



# Seattle Transit Measure (STM) - Background and Programming

Transit Advisory Board  
September 25, 2024

Matt Yarrow, STM Program Manager

Laura Lee Sturm, Transportation Access Program Manager



# Our Vision, Mission, Values, & Goals

Seattle is a thriving equitable community powered by dependable transportation. We're on a mission to deliver a transportation system that provides safe and affordable access to places and opportunities.

## **Core Values & Goals:**

Equity, Safety, Mobility, Sustainability, Livability, and Excellence.

# Today's Presentation



- STM Background and History
- Overview of STM Program
  - Transit Service Investments
  - Transportation Access Program (TAP)
  - Emerging Needs
  - Transit Capital Programs



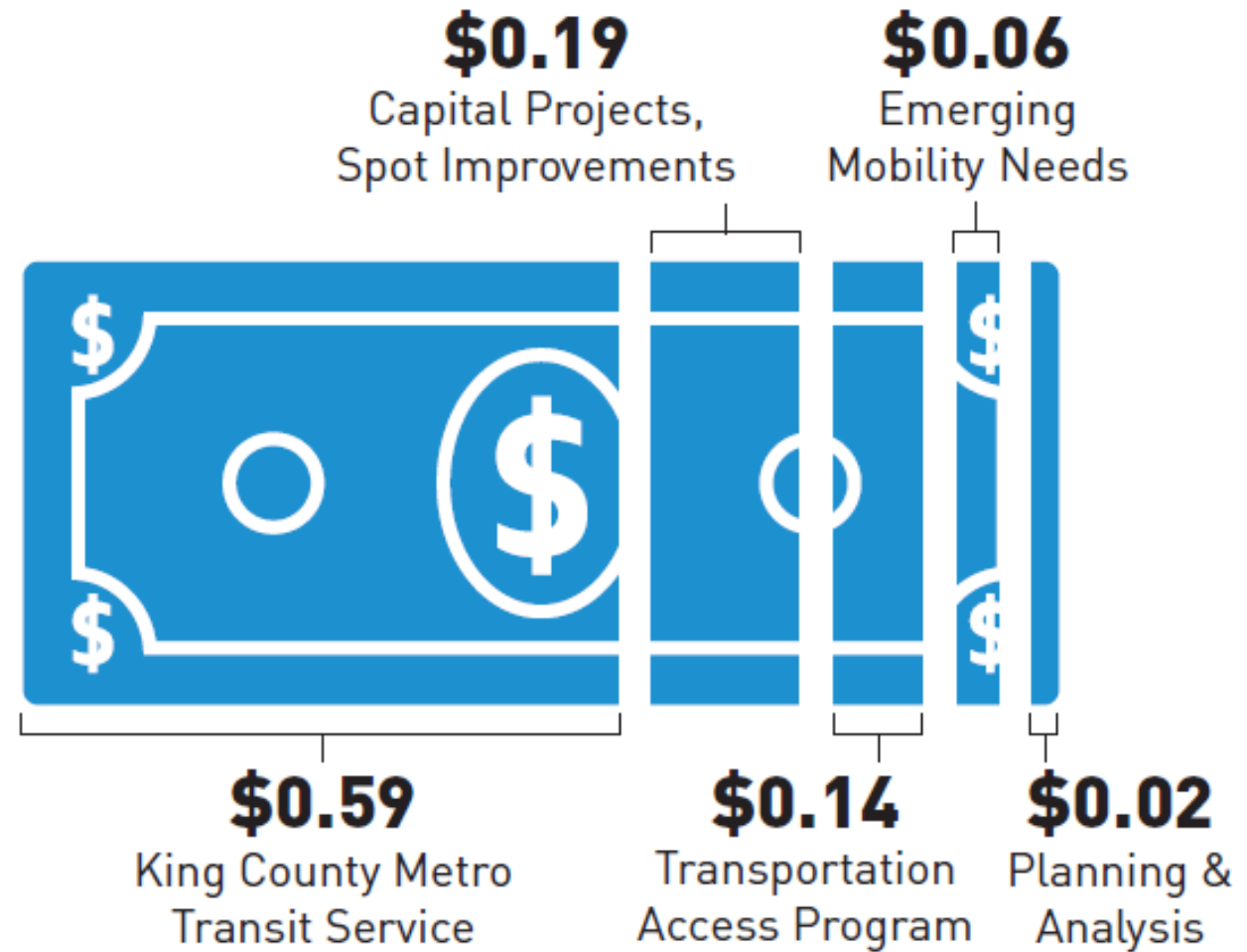
# STM Background

- Seattle Transit Measure (STM) approved in November 2020 with 80% voter approval
- Replaced the 2014 STBD Prop 1 (expired 2020) and continues much of the same programming
  - 2014 STBD Prop 1 was funded by a 0.1% sales tax and \$60 vehicle license fee
- Levies a 0.15% sales and use tax (equivalent of \$0.15 on a \$100 purchase) from April 2021 – March 2027
- Raises ~\$50M/year on average for transit service and access improvements, capital and emerging needs
- Oversight provided by the Transit Advisory Board



# STM Background

*STM Spending Breakdown in a Typical Year per dollar, 2021-2026*

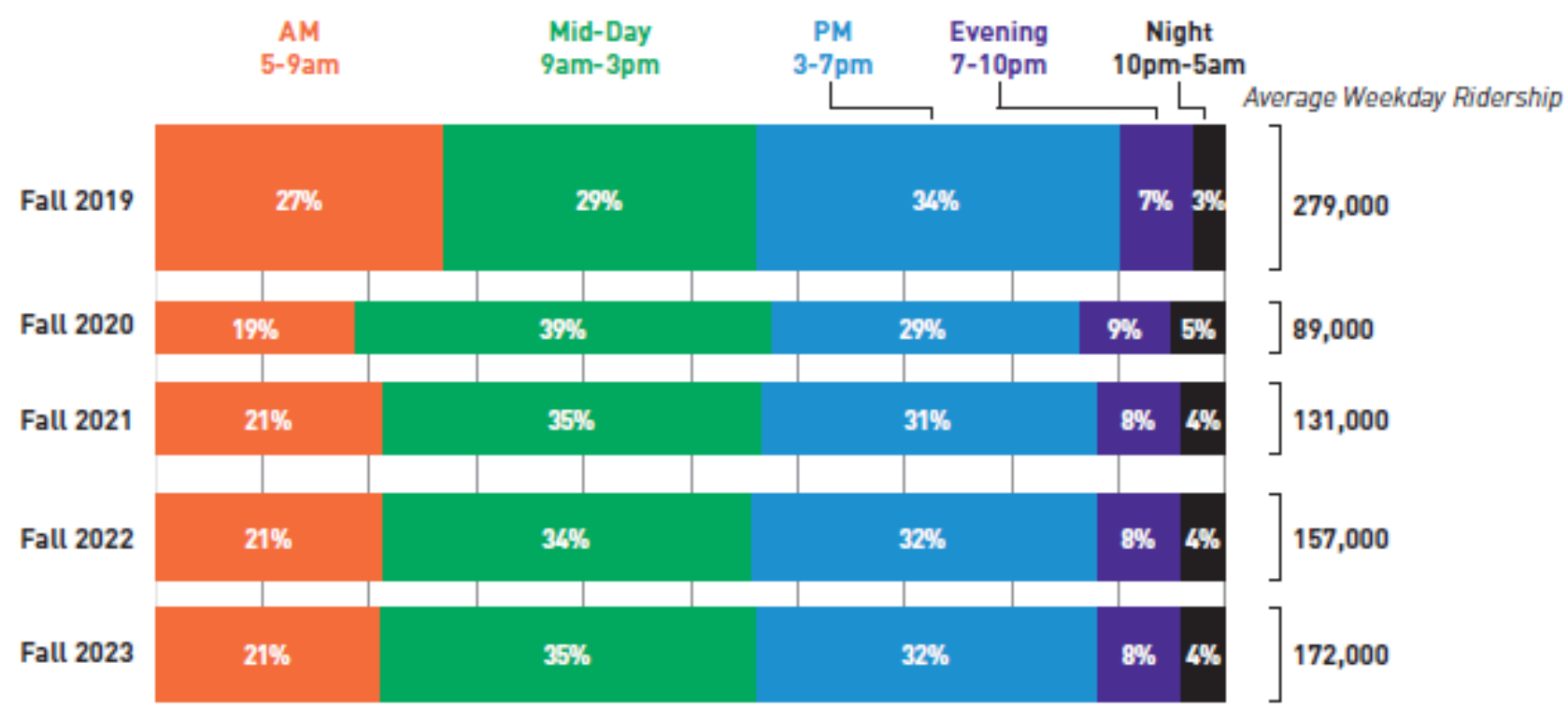




# Transit Service Investments

# TRANSIT SERVICE TRENDS

- In 2023, STM invested in about 141,000 annual service hours on Metro's system
- Transit ridership in Seattle followed national trends from 2020 through the present.
  - A slow, steady increase from about 30% to ~ 65% of pre-Covid levels.
- Ridership in off-peak times (midday, night, weekends) has rebounded faster

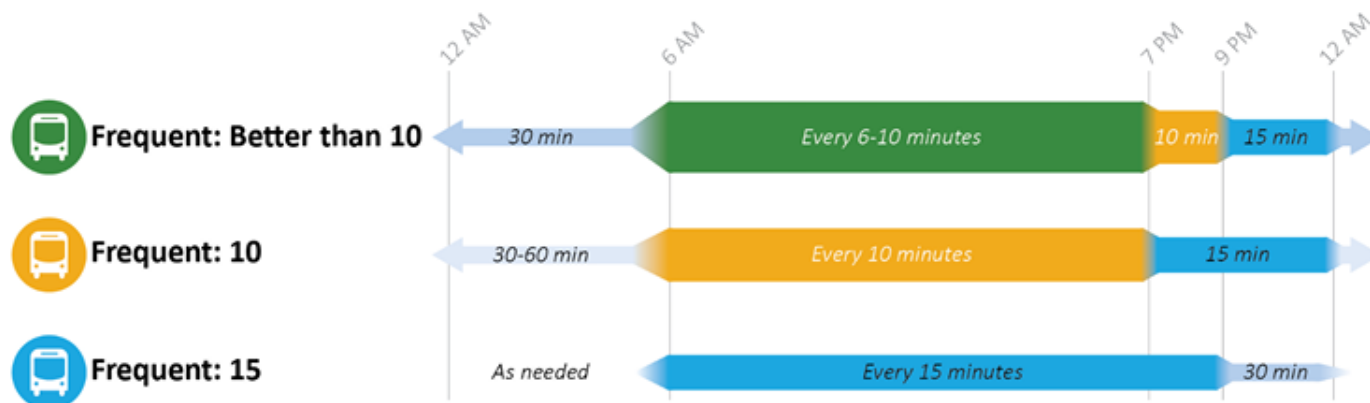




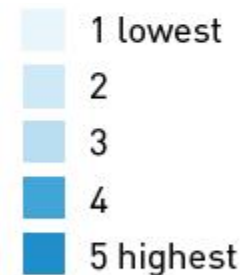
# FREQUENT TRANSIT NETWORK INVESTMENTS

- The FTN envisions a network of frequent and reliable routes that provide robust mobility options and transfer opportunities, at all times of day and all days of the week
  - Recently Updated in the Seattle Transportation Plan
- The STM team and TAB collaborated on an equity-centered Investment Prioritization Methodology in 2022
- A gap analysis is performed between current service levels and the FTN. The Investment Methodology is used to prioritize service adds that fill this gap.

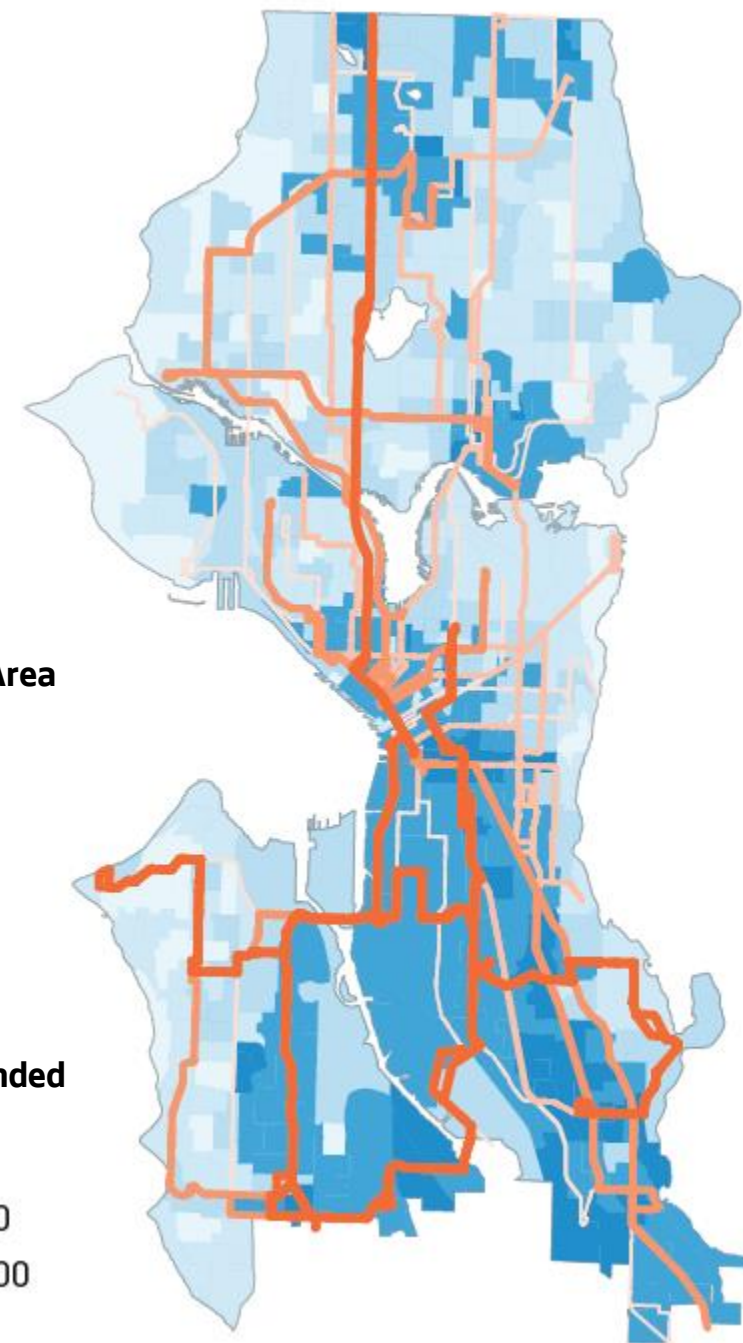
Figure 3: Frequent Transit Network Target Frequencies



## Equity Priority Area



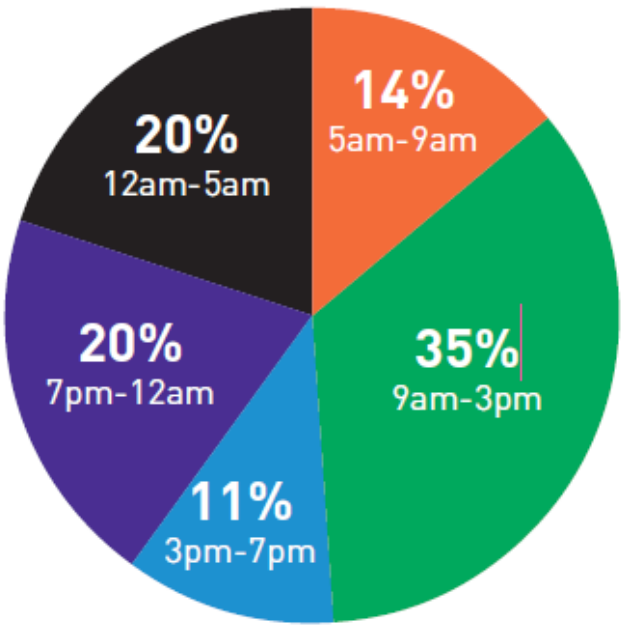
## Annual STM-Funded Service Hours



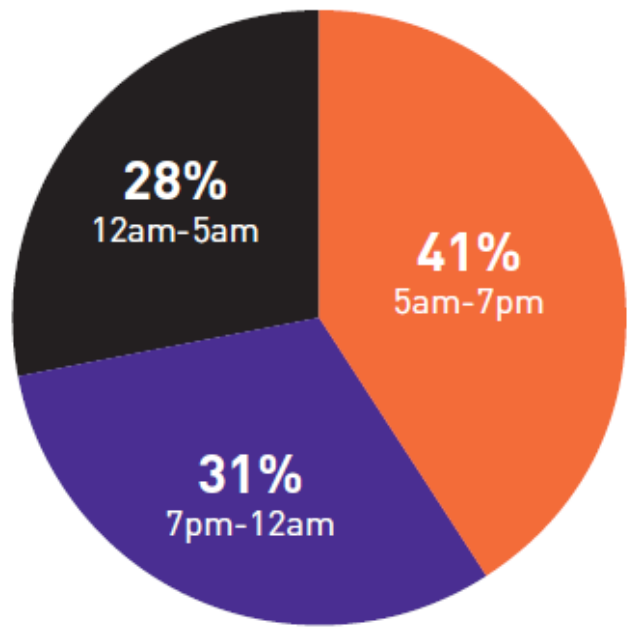


# TRANSIT SERVICE INVESTMENTS

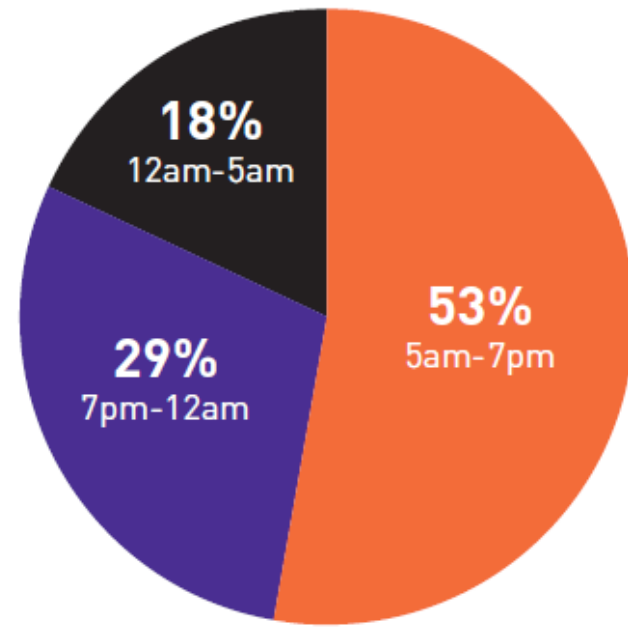
- In 2023, STM funded 3,073 additional weekly bus trips on Metro routes operating within Seattle.
  - 2,325 trips on weekdays (465 per day)
  - 307 on Saturdays
  - 438 on Sundays
- 80% of trips supported off-peak travel in the midday, evenings, nights, and weekends.



**465**  
Weekday Trips



**307**  
Saturday Trips



**438**  
Sunday Trips

# Metro Flex

## Seattle Transit Measure funds new on-demand Metro Flex service and adds bus service in Delridge and South Park

by [Ethan Bancroft](#) on July 11, 2024







# Transportation Access Programs

# Transportation Access Program (TAP) Overview

*Mission: To provide affordable, safe, and equitable access to public transportation by providing transit resources and community-centered programming to diverse Seattle communities.*

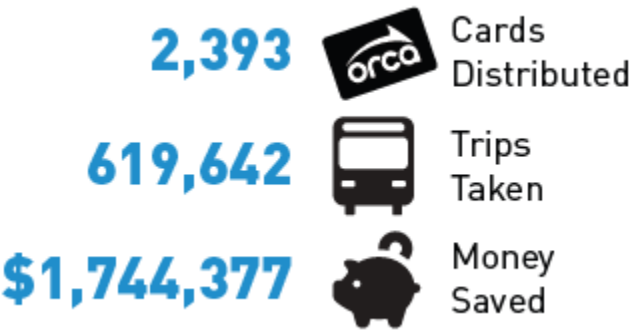
- TAP operates 9 programs in three general categories: ORCA subsidy programs; education and engagement programs, and research programs
- Focus Populations: Low- and No-Income Residents, Low-Income Workers, Students and Youth, Seniors



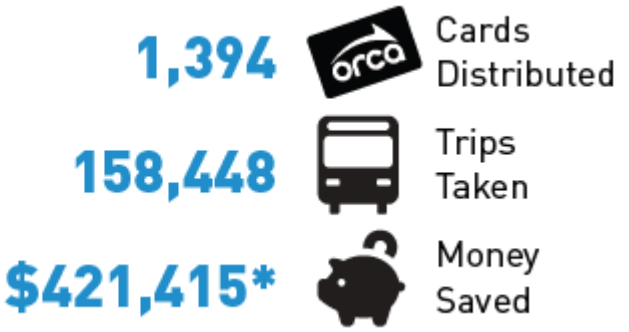


# TAP Fare Subsidy Program Performance in 2023

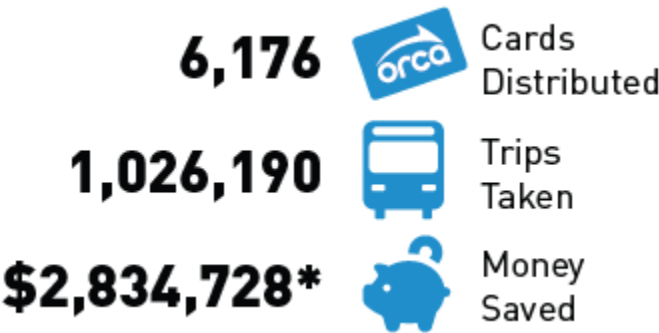
## Recovery Card Program



## ORCA Promise Scholars<sup>1</sup>



## Seattle Housing Authority (SHA) Transit Pass Program



## Seattle Public Preschools (SPP) Partnership\*\*



\*The full cash fare program participants would have paid for the rides they took under this program.

\*\*Program initiated in September 2023, so these numbers reflect a partial year of data.

# TAP – Educational and Other Programming

## Youth Transportation Summit

- From Mayor Harrell's 2022 Climate Justice Executive Order
- Summit: Dec 2023; MO Presentation: Jan 2024

## Senior Programming

- Partnerships with Hopelink and 3-4 senior centers throughout Seattle

## Uplift Seattle's Equitable Access to Transit (U-SEAT)

- Partnership with Uplift Northwest and the University of Notre Dame's Lab for Economic Opportunity (LEO)
- Evaluate the effect of free transit on low-income worker's employment outcomes.

## Downtown Circulator

- Partnership with the local nonprofit Solid Ground and King County Metro
- Free, fixed-route, day-time shuttle meant to connect low/no income and disabled people to services downtown





# TAP Makes A Difference – Participant Perspectives

“You don’t know how much this program has helped me out. When I first got the Recovery card, I was close to having to shut off my phone (which I needed for work). Covering my transit costs has allowed me to keep my job and pay my bills. Having a card that is cross agency has also allowed me to see more of my friends and family that live in neighboring counties. Thank you so much!”

“Having this card has drastically cut down on how much I’m driving and spending on the bus fare out of pocket. It’s transformed the way I navigate the city!”

“My family has never been on a train (any rails), ferry, let alone a streetcar and have never seen so many different forms of transportation! Not only do we want to discover where and what different places can be discovered, but my goal is to ride every King County Metro Transit bus, etc. so that we can see and explore the locations of where the transportation begins, ends, and where they go.”

When asked to summarize their time in the Youth Ambassadors Program, they responded that it was “educational, enjoyable, fun, and really cool to learn about green spaces.”

*“I’m extremely grateful about this program and it has saved me a ton of money in transportation to get to and from work which really helped offset the costs of living in Seattle.”*



# Emerging Needs

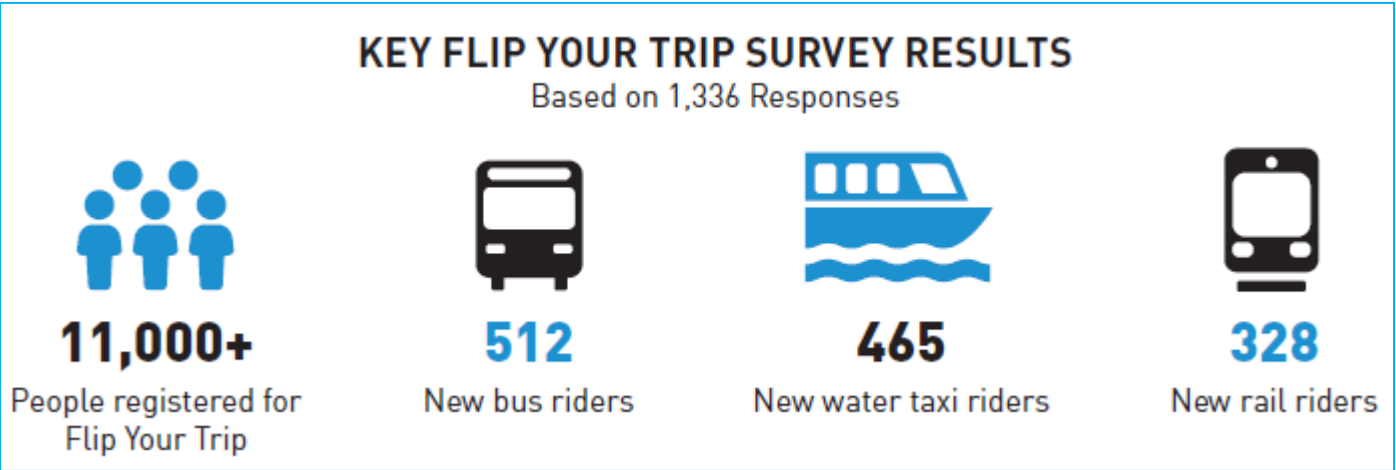




# West Seattle Bridge

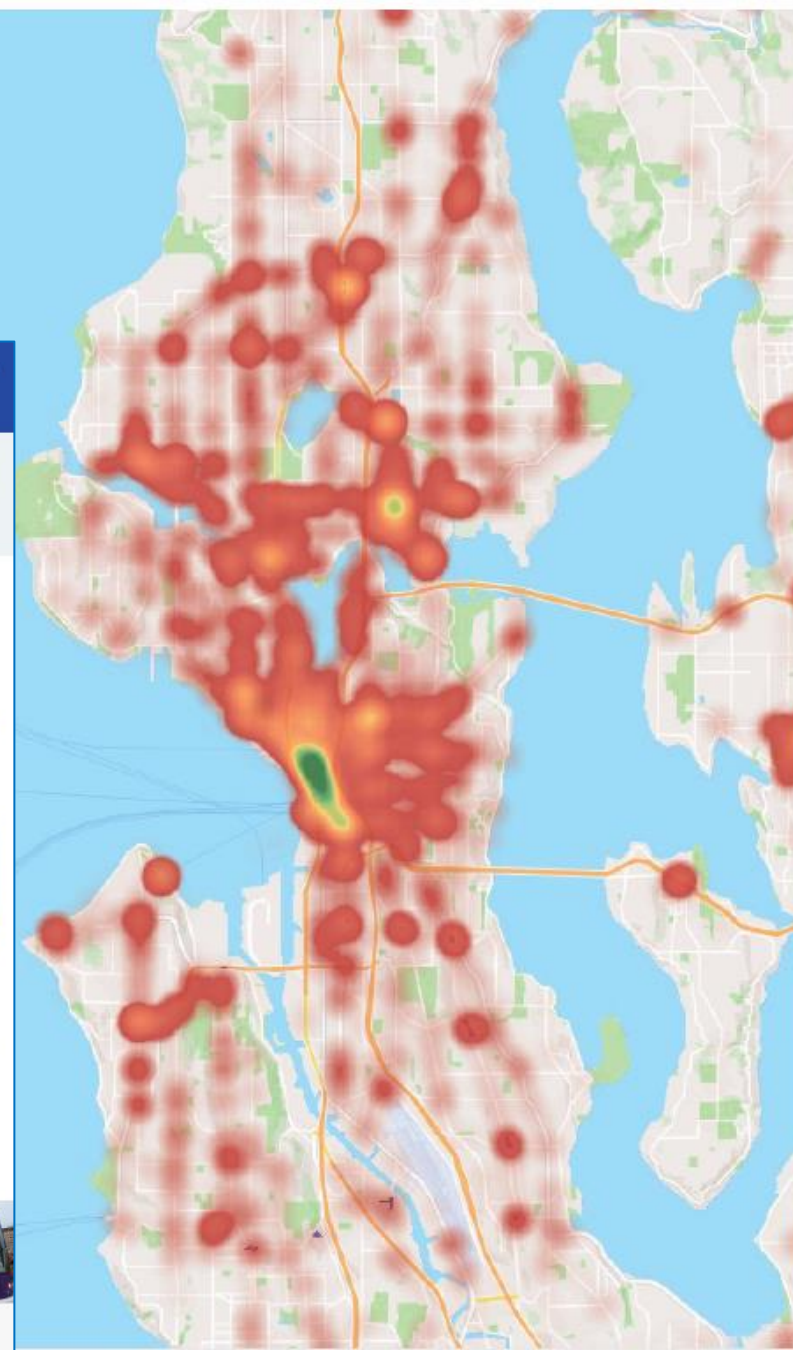
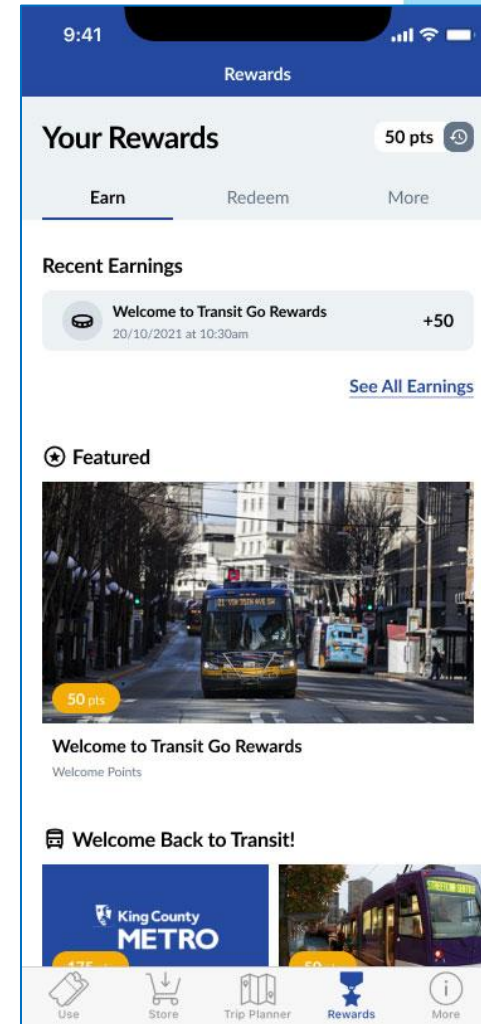
**Additional Transit Service:** Starting in 2021 through bridge opening in Sept. 2022, STM funded ~25,000 annual hours of transit service on routes 50, 60, 120, and RapidRide C Line. STM also funded additional hours on water taxi and the water taxi shuttle.

**Flip Your Trip:** Mode shift incentives during the bridge closure, including transit, vanpooling, biking, scooting, staying local, or driving at non-peak hours. ~11,250 participants – exceeded expectations.



# TransitGO Rewards

- Users earn points they can redeem on transit and micromobility.
- Used to support West Seattle Bridge Closure, subsequent low bridge closures, and bike/scoot to transit campaigns



*Transit Go Rewards Ticket Activation Locations in 2023*



# Transit Capital Projects



# Recent changes to STM Capital

- In the 2023 budget process, several changes to the STM capital budget took place.
- The STM capital spending limit was increased to \$15M per year with two restrictions imposed on STM funds:
  - \$500,000 for a J Line Safety Enhancement project
  - \$12M proviso "solely for bridge-related or structures-related transit improvements."
- In 2023, STM team worked to respond to capital budget changes and consulted the TAB on capital spending priorities
- Overall capital expenditures went up over 200% in 2023

## TAB STM CAPITAL SPENDING PRIORITIES

1. Improve transit travel time and reliability
2. Improve safe routes to transit and safety and security at bus stops
3. Wayfinding improvements for peds and cyclists traveling to transit stops





# BUS LANE PROJECTS

- **Rainier Ave S Bus Lane Project**

- **Phase 1 (completed July 2022):** northbound bus lane between S Alaska St and S Walden St, and a southbound bus lane between S Oregon St and S Edmunds St.
- **Phase 2 (Construction began Sept 2024):** expand bus-only lanes further north on Rainier Ave S., S Walden St to S Grand St – estimated to save bus riders 5 minutes during AM peak

- **Aurora Ave N**

- Continuing to work with WSDOT for approval to install northbound bus lanes between Prospect St and Lynn St



# Transit Spot Improvements

- Transit Spot Improvements delivered with Move Seattle Levy funds and STM funds
- In 2023 - 10 spot improvements delivered with STM funds
- Positive impact on 17 routes in Seattle



*New bus shelter pad on Aurora Ave and NE 125th St*



# Transit Corridor Planning and Design

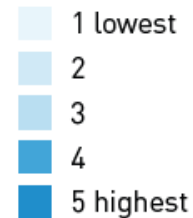
- Large transit corridor projects are complex
- Role for STM during the planning and design stage: provide local funds to initiate new projects and leverage grants
- 2022 and 2023 Projects with STM funding:
  - NE 130th & NE 125th Mobility and Safety Project
  - N 130th St - Bitter Lake to Haller Lake Mobility Improvements
  - Rt 48 Transit Plus Multimodal Corridor (TPMC) Design
  - SW Alaska St Design



# Locations of 2023 STM-funded projects and Equity Priority Areas

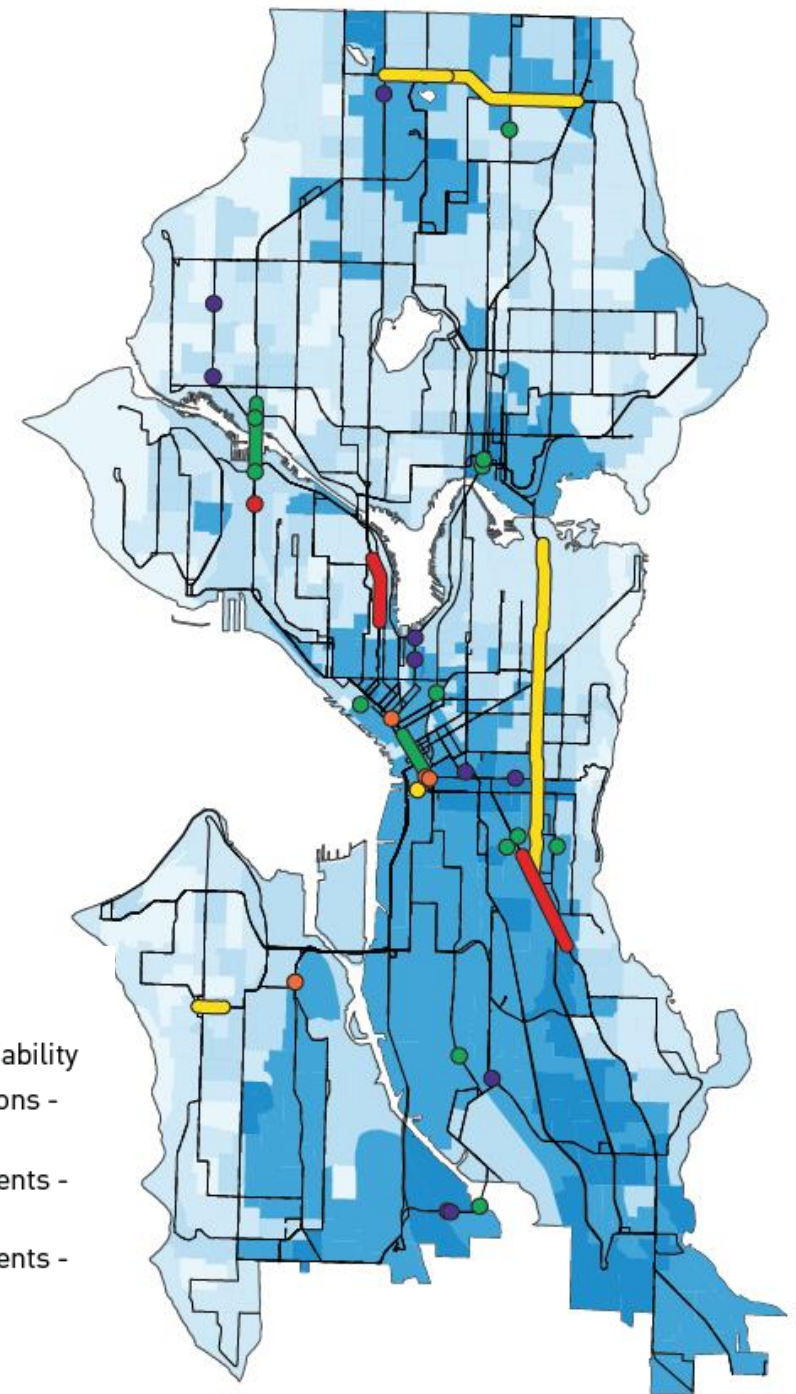
- Growth in capital project spending supports holistic approach STM support of the transit system
- When and where possible, the STM team leverages data to select locations that meet SDOT's equity goals and to address safety and performance issues.

## Equity Priority Area



Transit  
— Routes

## Project Category





# What's Next



# What's Next for STM

- **2025 City Budget Process**
- **Transit Service:**
  - Working with Metro on future bus network restructures
  - Focus on increasing fixed route service investments through 2025
  - Evaluate Metro Flex Pilot
- **Transportation Access Program:**
  - Evaluate possible future iterations of SPP Program
  - Focus on increasing usage of Downtown Circulator
- **Capital:**
  - Monitor STM spending; continue to support key transit-focused projects through life of measure
  - Use local capital funds to initiate projects and leverage grant funds
- **Renewal:**
  - Prepare for a new transit measure in 2026



# Questions/Discussion