

# A More Connected Washington: Why Now Is the Time to Expand Our Intercity Bus Program



Transportation  Choices

## Connecting Rural Communities

All Washingtonians deserve to be able to get where they need to go. However, many residents in rural areas, particularly seniors, and people with disabilities, are unable to drive. That's where intercity buses come in. **The Travel Washington Intercity Bus Program links small towns and rural areas to local bus networks and cities. It helps people travel to see friends and relatives, access vital health services at major hospitals, and even commute to work.**

## The Travel Washington Program Today



Established in 2007, Travel Washington is a partnership between the Washington State Department of Transportation and private transportation companies. The program offers

four regionally branded routes: the Apple Line (Omak to Ellensburg), the Dungeness Line (Port Angeles to Seattle), the Gold Line (Kettle Falls to Spokane), and the Grape Line (Walla Walla to Pasco). These routes, operated through a four-year contract with WSDOT, provide [over 30,000](#) essential transportation trips per year for rural communities in the state.

Beyond these four routes, Washington's intercity transportation network is interwoven with services provided by Greyhound, FlixBus, Amtrak, the Washington State Ferries, local transit agencies, and non-profit mobility providers, although private services have declined since the pandemic.



**WSDOT could more than double ridership on Washington's intercity buses with an investment of \$12 million per year.**



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# Seizing the Moment: What Travel Washington *Could* Look Like

As our state continues to grow, it's imperative to meet the needs of Washingtonians in rural and underserved communities. **Half** of our state's population relies on public transportation, and a **quarter lacks driver's licenses**. **State-supported intercity bus programs play a crucial role in connecting residents to vital services and opportunities like healthcare and jobs, particularly as private bus services decline.**

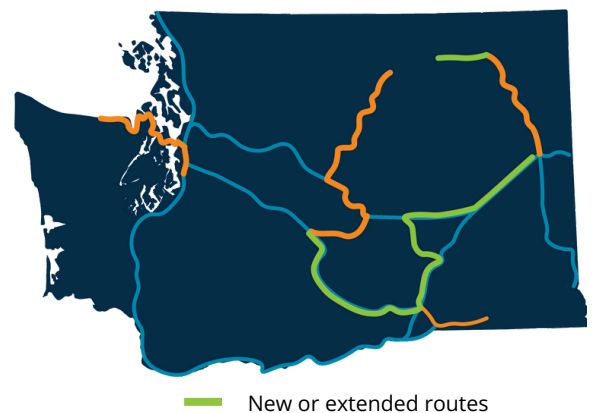
In 2024, WSDOT **updated a Travel Washington study** to identify key opportunities to expand intercity bus service. Top priorities for increased funding include **new routes from Ellensburg to the Tri-Cities and the Tri-Cities to Spokane, expanding the Gold Line west to Republic, and increasing the frequency of existing routes from 1-2 to 3 daily round trips.**

By implementing these priority recommendations, **WSDOT could more than double ridership on Washington's intercity travel network**, with a big boost from the two new proposed routes. That program expansion would benefit an estimated 68% more households without a car in the state. Washington is well-positioned to expand its network and lead the nation in intercity bus transportation.

## CURRENT INTERCITY NETWORK



## PRIORITIES FOR EXPANSION



## What We Need

The time to act is now.

**We advocate for a bold state investment of \$12 million per year to implement WSDOT's recommendations and help more people in rural Washington get where they need to go.**

In the coming legislative session, Transportation Choices Coalition will work with our elected leaders to prioritize this investment in our intercity bus network.

**Learn more and take action at [transportationchoices.org/intercitybus](https://transportationchoices.org/intercitybus)**

*Transportation Choices Coalition* advocates for safe, sustainable, and equitable transportation for all residents in Washington State. For over 30 years, it has brought together businesses, labor, transit agencies, transit riders, and elected leaders to win transformative policies and funding.