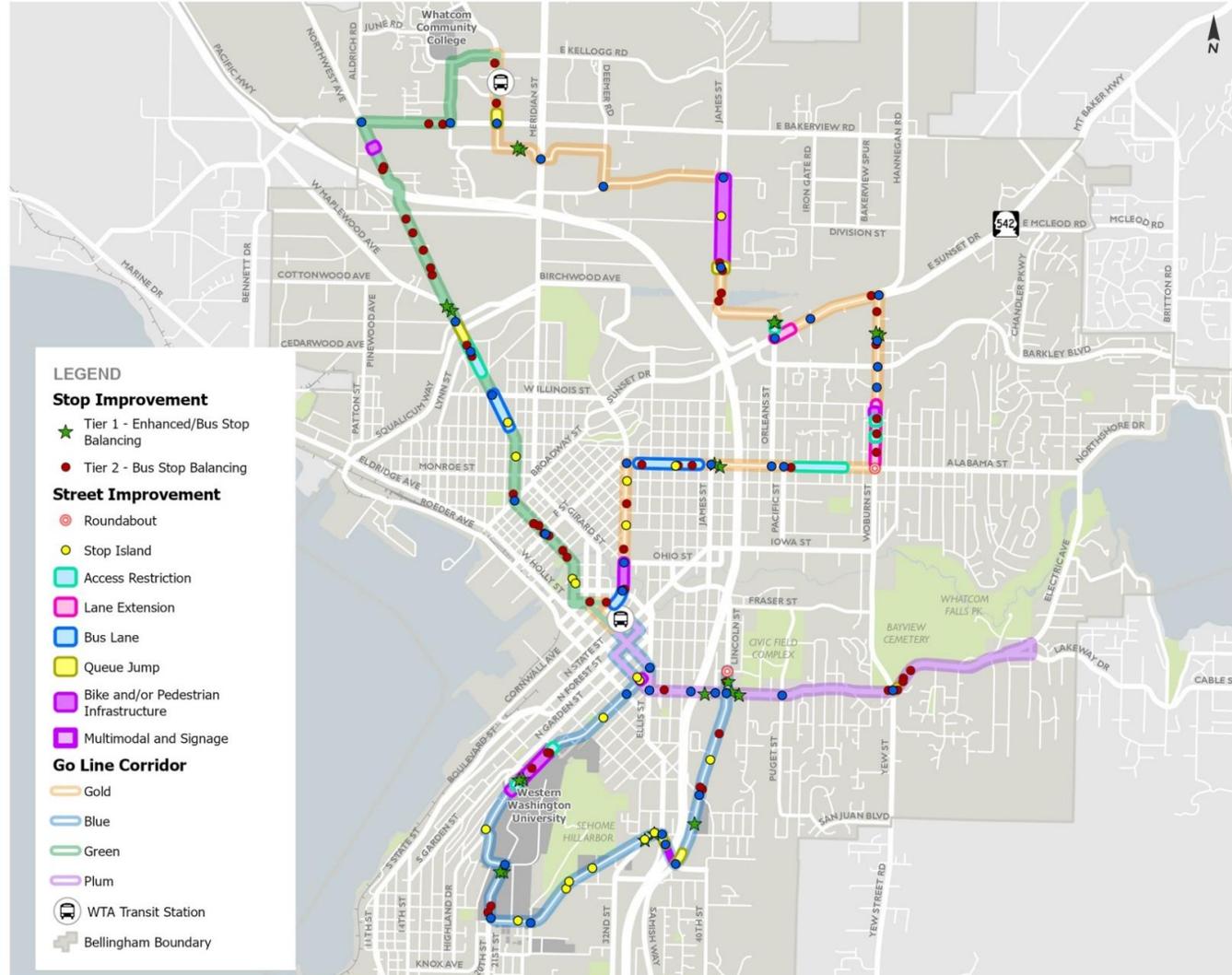


Enhanced Bus Stops

- Tier 2

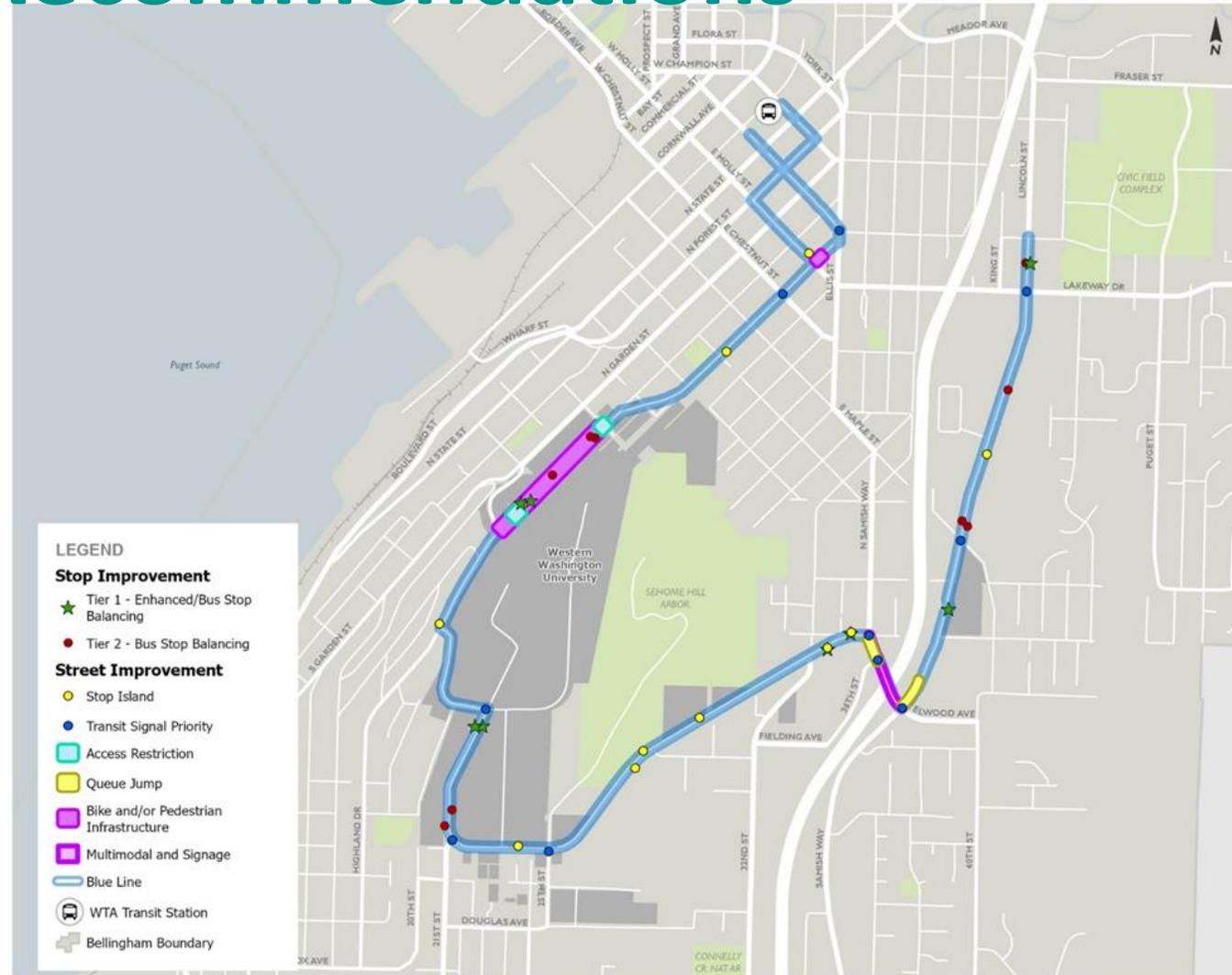


Recommended Enhancements



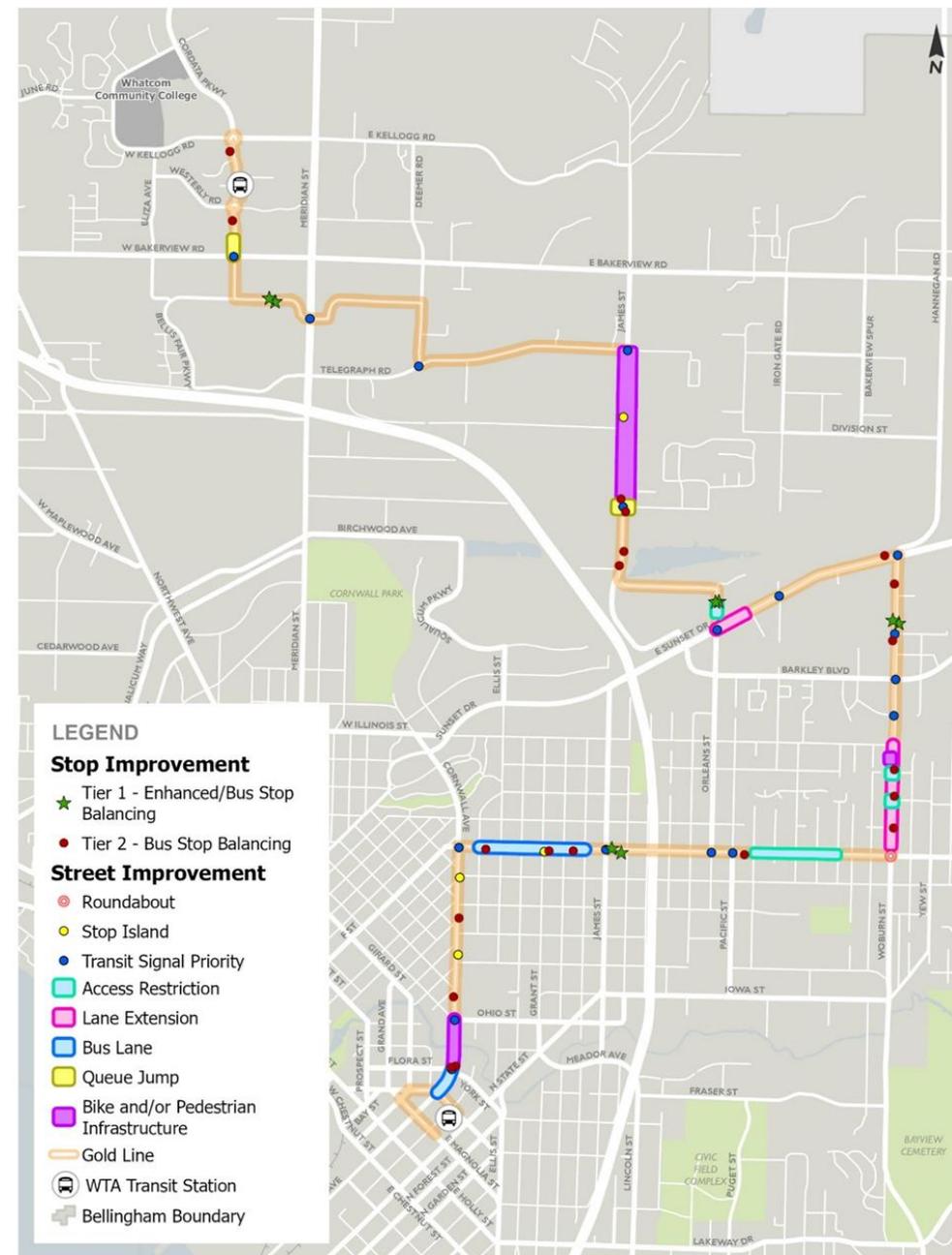
Blue Go Line Recommendations

- Estimated cost of full implementation: \$2,229,800



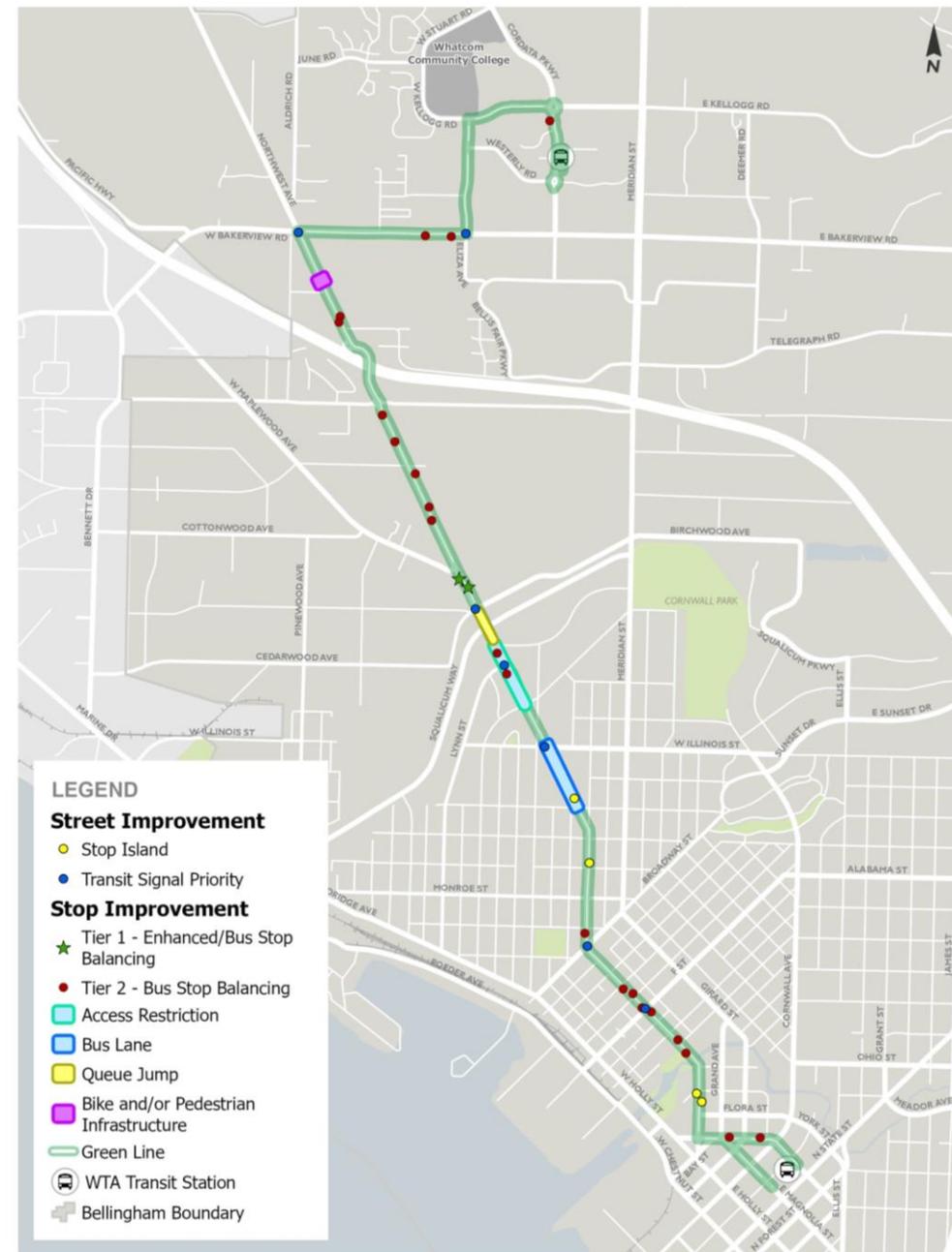
Gold Go Line Recommendations

- Estimated cost of full implementation
 - Short Term Projects: \$7,941,200
 - Long Term Projects: \$17,454,700



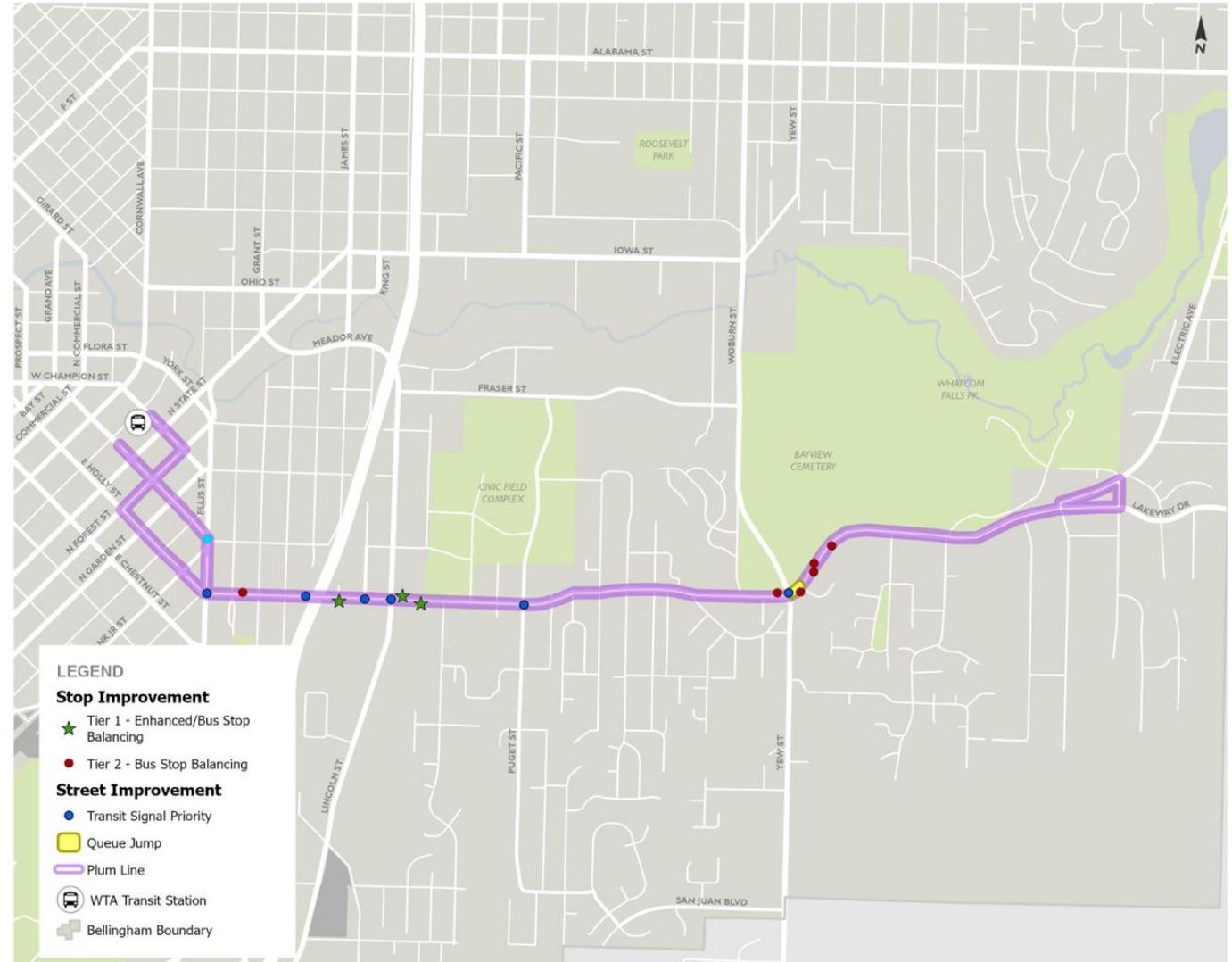
Green Go Line Recommendations

- Estimated cost of full implementation
 - Short Term Projects: \$659,600
 - Long Term Projects: \$3,217,500



Plum Go Line Recommendations

- Estimated cost of full implementation
 - Long Term Projects: \$3,217,500



Estimated Travel Time Savings

- **Bus Stop Consolidation** = 17-19% faster run time
- **Bus Island** = small reduction per island
- **Bus Lane** = 55% reduction in run time
- **Extended Turning Lane** = depends on congestion & delays
- **Queue Jump Lanes** = 9 seconds per queue jump
- **Transit Signal Priority** = 2.1 minutes per trip
- **All Door Boarding** = 38% reduction in boarding time

Estimated Travel Time Savings

Go Line Route	Travel Times Savings (minutes)	
	Inbound	Outbound
Gold	7.9	8.9
Green	5.9	5.9
Plum	2.3	2
Blue	7.6	7.2

Estimated Operating Costs

Go Line Route	Net New Revenue Hours	Cost Range (2027 Dollars)	
		High ¹	Low ²
Gold	7,248	\$1,744,764	\$745,461
Green	5,189	\$1,249,089	\$ 533,681
Subtotal	12,438	\$2,993,852	\$1,279,142
Plum	4,901	\$1,179,785	\$ 504,070
Blue	1800	\$433,272	\$185,118
Total	19,139	\$4,606,910	\$1,968,331

1. Represents fully allocated cost including administrative, direct operating cost, fuel, wages, maintenance, etc.

2. Represents marginal increase in cost assuming some of the staff supporting operations now would be able to also support the increased frequency

Project Prioritization

- Goal Alignment
- Project Scale and Complexity
- Project Cost
- Funding Opportunities/Grant Competitiveness
- Project Readiness

Next Steps & Schedule

Activity	Date(s)
LPA Draft Finalized	Feb 2026
Public Engagement	Feb-March 2026
Bellingham City Council Adoption	April 2026
WTA Board Adoption	April 2026
WSDOT Regional Mobility Grant Application	June-July 2026

To provide feedback and learn more visit
engage.ridewta.com/rapid-transit-study



THANK YOU

WHATCOM HUMAN SERVICES TRANSPORTATION PLAN

Accessibility & Convenience for All



whatcom council of governments

Melissa Fanucci, AICP
Principal Planner
Whatcom Council of Governments
(360) 685-8385
melissa@wcog.org
www.wcog.org/hstp



Presentation for CTAG

February 12, 2026

WHO ARE PEOPLE WITH SPECIAL TRANSPORTATION NEEDS?



People including their personal attendants, who because of physical or mental disability, income status, or age are unable to transport themselves or purchase transportation.

WHAT IS THE HUMAN SERVICES TRANSPORTATION PLAN?

Whatcom's Human Services Transportation Plan, or **HSTP**, is updated every four years to:

Assess existing transportation options for people with special transportation needs

Identify gaps in the transportation system

Develop strategies to address those gaps



WHY IS THE HSTP IMPORTANT?

The HSTP's goals and strategies determine ranking of applications to the WA State Department of Transportation's (WSDOT) [Consolidated Grants Program](#).



Consolidated Grants funded last biennium (2023-2025):

- \$1.5m for Lummi Transit fixed routes
- \$300k for Lummi Transit replacement buses
- \$95k for Lummi Tribe's emergency transportation and evacuation planning
- \$264k for Whatcom Smart Trips training to youth and seniors on riding fixed-route transit
- \$202k for Whatcom Transportation Authority's travel training program

CURRENT GOALS & STRATEGIES

- 1 Develop innovative options for transportation that include new services, creative pilot projects, and technology improvements.
- 2 Increase access by reducing gaps in the public transportation system, improving infrastructure and system operations, encouraging transit-oriented development, and providing education opportunities regarding transit options.
- 3 Improve safety for travelers through outreach, infrastructure, services, and environmental justice policies.

Options for reliable and independent transportation.

Access that is equitable regardless of location, age, income, or disability.

Safety and **comfort** for travelers with special transportation needs.

QUESTIONS TO YOU

1. Demographics of the community members you work with (age, income, disability status, race/ethnicity)

2. What transportation services do you work with or provide?

3. What transportation systems work well for your clients/community members?

4. What has prevented your clients/community members from making the trips they need?

5. Do they have transportation needs beyond Whatcom County?

6. If you could prioritize one gap to improve mobility for your clients or community members, what would it be?

OTHER WAYS YOU CAN HELP

Share a link to a quick online survey

Share copies of a paper survey

A quick feedback session at a meeting or event

Assistance connecting to people with lived experience for compensated interviews

Advisory team participation
(Two 1-hr meetings, 1 document read)



GET IN TOUCH

Melissa Fanucci

Whatcom Council of Governments

(360) 685-8385

melissa@wcog.org

www.wcog.org/hstp

