

LONG-RANGE TRANSIT PLAN

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Prepared for



Prepared by

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The Skagit Transit LRTP project is supported with funding from Washington's Climate Commitment Act (CCA). The CCA supports Washington's climate action efforts by putting cap-and-invest dollars to work reducing climate pollution, creating jobs, and improving public health. Information about the CCA is available at www.climate.wa.gov.



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Project Overview4

Long-Range Transit Plan Elements.....5

Community Engagement.....6

Anacortes On-Demand Zone8

Service Recommendations..... 10

Recommended Route Network 11

Short-Range Service Recommendations 16

Capital..... 18

Access..... 18

Phasing Approach & Implementation Strategy 19

PROJECT OVERVIEW

The Skagit Transit Long-Range Transit Plan (LRTP) serves as a roadmap for service and capital investments over the next 10 years. The LRTP included a comprehensive analysis of existing operational and market conditions, along with robust community engagement, to identify needs and prioritize future improvements.

Service recommendations consist of route network and schedule adjustments to enhance service for existing riders, as well as expanded offerings to attract and retain new riders. Capital recommendations consist of passenger facility upgrades, a bus stop improvement program. The LRTP also supports future Transit Development Plans, which are updated annually and detail immediate-term service modifications. Transit access and integration investments include crossing and pedestrian network enhancements, fare and data integration investments, and speed and reliability upgrades.



LONG-RANGE TRANSIT PLAN ELEMENTS

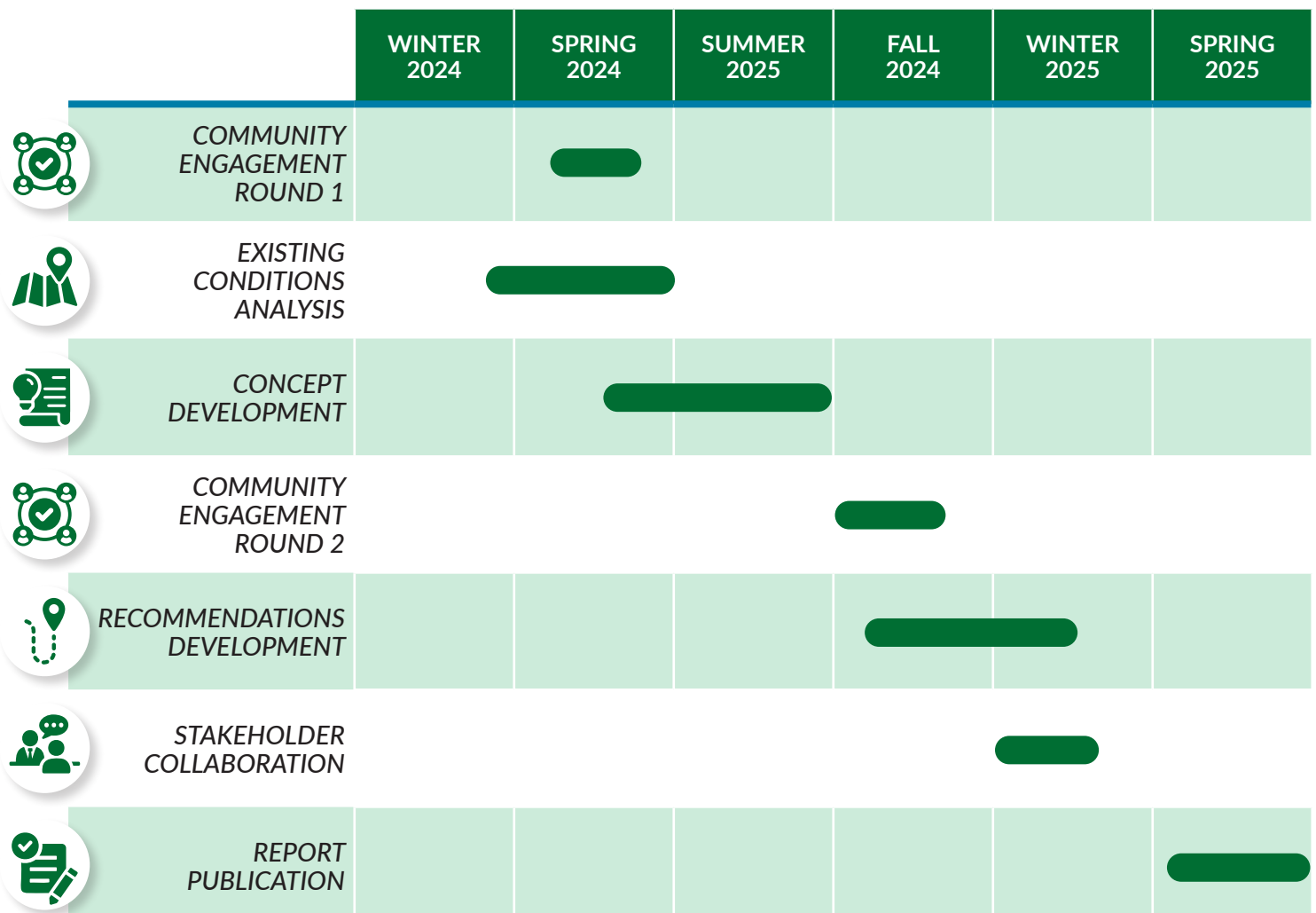
The LRTP has three elements, all supported by County-wide engagement to better understand the opportunities and challenges of the rider experience and recommend improvements accordingly:

Comprehensive Analysis of Current Operations – An analysis looking at existing operations to then identify opportunities for service improvements, route efficiencies, and overall system upgrades to meet the current and future demands of ridership.

On-Demand Transit Assessment – Explores an alternative service model that allows for on-demand service for areas with lower population density or during low ridership periods when fixed-route service may not be as effective.

Service Recommendations and Implementation Strategy - A range of service and capital investments suggested to be made over the next decade to support the agency's mission. The LRTP intends to be resource-neutral with additional services and investments that could be made if new resources become available. Three phases define a recommended implementation strategy that is illustrative of a reasonable scenario for acquiring additional vehicles and onboarding additional operators, as resources are secured.

PROJECT TIMELINE



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Community engagement was centered around understanding the types of transit improvements and investments that would enhance local and regional mobility for both existing and future riders.

Project outreach took place throughout 2024, with targeted activities occurring during two stages of the project:

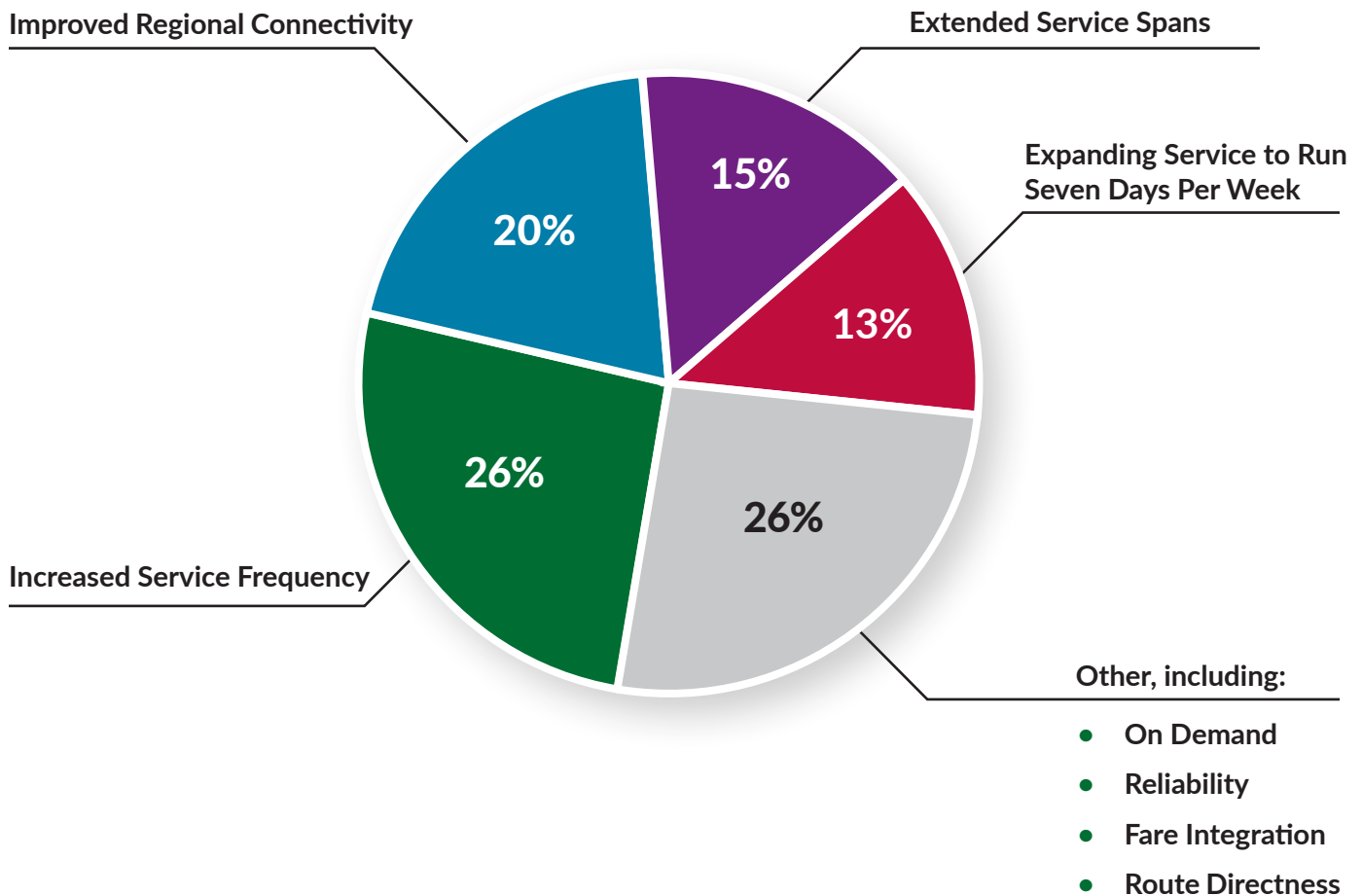
1 ROUND 1 - SPRING 2024

During this round of outreach, Skagit Transit shared key findings of the existing conditions analysis and obtained input from the community on transit opportunities and priorities to develop a high-level long-range vision.

2 ROUND 2 - FALL 2024

During this round of outreach, Skagit Transit shared service concepts and solicited feedback from transit riders and local stakeholders, which was utilized to refine service LRTP recommendations.

COMMUNITY CONVERSATION ENGAGEMENT THEMES



A ROBUST SET OF STRATEGIES WERE EMPLOYED TO OBTAIN PUBLIC AND STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK



Project flyers on buses



In-person and virtual open houses



Community stakeholder meetings



Interactive Online mapping tool



Social Media and Press Releases



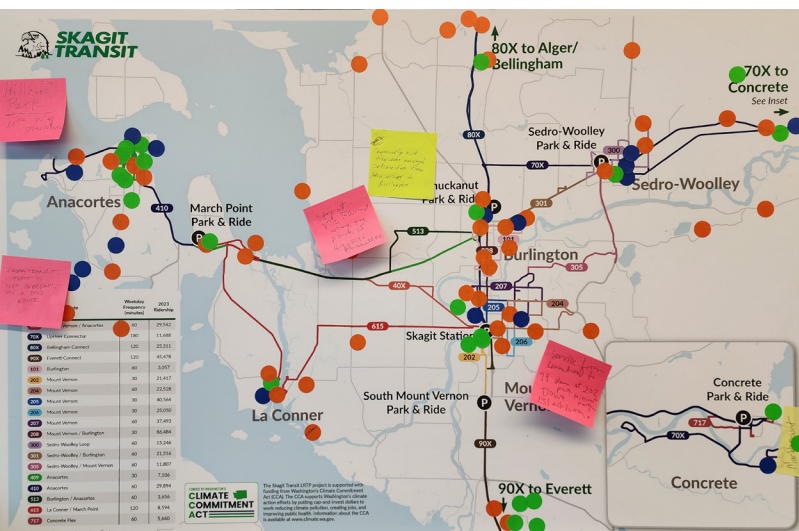
Interactive map-based visioning exercises



Project information tabling at community events



Online surveys and paper feedback forms



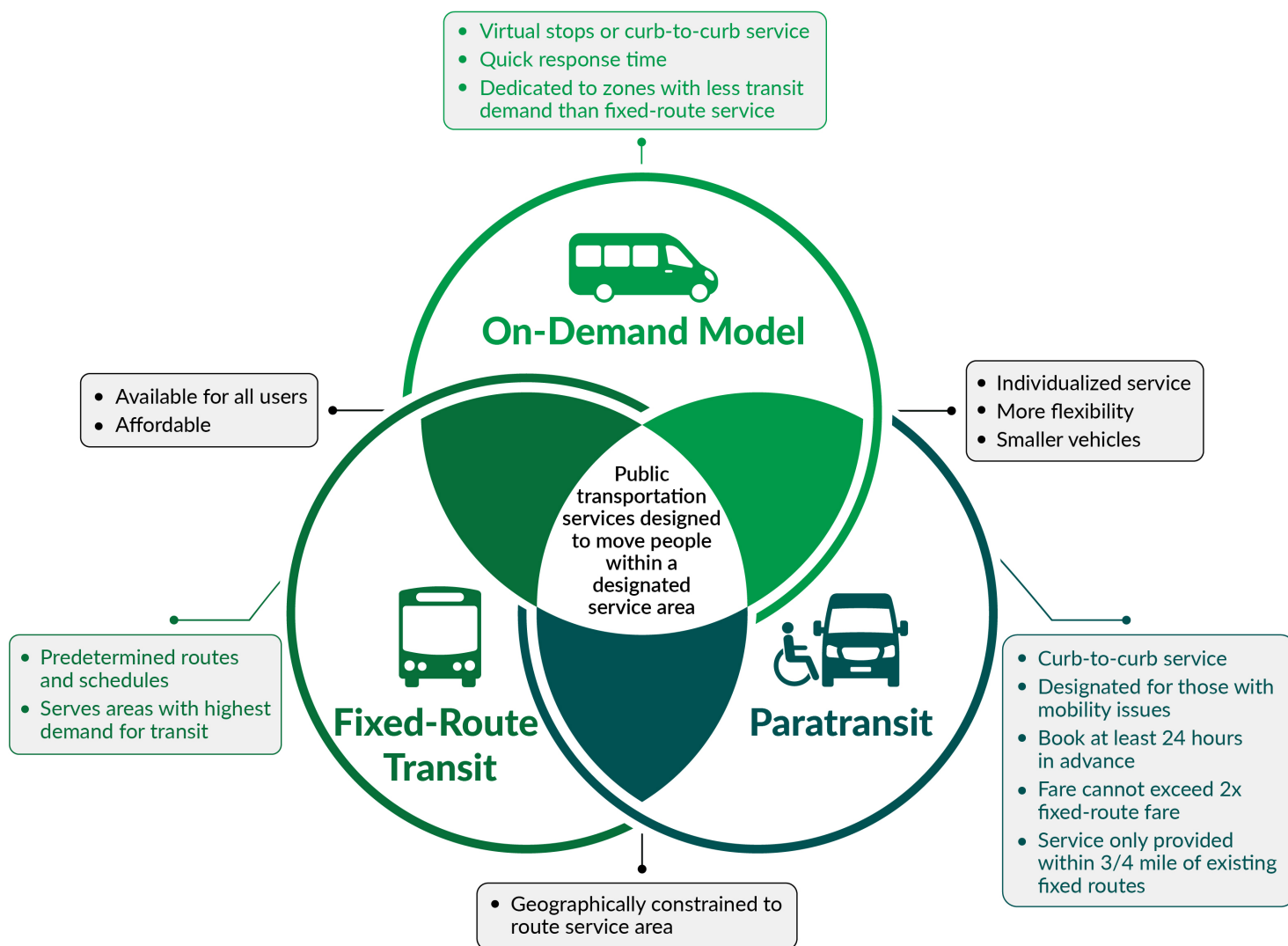
ANACORTES ON-DEMAND ZONE

Currently, Skagit Transit provides fixed-route service and paratransit service. To continue to advance its mission as part of this LRTP, Skagit Transit has investigated the provision of “on-demand” services.

On-demand transit is an emerging service type. There are several considerations that are important for Skagit Transit to consider when exploring on-demand transit. A peer review of on-demand service in communities with similar land use characteristics as Skagit County provides additional guidance on service design and policies.

The most viable opportunity for on-demand service in Skagit County was identified as Anacortes, based on fixed-route service gaps, market conditions, best practices, and community feedback. The size of the on-demand service zone is still to be determined based on funding availability. A zone can be scaled to service downtown Anacortes at a minimum and potentially a larger area of Fidalgo Island.

Partial funding for this analysis was provided by the Federal Transit Administration’s Areas of Persistent Poverty (AoPP) program, which supports increased transit access for environmental justice populations.



SERVICE DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS FOR ON-DEMAND TRANSIT



NETWORK CONNECTIVITY

In areas that experience lower population densities, destinations spread over a broad area, street network constraints, pedestrian network limitations, and/or challenging topographies on-demand service may be a potential solution.



SERVICE PURPOSE(S)

On-demand service is most successful when it serves a clear purpose that is not achievable by fixed-route service.



SERVICE AREA/ZONE

On-demand transit service should be confined to a defined zone and include a combination of destinations such as stores, senior centers, schools, medical facilities, and libraries in addition to connecting residential areas.



POTENTIAL MARKET GROUPS

Areas where households have limited vehicle access, adults older than 65, and youth under the age of 18 are all markets that indicate a potential for transit demand.



CAPACITY AND VEHICLE TYPE

Medium-duty cutaways and passenger vans are the most common on-demand vehicle types. The number of vehicles required to operate on-demand service depends on the zone size, street network, pick-up and drop-off policy, and goal wait time.



HOURS OF SERVICE AND GOAL WAIT TIME

The hours of operation should be determined based on the unique needs of riders within the on-demand zone.



FARES

Unlike paratransit, on-demand service does not have a price maximum. Transit agencies can establish fares based on the anticipated cost per ride or any other metric.



PICK-UP AND DROP-OFF OPTIONS

Riders can be picked up and dropped off within close proximity of their origin and destination when both endpoints are within the service zone.



BOOKING

On-demand service works similarly to a ride-hailing service; riders reserve a trip by using a digital app or contacting a call center where a ride is deployed for pick-up at/near their location and drop-off at/near their destination.



SERVICE DELIVERY

Delivery options for on-demand service include "in-house" or "turnkey service contract".

SERVICE RECOMMENDATIONS



ROUTE CHANGES

More Direct
Easier to Understand



FREQUENCY UPGRADES

Better Connections
Shorter Wait Times



INCREASED HOURS

Later Hours
More Sunday Service



SHORT-RANGE

- Route upgrades to simplify local routes, enhance intercity connectivity, and reduce transfers
- Schedule adjustments and frequency upgrades to improve connections and reduce wait times
- New On-Demand Service in Anacortes with smaller vehicles to increase transit access, accommodate short trips, and connect to Routes 40X and 410.



MID-RANGE

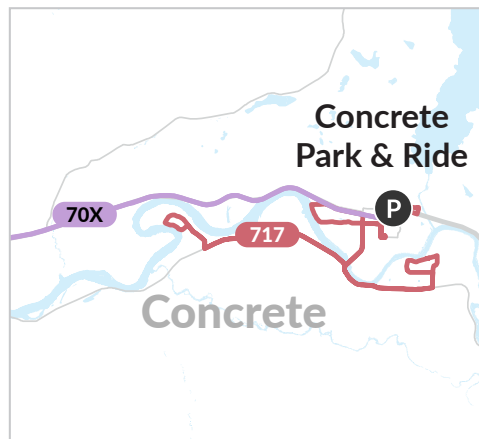
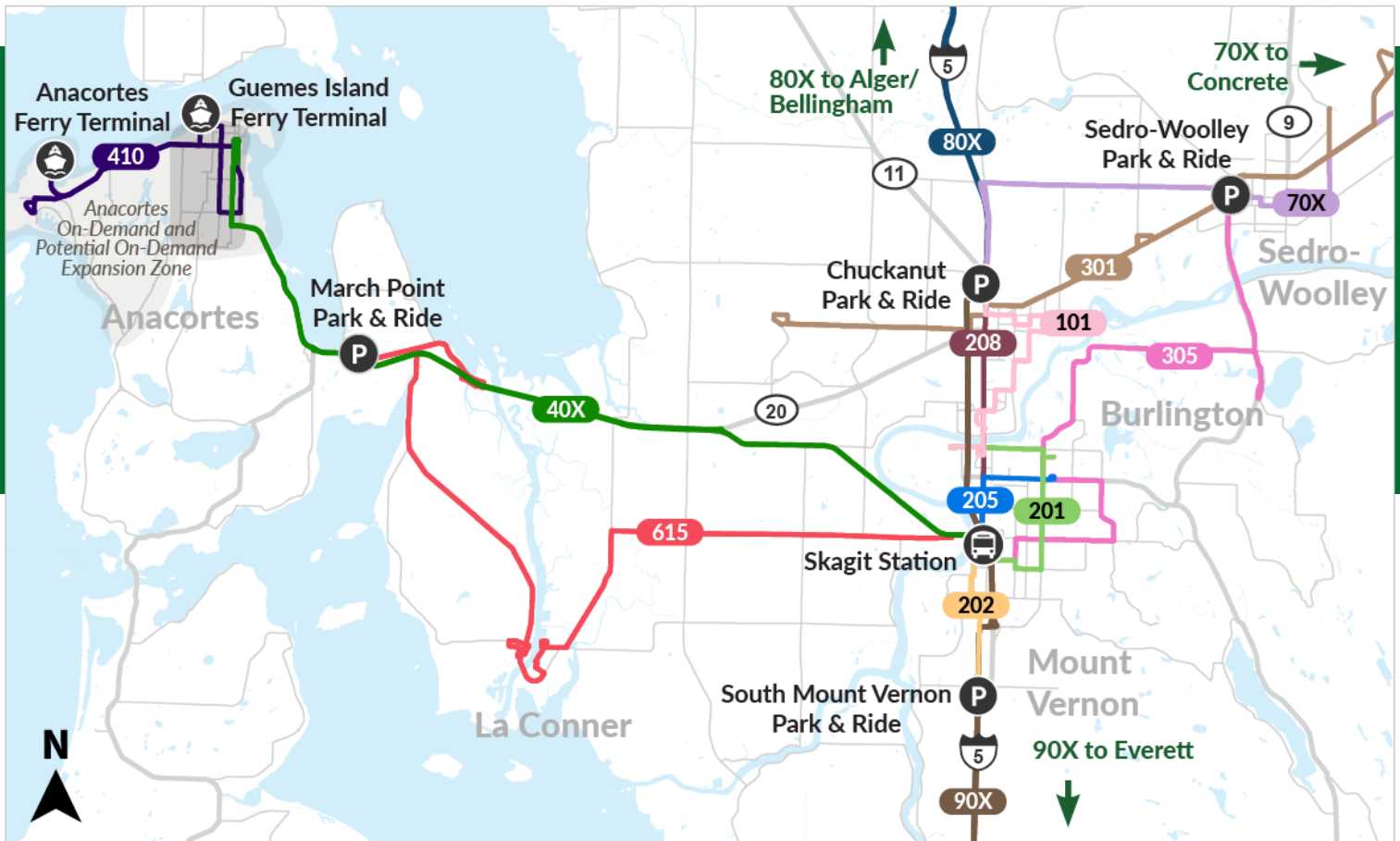
- Upgrades at Skagit Transit facilities to enhance the rider experience and improve operator comfort.
- Completion of a systemwide bus stop improvement program to ensure accessibility, safety, and comfort.
- Frequency upgrades to further increase service convenience and accommodate future ridership growth.
- Expanded weekend service to fill existing service gaps



LONG-RANGE

- Frequency upgrades and expanded evening service

RECOMMENDED ROUTE NETWORK



POTENTIAL IMPLEMENTATION PHASING



SHORT-RANGE

Phase 1

Laying the foundation for future system improvements

Routes: 90X, 101, 201, 202, 205, 208, 305

Central County

Phase 2

Laying the foundation for future system improvements

Routes: 410, 40X, 70X, 301, Anacortes On-Demand Zone

West County

Re-evaluate service before proceeding



MID-RANGE

Phase 1

Weekday frequency improvements on core routes

Routes: 40X, 101

Phase 2

Add/upgrade Sunday service and upgrade infrequent routes

Routes: 70X, 201, 202, 205, 410, 615, 717

Phase 3

Upgrade frequency on intercounty routes

Routes: 80X, 90X

Re-evaluate service before proceeding

Annual Service Hours

55,800

32,100

Additional Peak Vehicles

None

None

7,700

10,000

10,300



Mid-Range and Long-Range phases dependent on additional resources



LONG-RANGE

Phase 1

Central County and
Anacortes upgrades

Routes: 101, 201,
202, 205, 208, 410

5,800



Phase 2

Sedro-Woolley
upgrades

Routes: 301

7,700



Phase 3

Later service on
connector routes

Routes: 40X, 80X,
90X

7,000

None

Phase 4

Clear Lake/LaConner
upgrades

Routes: 305, 615

9,900



Phase 5

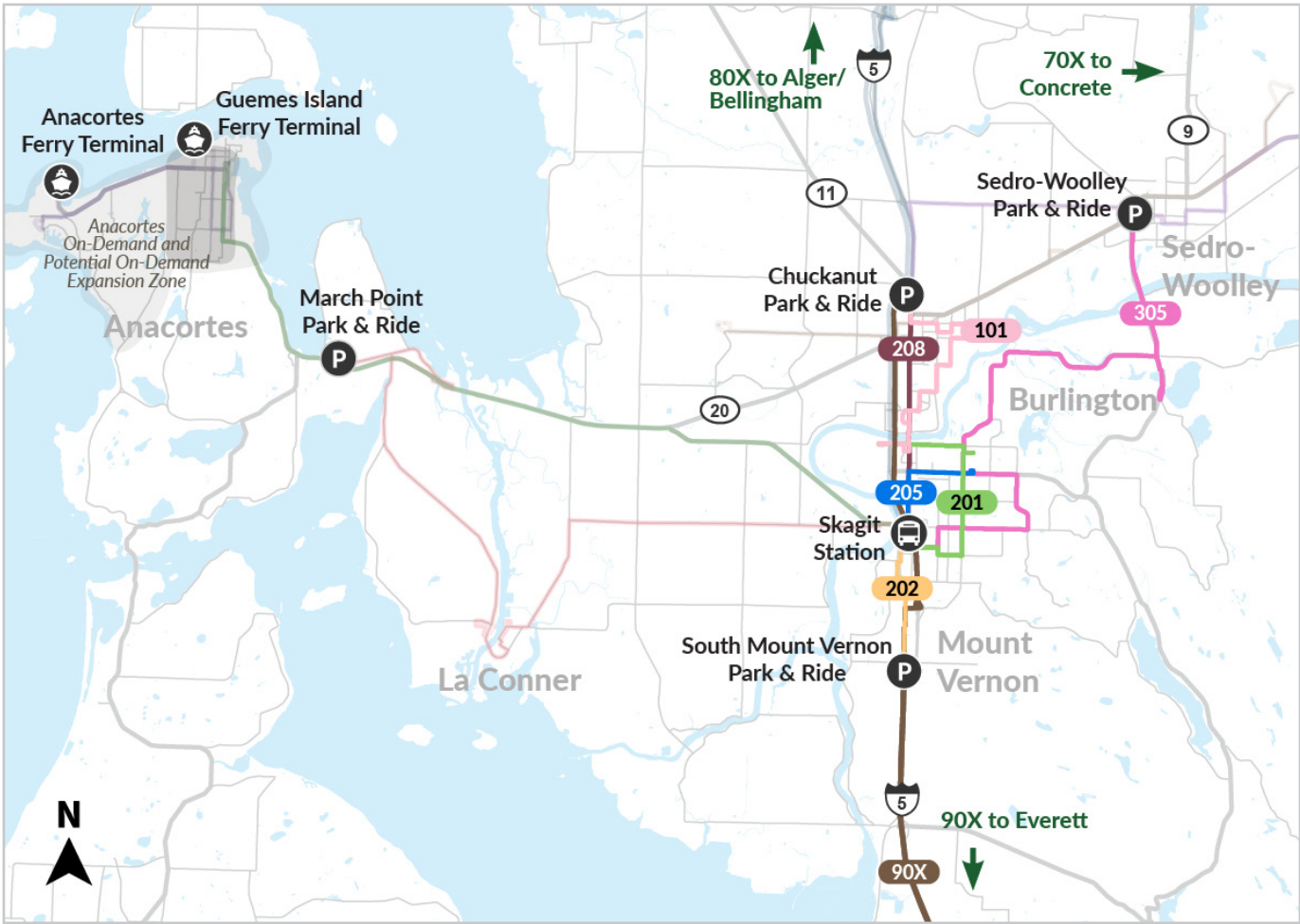
East County
upgrades

Routes: 70X, 717

400

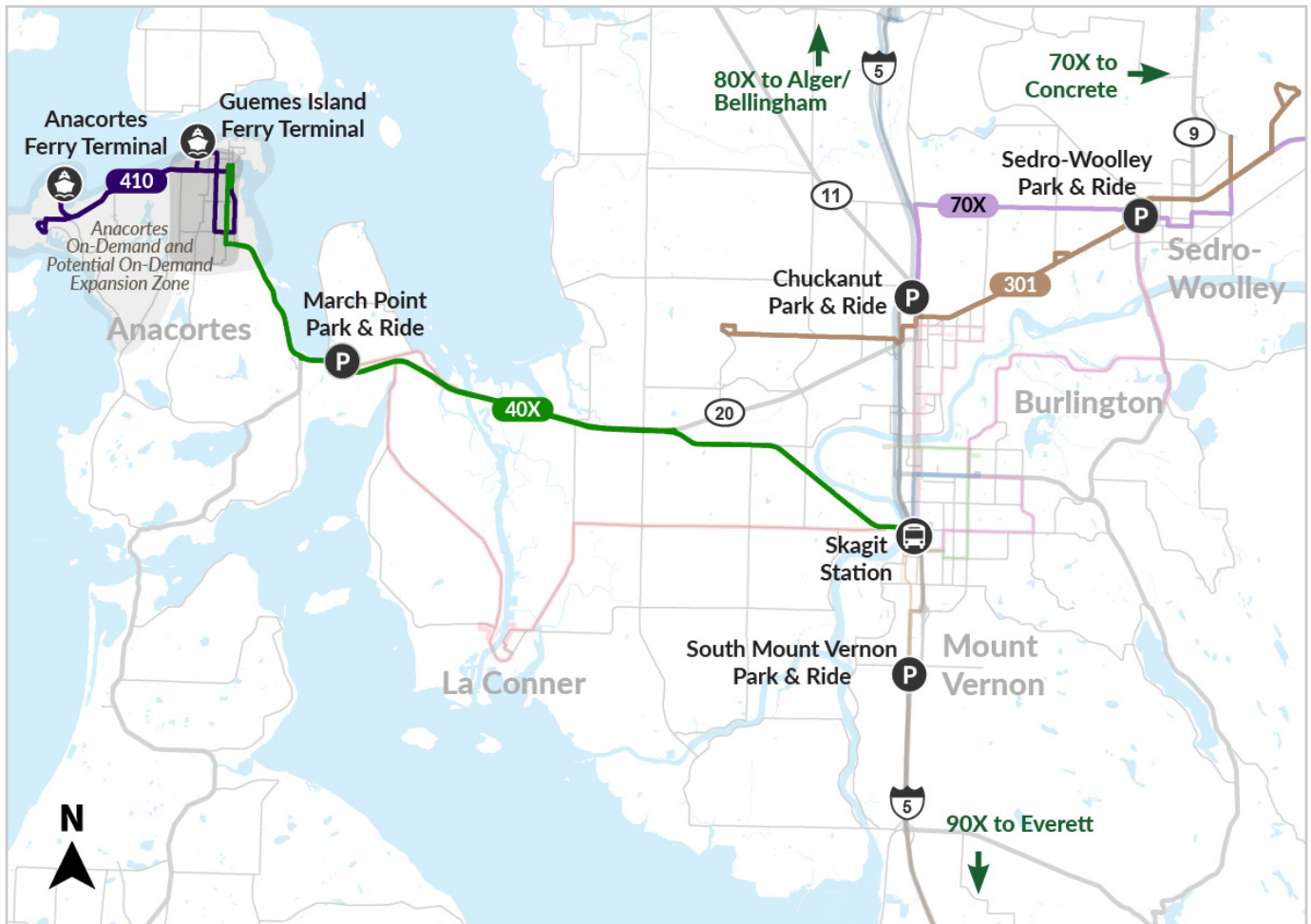


SHORT-RANGE PHASE 1 ROUTE CHANGES

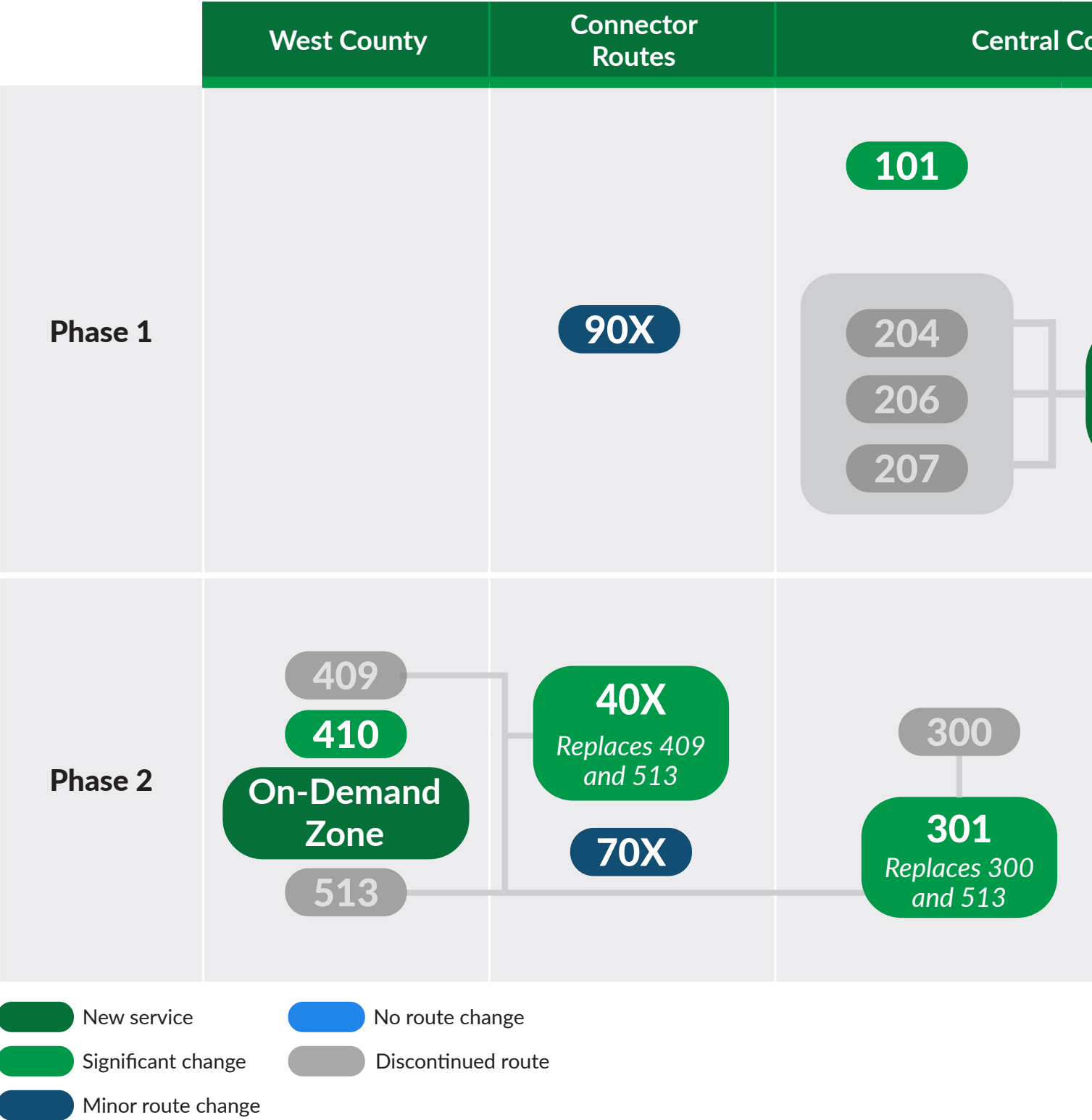


New Service	Significant Change	Minor Change	No Change	Discontinued Route
201 Mount Vernon	40X Mount Vernon / Anacortes	70X Sedro-Wooley / Concrete	205 Mount Vernon	204 Mount Vernon
Anacortes On-Demand Zone	101 Burlington	80X Bellingham Connect	208 Mount Vernon	206 Mount Vernon
	301 Sedro-Wooley	90X Everett Connect	615 La Conner	207 Mount Vernon
	305 Clear Lake	202 South Mount Vernon	717 Concrete	300 Sedro-Wooley
	410 Anacortes			409 Anacortes
				513 Burlington / Anacortes

SHORT-RANGE PHASE 2 ROUTE CHANGES



SHORT-RANGE SERVICE RECOMMENDATIONS



County	East County	Annual Estimated Net Service Hours	Estimated Net Peak Hour Service Vehicles
<div>202</div> <div>205</div> <div>208</div> <div>201</div> <div>Replaces 204, 206, and 207</div>	<div>305</div>	0	0
		0	5,000

CAPITAL

Beyond service improvements, capital investments can enhance the system through infrastructure and technological upgrades. These investments increase reliability, comfort, and safety. This section recommends capital investments and improvements for the following passenger and operator facilities. Passenger and operator facility improvements are recommended for:

- March Point Park & Ride
- Anacortes Transit Hub
- Sedro-Woolley Park & Ride

In effort to improve rider comfort at higher ridership stops, a Bus Stop Improvement Program is also recommended as a capital investment to deliver a consistent and improved passenger experience.

There are opportunities to improve customer experience by integrating fare payment with other regional transit partners, like the ORCA system that is used by transit agencies from Pierce County to Snohomish County and including Washington State Ferries. This investment would be a lever that could dramatically benefit customers and impact regional access and information-sharing as populations and transit investments expand into the North Puget Sound.

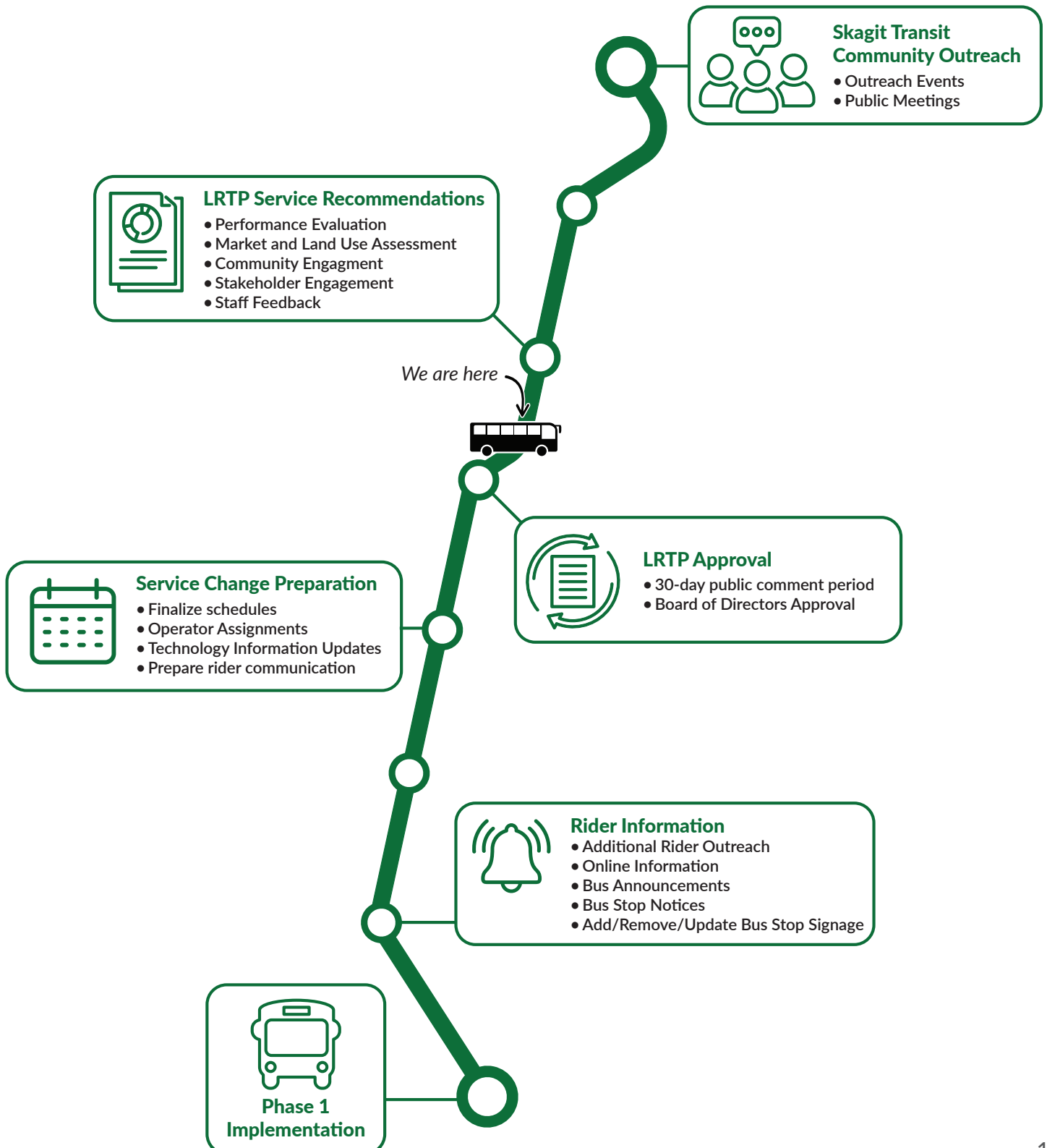
Fare integration would also enable Skagit Transit to better understand existing operational challenges, and the potential to improve travel time and service reliability. Over time, periodic analysis would help identify where spot improvements, such as queue jumps and transit signal priority, may benefit transit operations.

ACCESS

Access to and from transit stops impact, rider convenience and safety for people who walk, bike or roll. Skagit Transit and partnering jurisdictions should consider developing a sidewalk and crossing improvement program that would enhance connections to ensure rider safety and ease of access.

PHASING APPROACH & IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

The LRTP a milestone along the implementation timeline. Along with this implementation timelines, Skagit Transit will need to conduct targeted outreach to communicate upcoming changes. Skagit Transit should also coordinate with regional transit agencies for successful service integration as well as intercounty performance monitoring.



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