

Grays Harbor Transit – COVID-19

COVID-19 Pandemic Response

- Adjust and adapt
 - ✓ Reduction in service, including no weekend service
 - ✓ Implement back door boarding and masking requirements
 - ✓ Fare free
 - ✓ Installing plexiglass barriers, hand sanitizers, mask dispensers
 - ✓ Distance marking the seats
 - ✓ Implementing daily health screenings, paid leave and teleworking policy
 - ✓ Enhanced sanitization of fleet and facilities

New Normal

- ✓ Operational costs increased by 10%
- ✓ Slow ridership increases to pre-pandemic levels
- ✓ Challenges with reinstating pre-pandemic staffing levels and implementing organizational changes
- ✓ Challenges with staffing issues hindered the return of weekend service
- ✓ Transit having to compete with single occupancy cars and more teleworkers. Transit must become a lot more convenient and less expensive to operate

Grays Harbor Transit – Rural Transit

- Fixed route works for the city operations; Rural areas require Dial-A-Ride (micro transit) service.
- Rural service is much less (fewer riders) efficient and effective than the urbanized service.
- Rural areas need to be serviced with express routes to attract the riders and cut down lengthy travel times
- Rural services are very limited due to low ridership and not very attractive due to low service frequency

Grays Harbor Transit – Moving Forward

Staffing

- Organizational Changes to facilitate Commercial Drivers License and On-the-Job training programs to allow Grays Harbor Transit to hire the right people and address staffing challenges
- Hired approximately 25 employees since February 2021, including Transit Operators, Dispatchers, Field Supervisors, Mechanics, Washer/Fuelers, and several management positions including a Safety & Training Manager and additional Human Resources staff.
- Return to Weekend Service on January 3, 2022 – Continue fare free status until December 31, 2022

Funding

- Passage of sales tax increase in 2013 helped GHT implement 7-day service and new technologies such as GPS system on all its buses /rolling stock.
- GHT using COVID-19 related grants to fund its operations, and any additional costs incurred due to the pandemic requirements
- Funding from sales tax is at an all-time high
- Ridership will increase gradually with expectations of reaching pre-pandemic levels in 2024

Grays Harbor Transit – Moving Forward

Electric Bus Conversion Challenges

- Grays Harbor Transit does not have the infrastructure needed to support electrification of its fleet
- Identify stakeholders (Cities, Public Utilities, Tribes, School Districts) to develop timeline and planning of implementation of electric bus infrastructure
- Utilize grant funding to help offset the costs
- Start introducing electric buses as early as 2026

Operations, Maintenance and Administrative Building

- Need of new location due to agency growth and aging facilities
 - Operations/Maintenance and Administration are in different locations
- GHT acquired property for new facility in November of 2021
- Initial stages of identifying funding and facility design
- Anticipated construction start date as early as 2024, and move-in date at the new facility on Spring 2026