

# 2026 Seattle Transit Measure Renewal

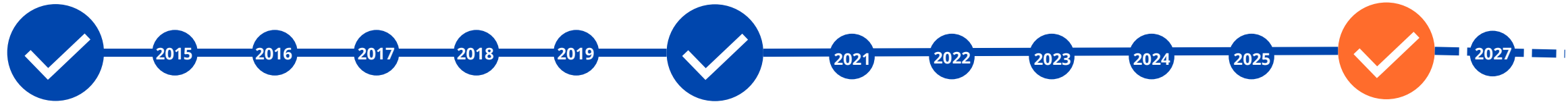


# What we're here to discuss

- How the existing Seattle Transit Measure serves the community and contributes to an affordable, accessible, and safe Seattle
- Introduce the Mayor's Seattle Transit Measure renewal proposal
- Outline how this proposal helps Seattle meet the demand for transit mobility, addresses affordability, and contributes to safety



# Investing in more Seattle transit service builds on a record of success



**2014**

0.1% sales tax  
+ \$60 VLF

**2020**

0.15% sales tax

**2026**

**STBD Prop 1 passes with 62% support**  
Passed after County-wide ballot initiative failed

**Seattle Transit Measure passes with 80% support**

**Seattle Transit Measure Renewal Process**

# City stewardship delivers positive community impacts



180,000 more bus trips per year;  
49% in equity priority areas



52,000 ORCA cards to low-income  
residents



Invested \$14M+ in support for  
regional transit safety initiatives



100+ transit capital projects focused  
on efficient transit operations and  
safe access to transit



Supported planning, project  
management, engineering, and  
permitting for Light Rail Expansion



50+ transit education programs for  
youth and older adults



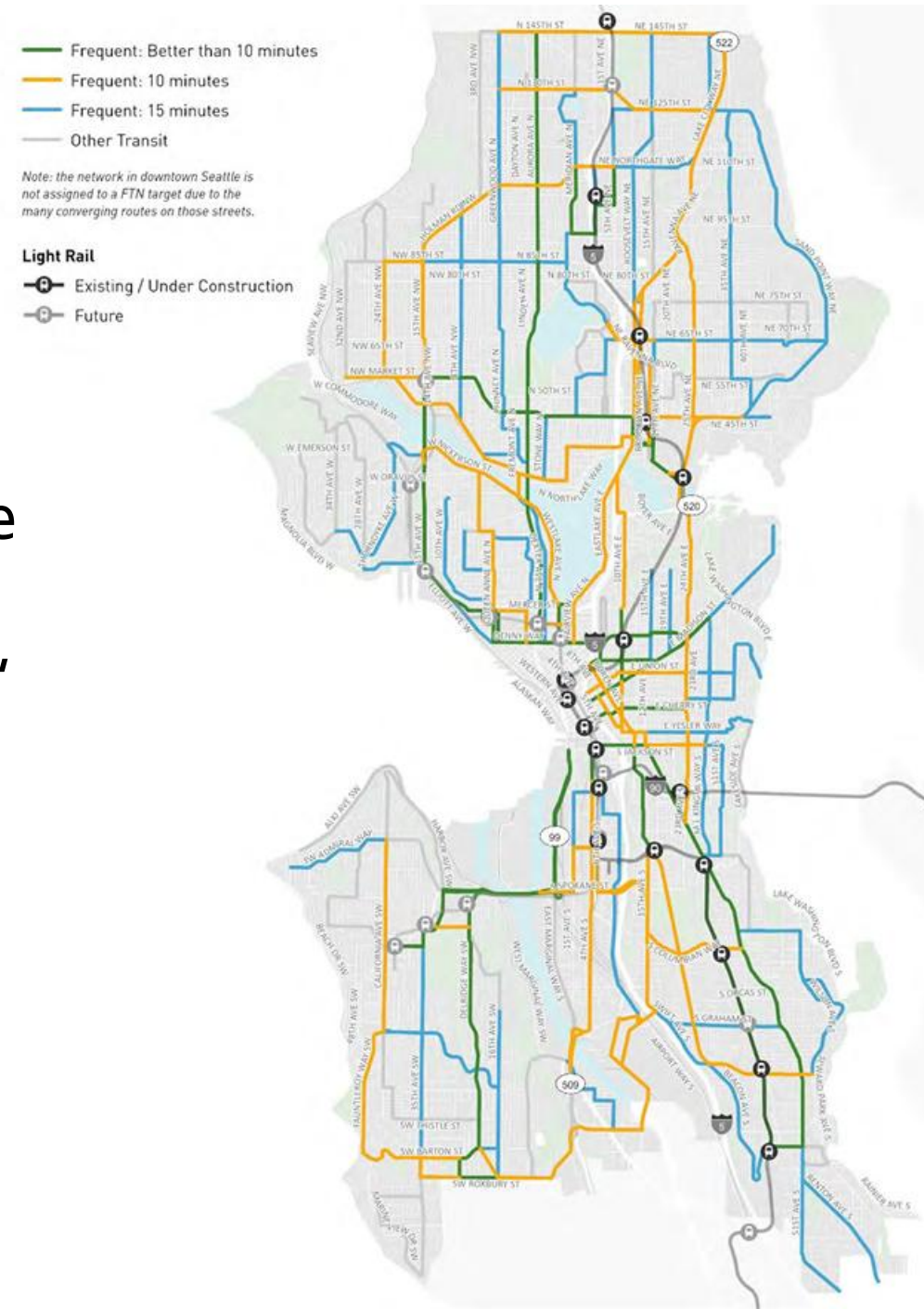
Responded to emerging transit  
needs, like COVID-19 and West  
Seattle bridge closure



Support for Seattle Streetcar lines

# Seattle's Frequent Transit Network reflects community priorities

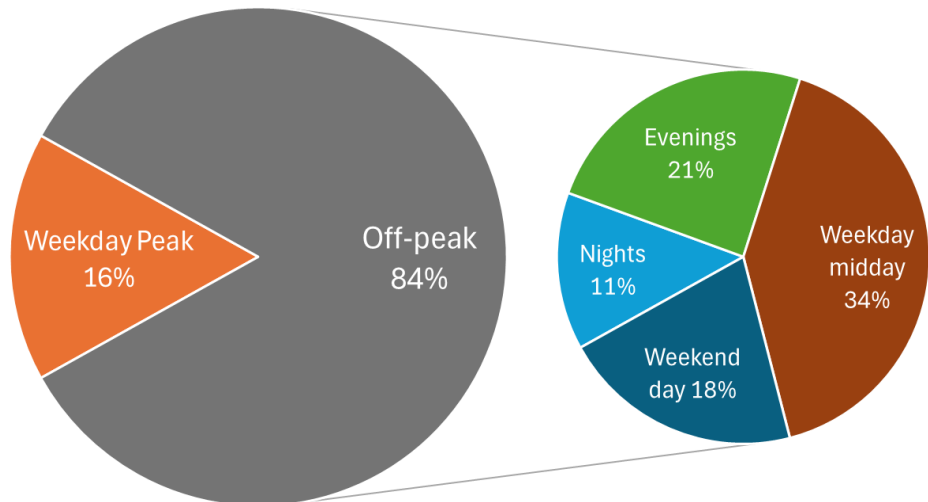
- Frequent Transit Network goals:
  - Consistent frequent service all day, every day
  - Traveling by transit is convenient, easy to choose
- Adopted as part of the Seattle Transportation Plan, based on thousands of community comments
- Reflects:
  - Seattle Comprehensive Plan
  - Population and ridership forecasts
  - Expanded transit, including new Link stations



# Data-driven, equity-centered investment strategy

- Gaps between current service and Frequent Transit Network targets
- Neighborhood demographics of route
- Times of day when highest percentage reduced fare trips taken

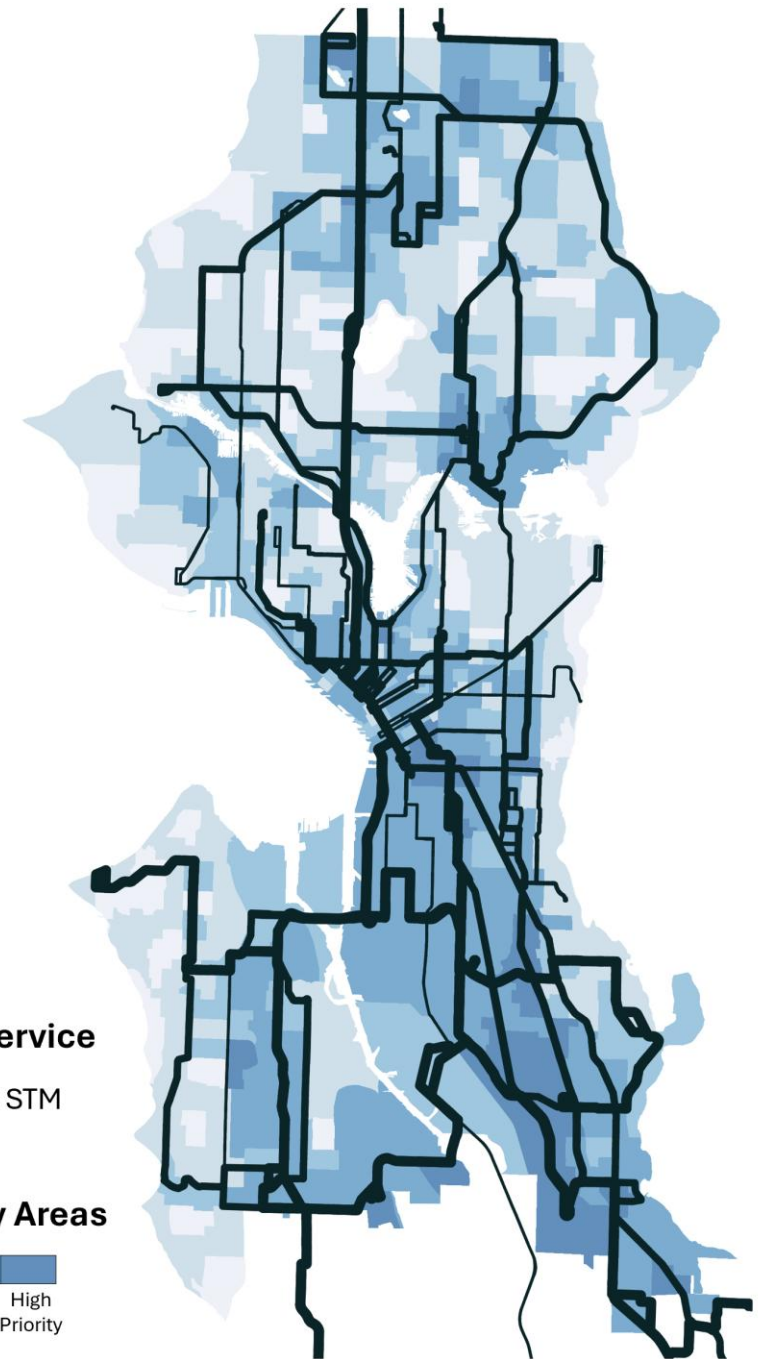
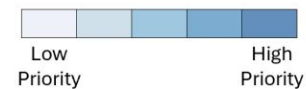
*Distribution of STM Investments by Time of Day*



## Seattle Bus Service



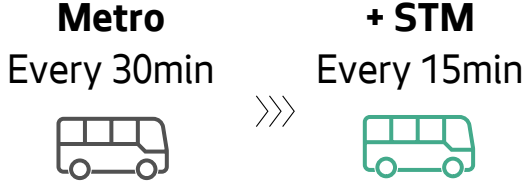
## Equity Priority Areas



# Current STM investment examples

## Route 60

*Weekends, daytime*

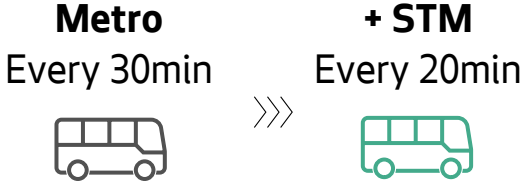


- Sunday ridership grew 41%
- Saturday grew 27%



## Route 50

*Weekdays, daytime*

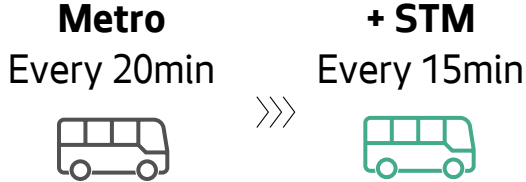


- Weekly ridership is 8% higher than 2019 levels



## Route 8

*Sundays, daytime*

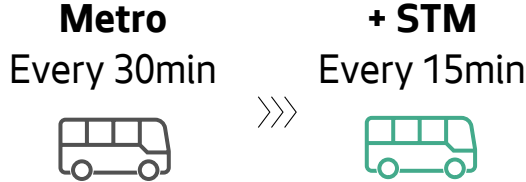


- Sunday ridership grew 29%
- 8th highest ridership in city



## Route 75 & 77

*Weekdays, mid-day*



- Starting Fall 2026!



# Contributions to safety are embedded in transit service

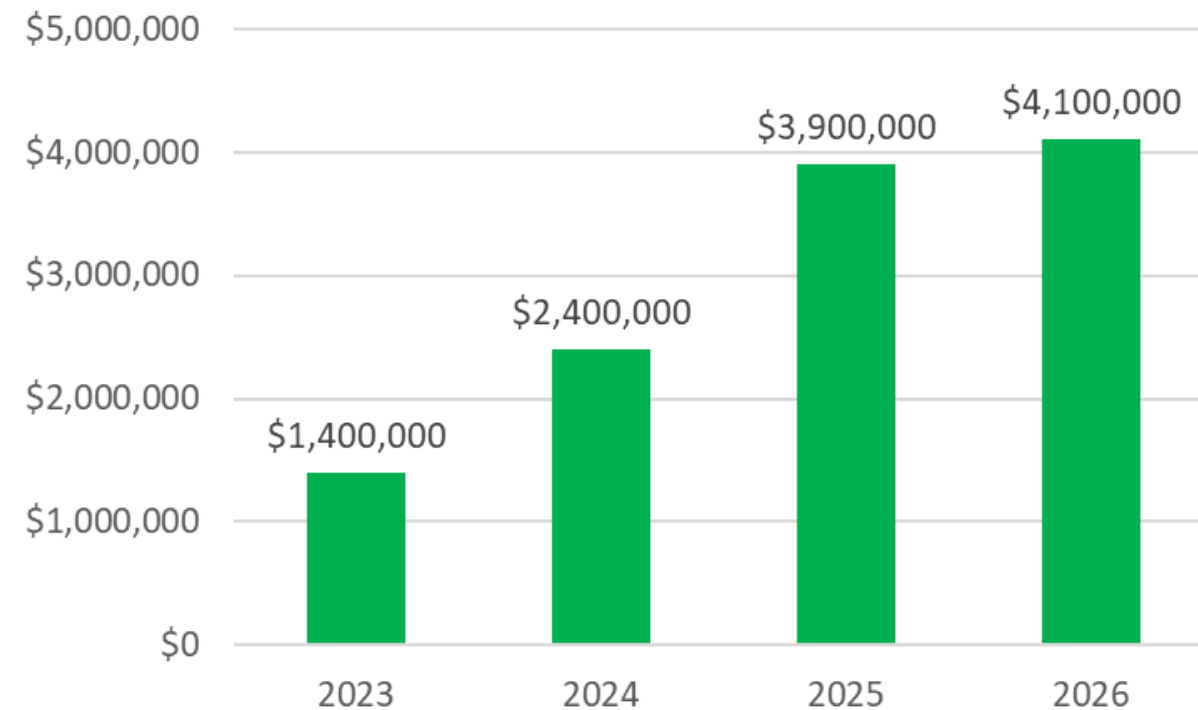
## STM: ~\$4.1M in 2026 (estimate)

- Metro's safety and security programs funded through service investments (7% - 9%)
- Examples:
  - Metro Transit Police Officers
  - Transit Security Officers
  - Behavioral Health Specialists

## 2024 Transportation Levy Transit Passenger Safety Program:

- \$9M over 8 years

STM annual contribution to Metro safety initiatives, 2023-2026



# Improved mobility and access to opportunity

## Seattle Housing Authority

- Serves **6,000+** people
- Average participant saved **\$633** in 2025
- Began in 2018
- Expanded in 2023

## Seattle Promise Scholars

- Serves **1,600+** students at Seattle Colleges
- Average participant saved **\$254** in 2025
- Began in 2022

## Seattle Preschool Program

- Serves **1,700+** families who attend SPP tuition-free
- Average participant saved **\$220** in 2025
- Began in 2024

# STM reduces transportation cost burden

"I hardly ever went anywhere. I used to cancel medical appointments because I couldn't get there. Because of my ORCA card, I can now get to my doctor's appointments and the stores...As someone who couldn't afford bus fares before, this has really come in handy."

—SHA Program Participant

"This card provides an easy way to get to and from school. We are so grateful as we do not have a vehicle at the moment and every little bit helps to make our lives easier. We've been able to attend school functions and visit classmates. Also attended our spiritual services downtown."

—Seattle Preschool Program Participant

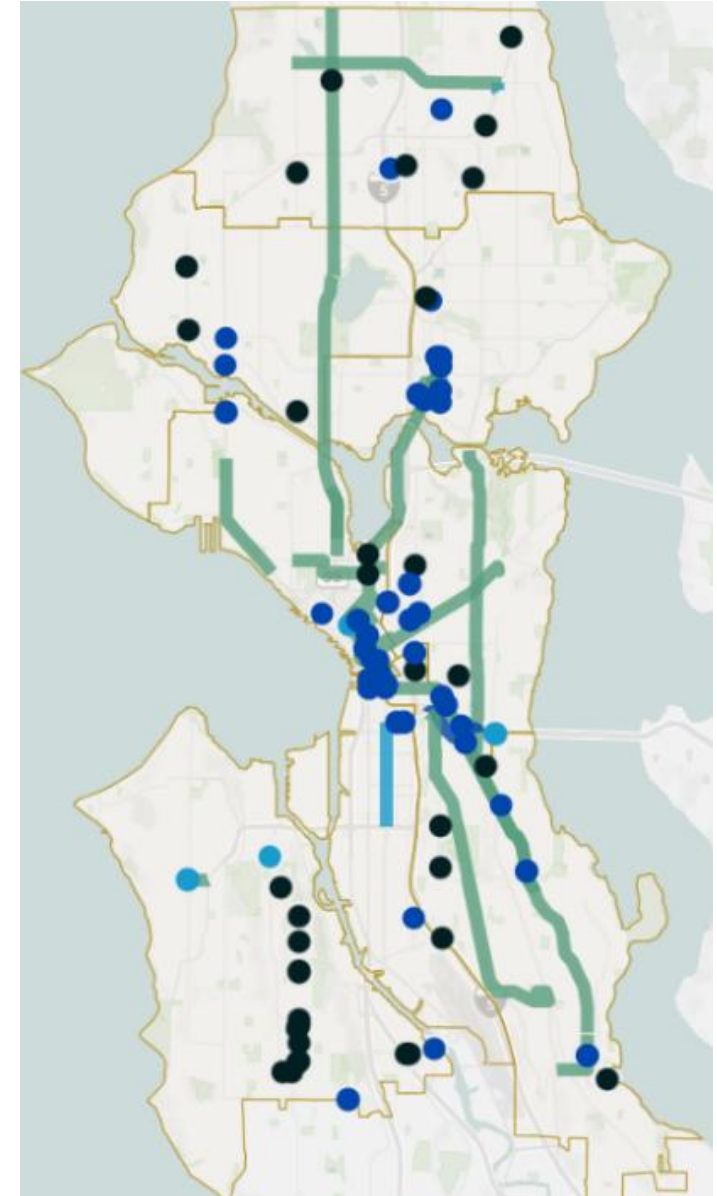
"This program has been a huge impact. I use the card at least 3-4 times a day so it's a huge budget saver. I use the card everywhere; doctor's appointments, grocery store, shopping, walking the dog, going to the park."

—SHA Program Participant



# STM supports transit capital projects

- Supports over 100 transit capital projects City-wide, increasing transit reliability and safe access to transit
- Ensures service investments are used effectively to keep transit moving, minimizing delays
- Example projects:
  - Rainier Ave S Bus Lane Project: improving Route 7 reliability
  - 13 transit stop improvements on Route 125 in West Seattle
  - New transit-ready street on 30th Ave NE between 125th and Lake City Way to support new Metro Route 77
- Compliment to 2024 Transportation Levy's **\$151 million over 8 years** for transit infrastructure improvements



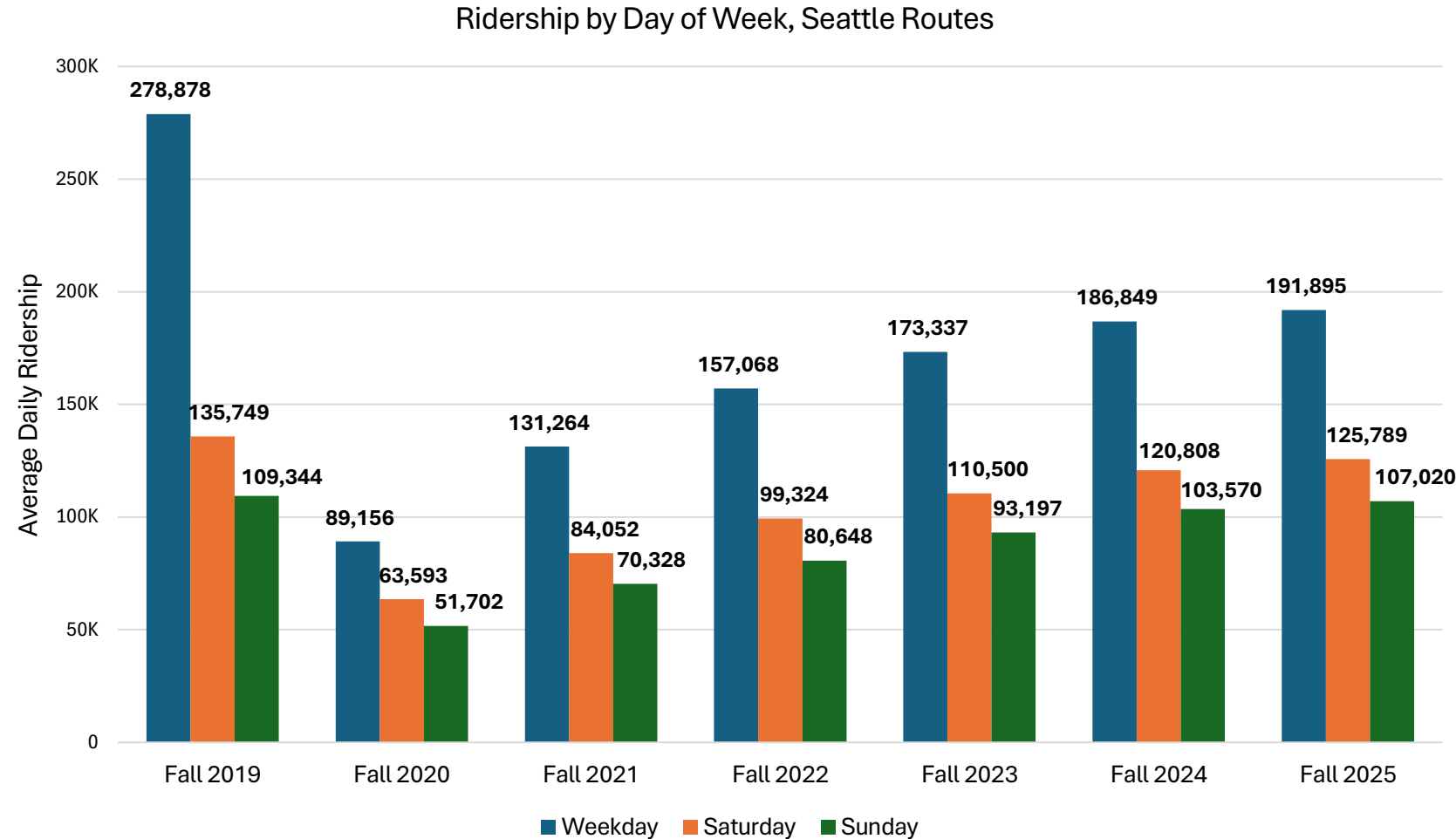
# Mayor Wilson's Proposal

- ✓ 0.3% sales tax for 10 years
- ✓ Improves transit service at all times of day
- ✓ Increases transit access, connecting people to opportunities and meeting their daily travel needs
- ✓ Supports Seattle's adopted affordability, equity, and climate goals



# Seattle is a growing transit city

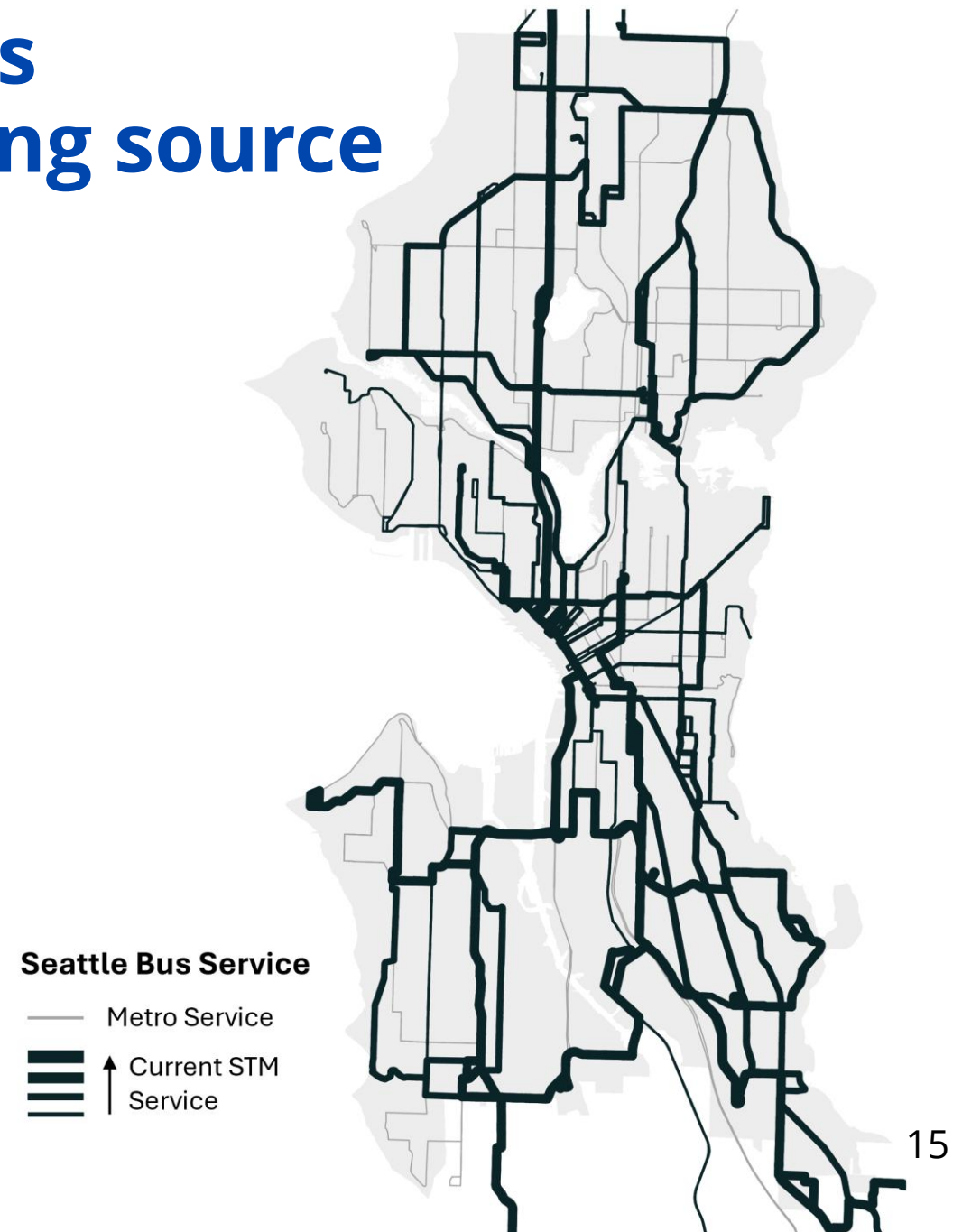
- Transit ridership is growing and evolving
  - Growing ridership for non-work / off-peak trips
  - New light rail stations and RapidRide lines
- Seattleites want fast, frequent, reliable, and affordable transit
- Transit increases equitable access to opportunity, services, and the economy





# Seattle Transit Measure is City's dedicated transit service funding source

- Since 2014 Seattle voters have invested in better-than-baseline transit service, access, and improvements
- STM is City's only source of funding for more transit service and access:
  - 1 out of every 13 transit trips in Seattle
  - 10,000 free low-income transit passes
- **STM expires in April 2027, and needs to be renewed by voters on the November 2026 ballot to maintain current services**



# Mayor Wilson's proposal:

Renew the **Seattle Transit Measure** in 2026 as a **0.3%** sales and use tax for **10 years**, delivering on Seattle's commitment to creating a **world-class transit network**

# STM Renewal Components

**86.5%**

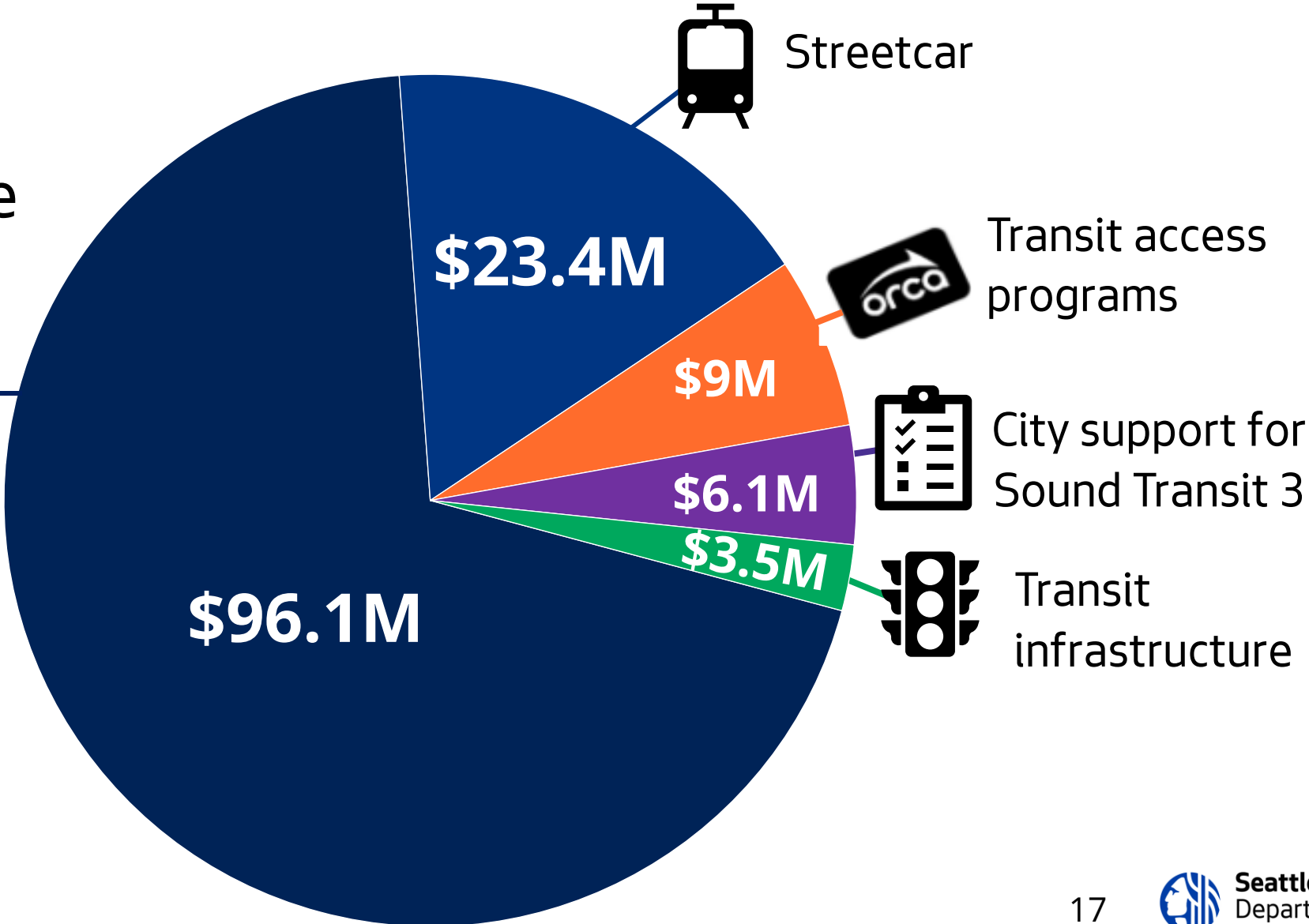
for transit service



Bus service

Average expected revenue:

**\$138 million per year**



# What we heard and how we responded

We heard	Response
Better bus service at off-peak times (evenings, nights, & weekends)	<p><b>\$119.5 M per year</b> for transit service</p> <p>Invested with a focus on <b>equity</b> and <b>filling gaps</b> in the Frequent Transit Network</p>
Better east-west transit connections	
Better bus service for people who rely on it most	
Expand free fare programs for low-income residents	<p><b>\$9M per year</b> for ORCA subsidy programs, expanding to <b>12,000</b> HCV participants</p>
Make buses more reliable and improve travel times	<p><b>\$3.5M per year</b> for transit capital improvements</p>
Ensure a safe environment for bus riders and drivers	<p>Proportional contribution to <b>all</b> of Metro's safety and security investments</p>
Concern about affordability and regressivity of sales tax, but desire to prevent cuts to services	<p>Considered available funding streams (sales tax and vehicle licensing fees), <b>0.3% sales tax only</b></p>

# Racial Equity Toolkit outcomes



STM renewal can advance racial equity by **investing in neighborhoods historically underserved** by transit



**Expanded service hours** and **ORCA subsidy programs** are the **highest-impact strategies** for supporting transit-dependent, lower-income communities



STM renewal includes both racialized benefits and burdens: funding sources are regressive, but the **resulting transit improvements directly benefit BIPOC riders**



Ongoing **accountability, reporting, and public communication** about STM investments keep Seattleites informed on the outcomes of these programs

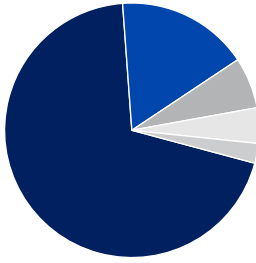


Targeted investments, culturally relevant outreach, and **equity-centered decision-making** are **essential to reduce harm and improve access**

# Keep people moving

\$119.5M per year

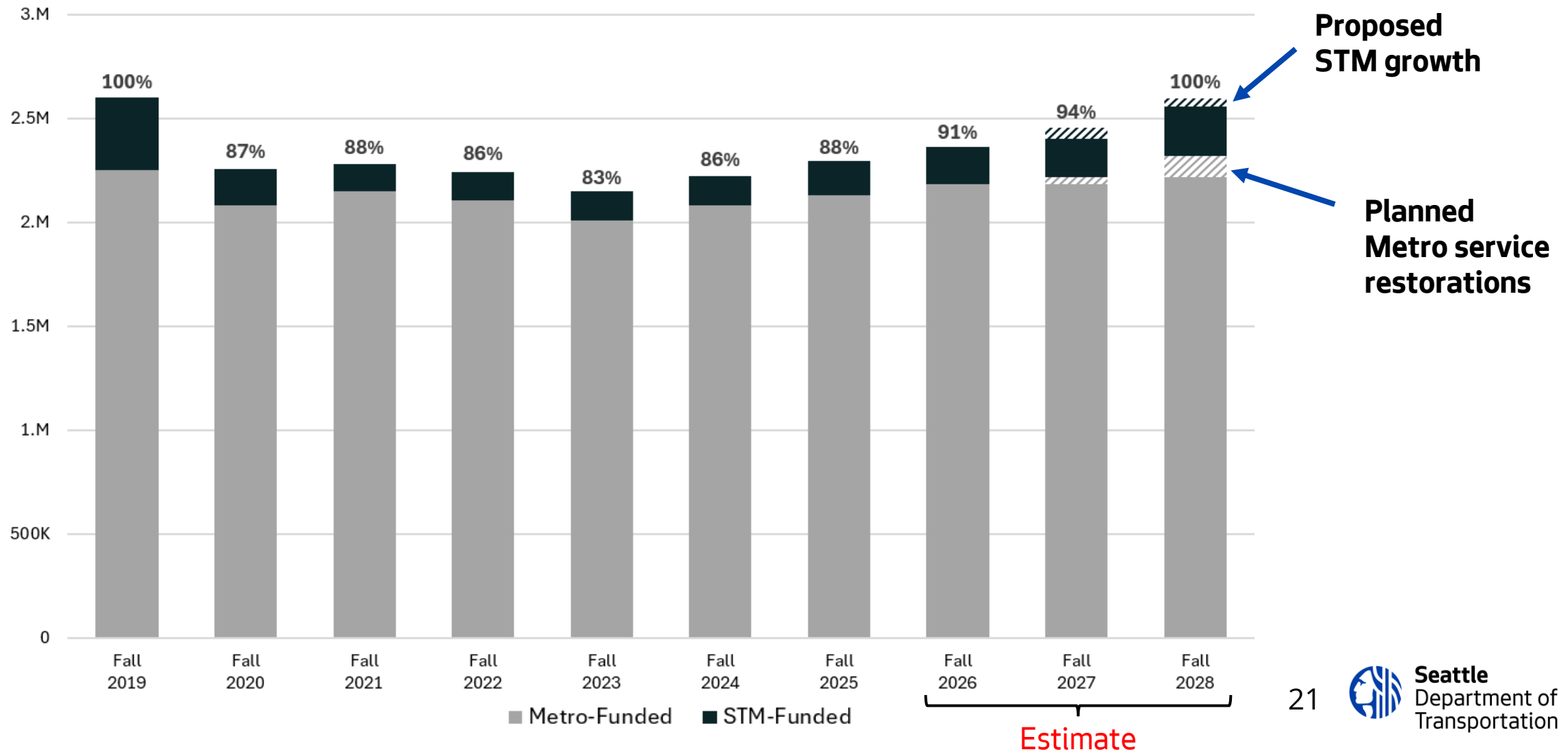
- 280,000 bus trips per year:
  - 100,000 more trips than today
  - 50,000+ more people travel by bus every week
- More reliable, frequent transit service:
  - Consistent schedule 7 days a week
  - Buses come more often evenings, nights, weekends, mid-day
  - Continue investing in Metro's safety/security efforts
  - Fund Seattle Streetcar System



# Seattle Transit Measure renewal: meet the moment

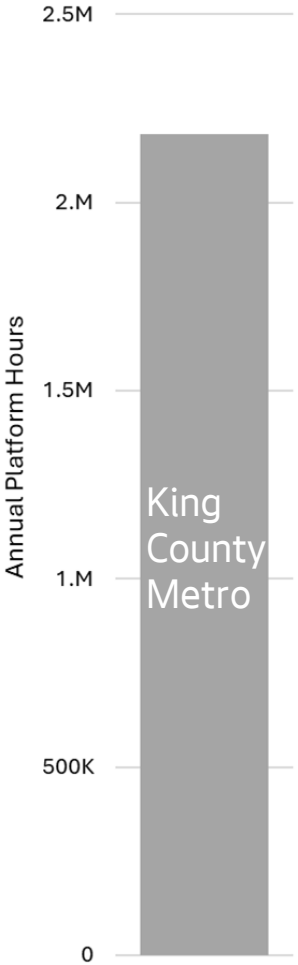
## Metro- and STM-Funded Bus Service In Seattle

Percent service hour recovery compared to Fall 2019



# Metro's baseline Seattle service

## Seattle Bus Service

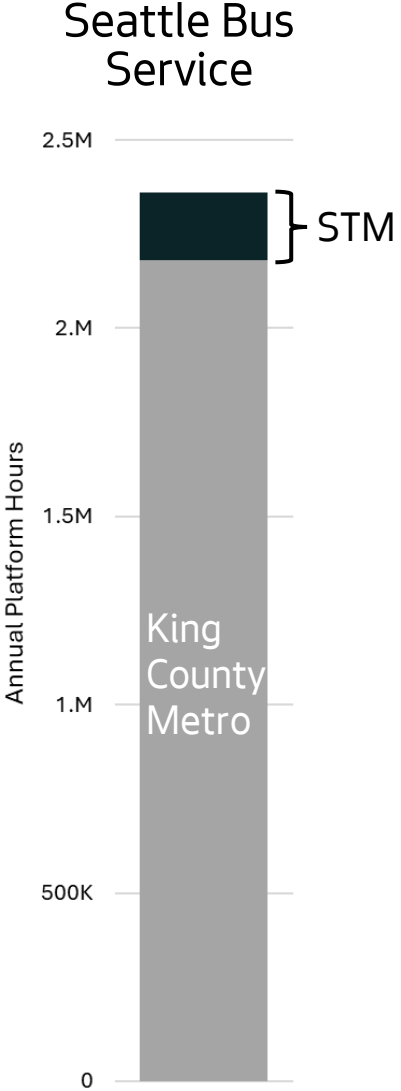


## Seattle Bus Service

— Metro Service

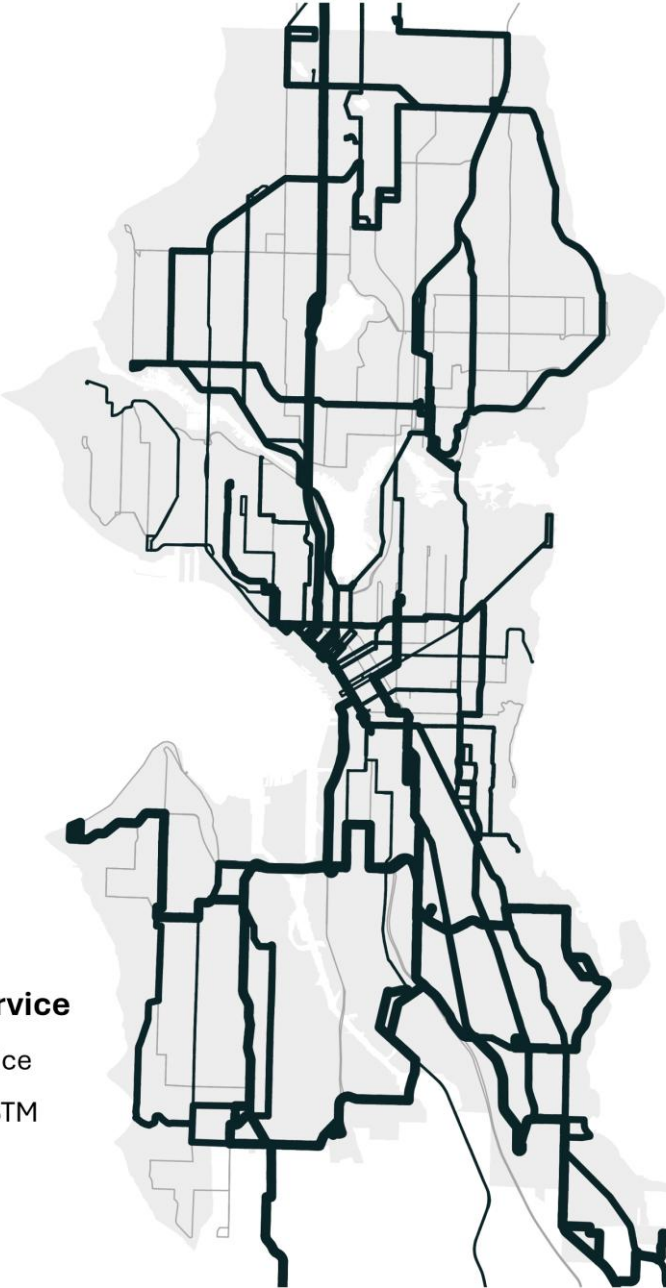


# Current STM service investments



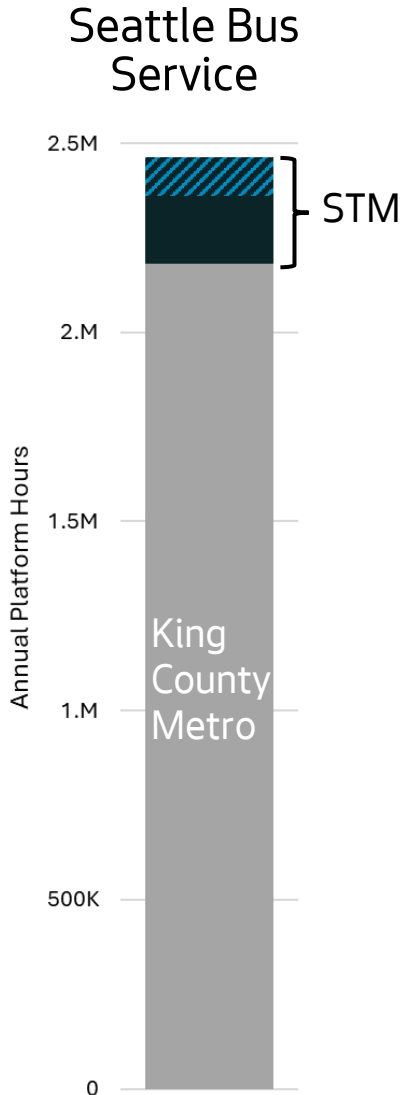
## Seattle Bus Service

- Metro Service
- ▬ Current STM Service
- ▬ Service



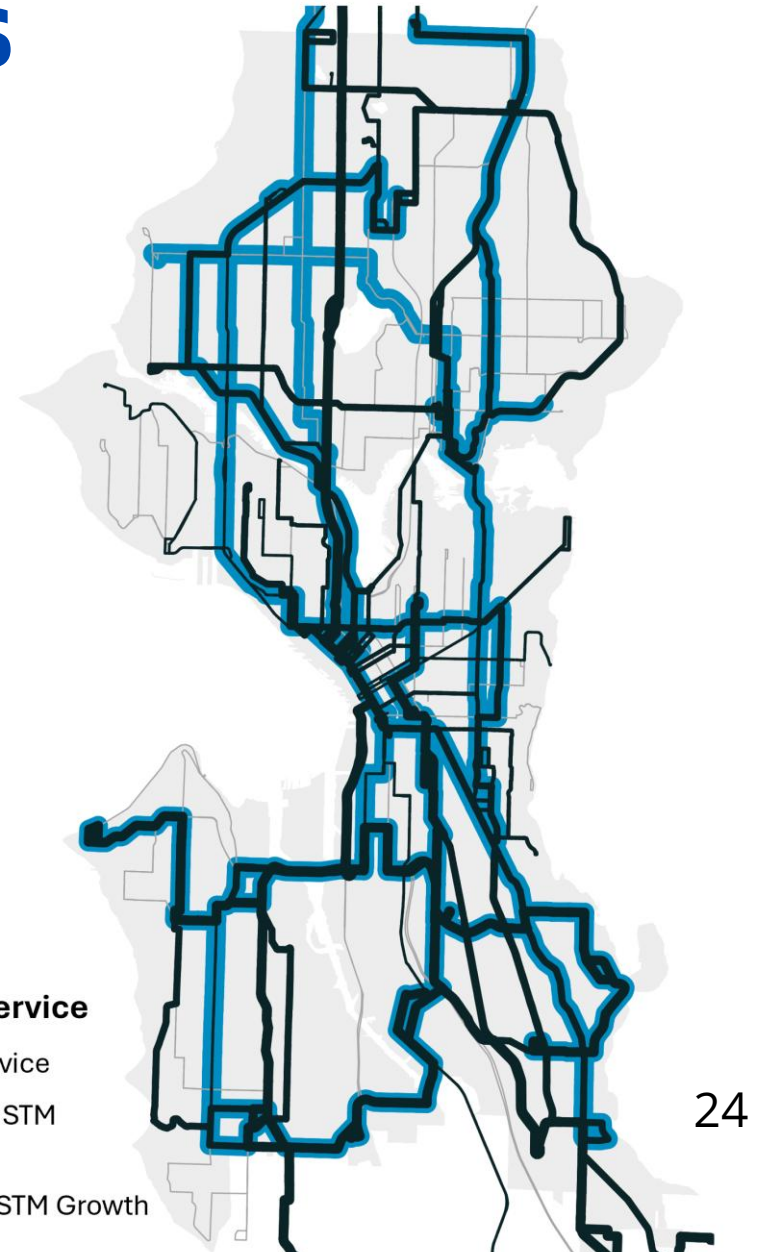
# Potential new service investments

- More frequent service during mid-days, evenings, nights, and weekends
- Continue prioritizing transit service for populations that depend on it most
- Improve bus service around areas planned for housing and employment growth
- Strengthen East-West transit service, including connections to light rail



## Seattle Bus Service

- Metro Service
- Current STM Service
- Potential STM Growth

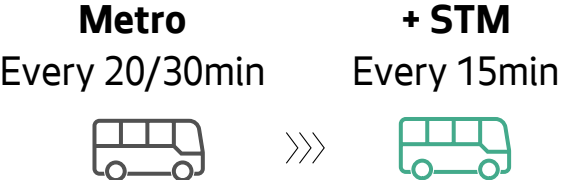


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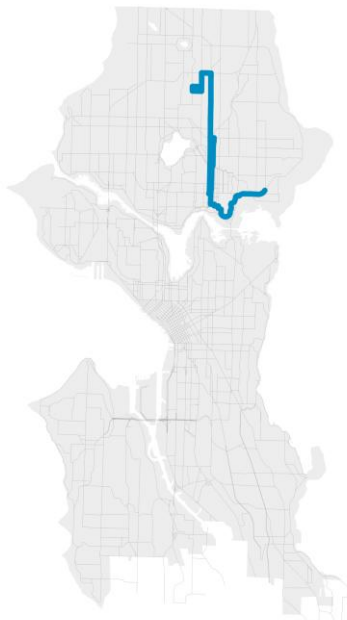
# Example potential future STM investments

## Route 67

Weekends, evening

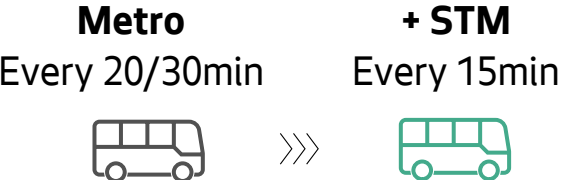


- Extend service later into evenings on weekends
- Serves 3 light rail stations



## Route 21

Weekends, daytime

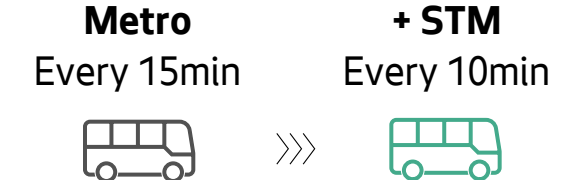


- Double weekend service to align with weekdays
- Large weekend service gaps

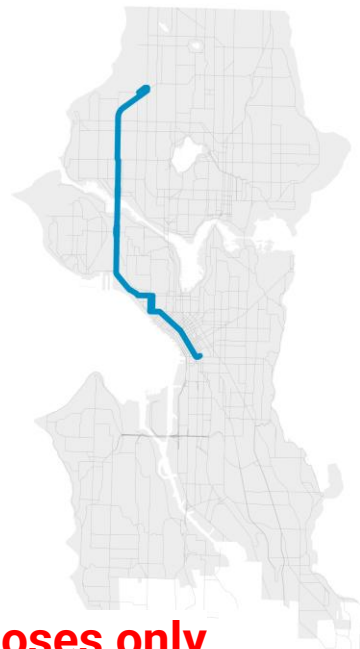


## D Line

Weekends, daytime

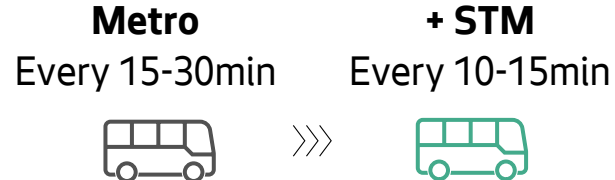


- 10-min service 7 days/week
- 3rd highest ridership in city



## Route 36

Weekdays, evening



- Extend frequent service later
- 7th highest ridership routes



For illustrative purposes only

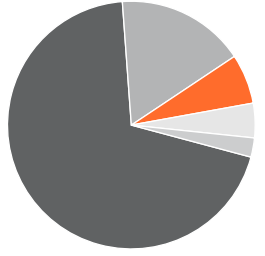
# Seattle Streetcar

- Vital connections to local destinations, hospitals, schools, colleges, special event venues
- Increasing ridership: 1.6 million in 2025
  - First Hill Streetcar returned to 2019 ridership
  - South Lake Union ridership grew by 40,000 riders (26%) in 2025
- Both lines serve a higher than average share of zero vehicle households and people of color



# Support and expand transit access

\$9M per year



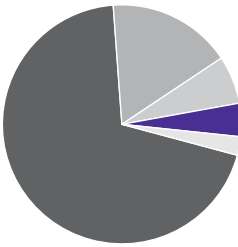
- **Continue providing 10,000 people with fully subsidized ORCA Cards every year:**
  - Seattle Housing Authority (SHA): 6,000 residents
  - Seattle Preschool Program: 2,000 low-income families
  - Seattle Promise Scholars: 1,500+ young adults
- **Expand SHA partnership to 12,000 Housing Choice Voucher participants**
- Continue transit education programming, serving youth and aging adults



# Advance Sound Transit expansion

\$6.1M per year

- Supporting design and delivery of the West Seattle and Ballard Link Extension projects and Graham Street station
- Planning capital projects to improve access to the expanded light rail network for Seattle's transit riders

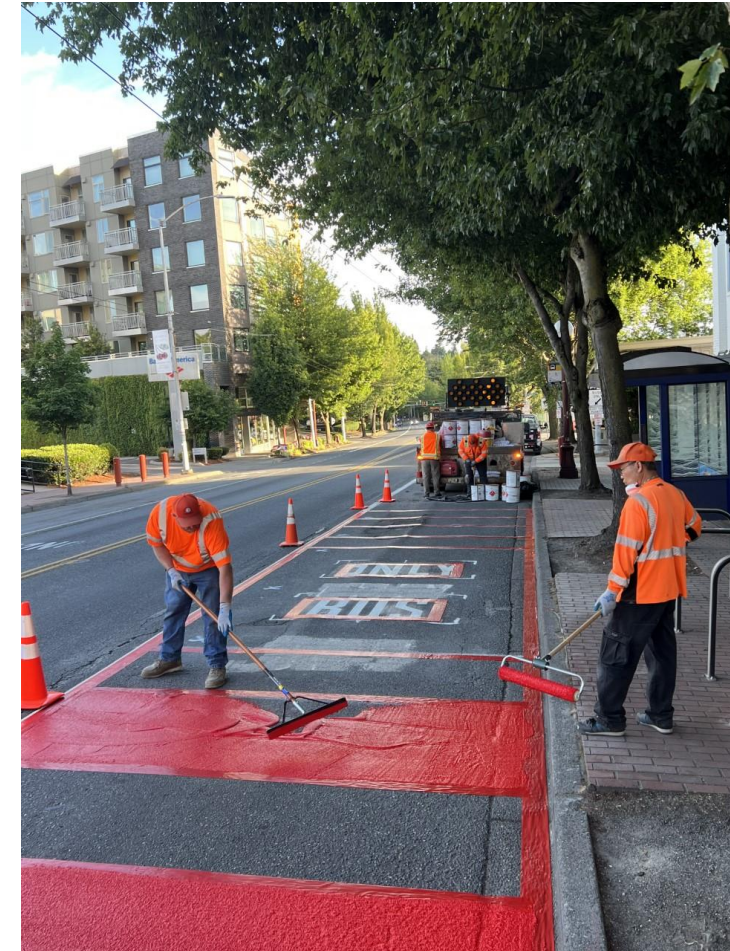
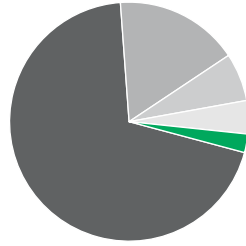


# Improve transit infrastructure

\$3.5M per year

Invest in improving transit travel time and reliability projects to:

- Keep transit on schedule
- Support STM transit service investments
- Improve the rider experience traveling to and waiting at transit stops
- 1-2 transit corridor improvements per year



# Why a 0.3% sales tax rate?



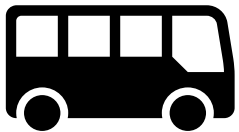
Costs have risen 26% since 2020

Demand for public services is increasing; people want:

- More transit that is frequent, reliable, and safe
- More access support for low-income residents



Other transportation funding sources have plateaued or declined, and there is competition for limited resources



0.223% sales tax is the baseline renewal, anything less would require cuts from today's level of investment

# Sales tax as a funding source

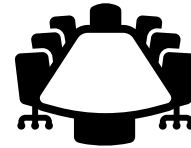
## Everyone contributes



Residents



Workers



Businesses



Visitors

## Essentials are exempt



Medication  
and medical  
equipment



Groceries



Rent and  
mortgage  
payments



Personal care  
and baby  
products

# Cost to taxpayers

Median income 2-person household (\$121,000/year)

	2020 STM	2026 STM	Change
Monthly Cost	\$2.42	\$4.83	+\$2.42
Annual Cost	\$29	\$58	+\$29

Low-income 2-person household (\$38,000/year)

	2020 STM	2026 STM	Change
Monthly Cost	\$1.50	\$2.92	+\$1.42
Annual Cost	\$18	\$35	+\$17

# Why renew the Seattle Transit Measure?

- Prevent cuts to programs and services people rely on
- Expanding the transit system supports affordable mobility options for people of all ages, ability, incomes
- More transit provides multiple ways to connect to destinations and makes the network more resilient
- Continue SDOT's contribution to Metro's safety investments through service purchases
- Allows Seattle to choose where and how to improve service and access in our City, beyond Metro's baseline



# Thank You!

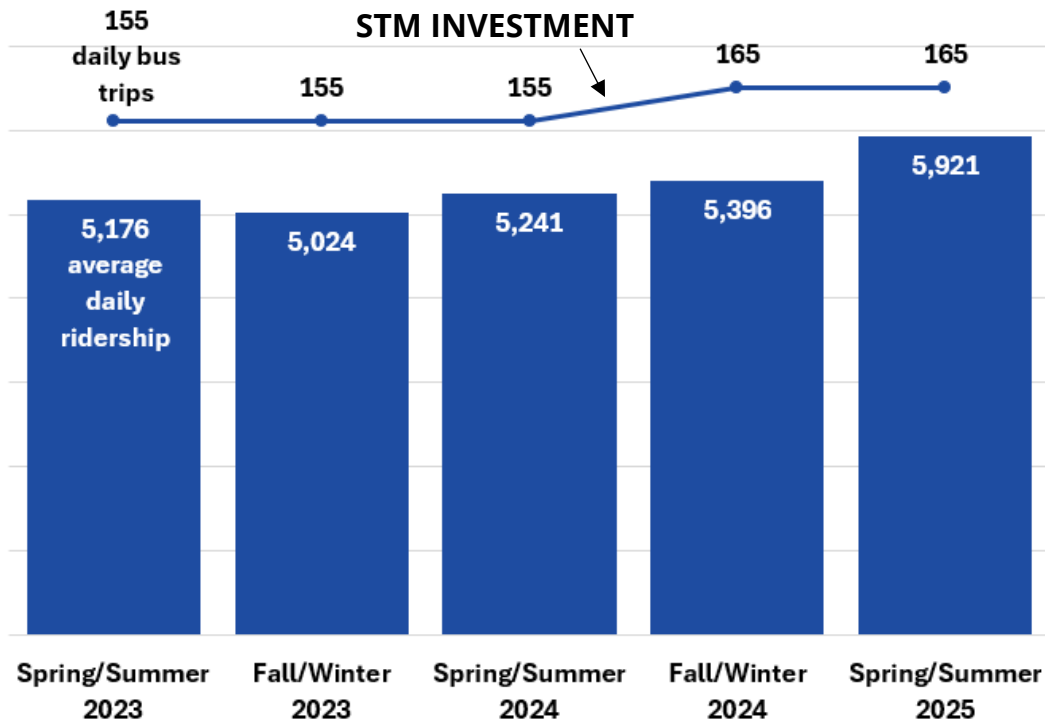
# Example: Route 60



- STM funds +250 weekly bus trips; 19% of all Route 60 service
- After STM investment, ridership grew 27% on Saturdays and 41% on Sundays
- Today, Weekend ridership is 60% higher than in 2019; Weekday is 10% higher

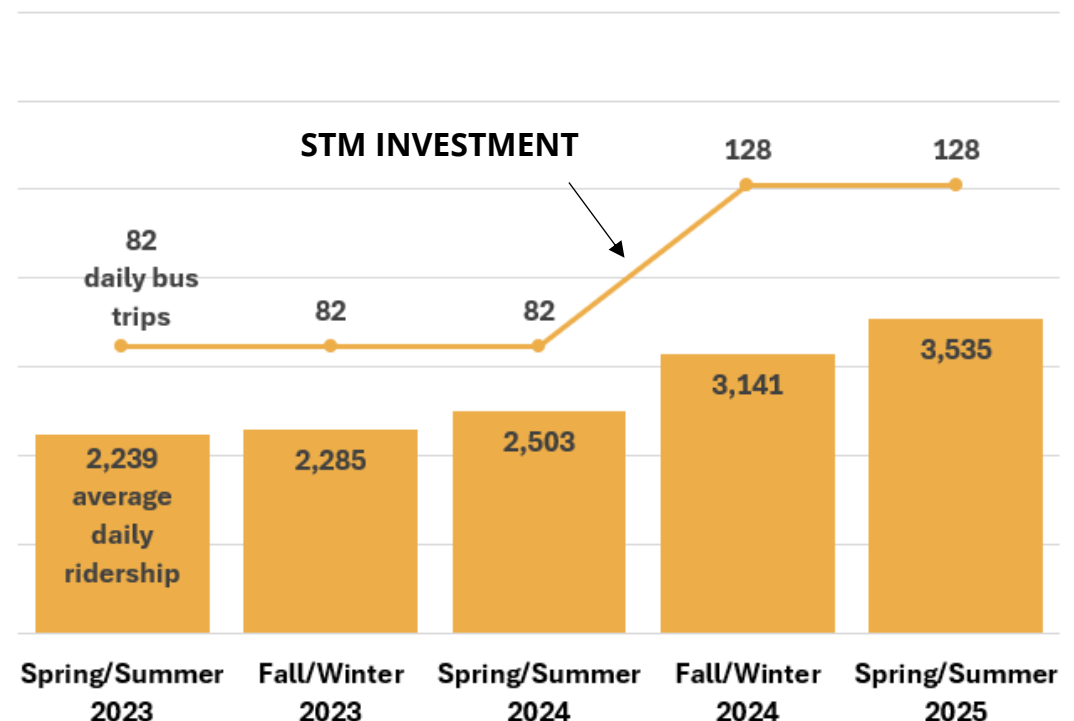
## Weekday

Extended 20min evening service through midnight



## Sunday

Improved from every 30mins to 15mins all day



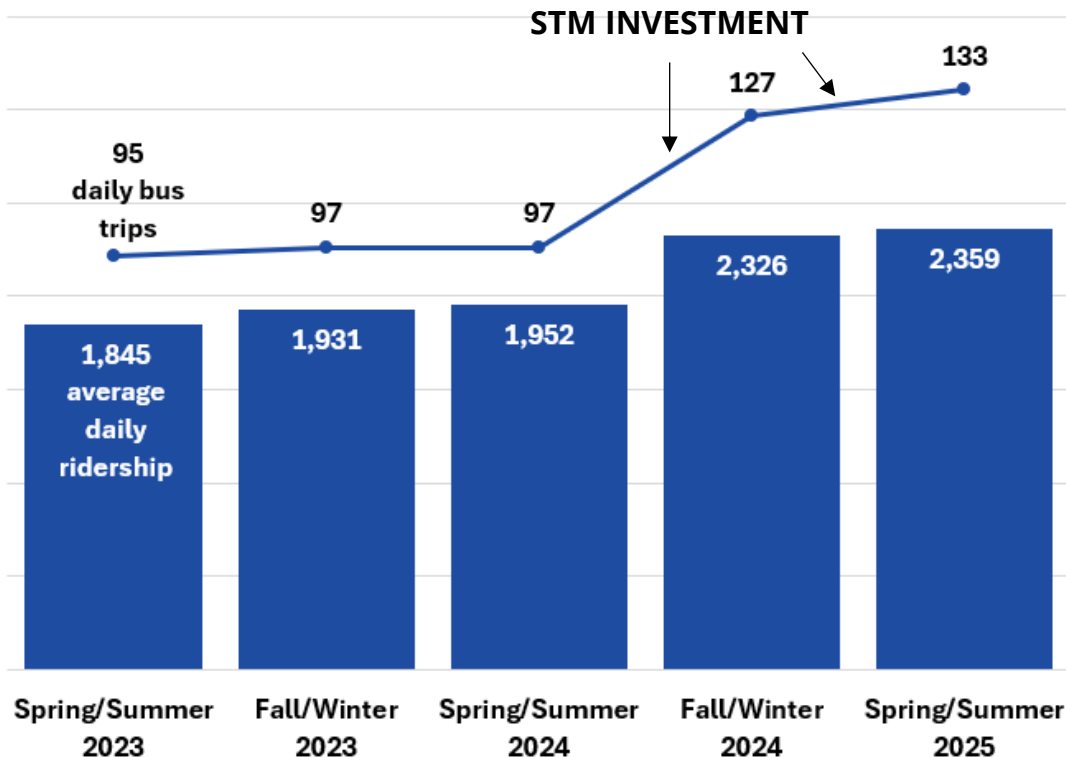
# Example: Route 107



- STM funds +300 weekly bus trips; 33% of all service on Route 107
- After STM investment, ridership grew 52% on Sundays and 21% on Weekdays
- Today, Route 107 ridership is 8% higher than in 2019

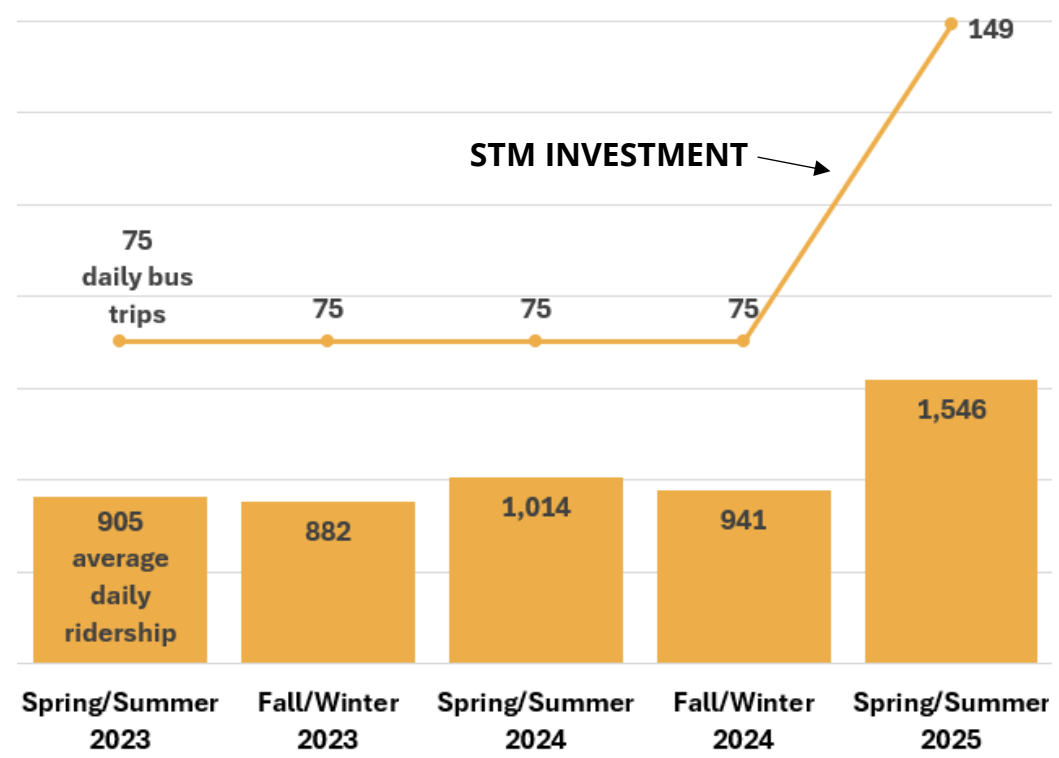
## Weekday

Improved from every 20/30mins to 15mins all day



## Sunday

Improved from every 30mins to 15mins all day and added hourly overnight service



# Education programs for youth and aging adults

- **Transit Education Program:** partner with Senior Centers to take older adults on field trips by transit
- **Youth Transit Ambassadors:** high school youth fellowship to introduce transportation careers
- **Youth Summit:** annual one-day summit to collect feedback on transportation themes

"My son has to drive me everywhere but now I know how to get to the library and the aquarium from my new apartment, and I am excited to get out there on my own!"

—Senior Field Trip participant



*Somali seniors from Horn of Africa services going on a field trip to the Seattle Aquarium*

# Support for new Metro route, Link connection

- New Metro Route 77 connects Bitter Lake, Lake City, Green Lake, and University District neighborhoods to 3 light rail stations, including new Pinehurst Station
- Route serves high equity priority populations
- STM contributed funds for three infrastructure projects that will make this new route possible:
  - NE 130th St & NE 125th St: mobility and safety
  - N 130th St: I-5 to Aurora Ave N
  - 30th Ave NE between 125th and Lake City Way transit street

**Pinehurst Station & Route 77**



# One transit service hour pays for more than one trip

- City's Transit Service Funding Agreement outlines how we support all Metro's costs:
  - **Direct Costs:** operator and mechanic wages, bus parts, fuel
  - **Indirect Costs:** infrastructure maintenance, revenue collection, scheduling, rider information, administrative costs, etc.
- City enjoys Metro's economy of scale without owning buses or hiring operators
- Metro and SDOT pay the same hourly cost for fixed-route bus service

2024 Metro Cost Pool Summary for Fixed-Route Service

