



Regional Bus Base Capacity

*Maintaining service as congestion
increases*

4/4/19



NO ACTION REQUIRED TODAY

PRESENTATION FOR: Information | Feedback | Discussion

Presentation agenda

- Describe operational challenges faced by all regional transit providers.
- Describe near-term capacity constraints and need for interim bus capacity before Link openings in 2021, 2023 and 2024.
- Inform future Board decisions about ST Express service levels and business model.

Board Decisions About ST Express Service

- As Link expands, what are the appropriate service levels for ST Express?
- What is the best method for providing long-term capacity (2024 and beyond)?
 - Build ST2 bus base? Continue existing partnerships?
- What is the right approach for short-term service levels?
 - Reduce service on lower performing routes? Find interim base capacity?

ST Express Fleet Distribution



Total fleet 312 buses
100% contracted operations



Pierce Transit Base

ST Express	Pierce Transit
129	153
40%	60%

Community Transit Bases

ST Express	Community Transit
64	286
18%	82%

King County Metro Bases

ST Express	Metro
119	1,491
7%	93%

As of March 2019

Fleet at PT will temporarily grow in Sept 2019

ST Express Operators & Cost



*Subcontracted to
First Transit*



153,000
service hours

311,000
service hours

351,000
service hours

\$130 per hour

\$169 per hour

\$153 per hour

2019 Budget

The Challenge: Regional Congestion

Service quality declines as congestion worsens

- ST Express speeds declined by 12 percent in the past 5-years
- Congestion caused **longer & more variable** travel times on nearly all routes
- Impact on Sound Transit passengers anticipated to continue until Link extensions open

Without congestion riders experience consistent service with room to board.



10 minutes
between buses

In heavy congestion, rider wait longer than planned and board more crowded buses.



20 minutes
between buses

Once on-board, riders experience longer travel times and greater uncertainty when they will arrive at their destination.



Riders spend more time on the bus and cannot rely on the published arrival time



How late will I be?

Lower confidence in bus service may drive riders to an alternative

Congestion Impacts Felt by Riders

Longer waits, more crowding, more uncertainty

- Longer waits for bus to arrive
- Less room to board, potential to be left at stop
- More uncertainty about journey, schedule, and arrival time
- Decreases confidence in reliability of service

Scale of the Rider Impact

Congestion reduces service levels across the region

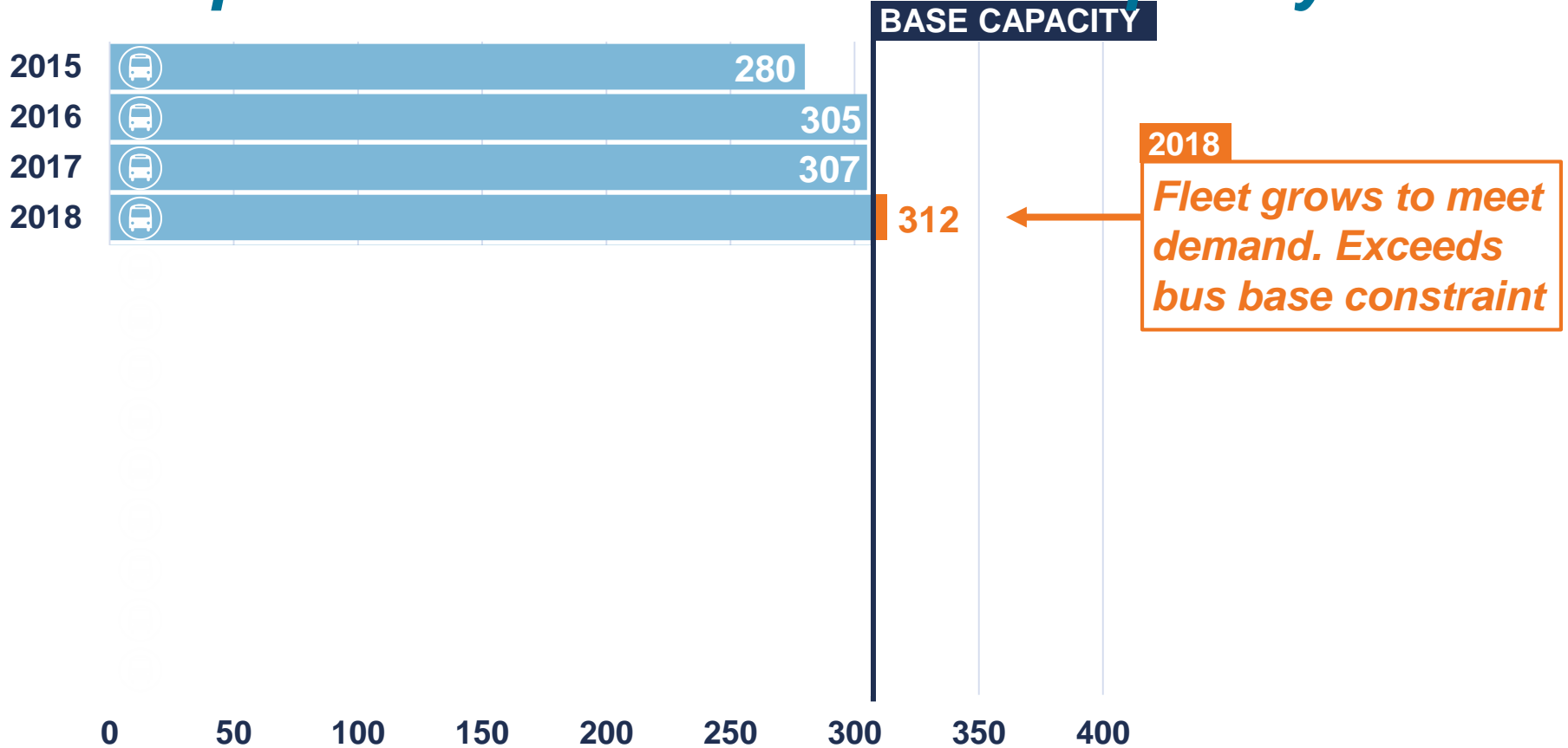
- Most severe impacts to the **55% of daily riders** who use the system during peak commute times
- Up to **10% fewer trips** with the same number of buses
- **Increase crowding by 12%** per trip on average

Response to Congestion Impacts

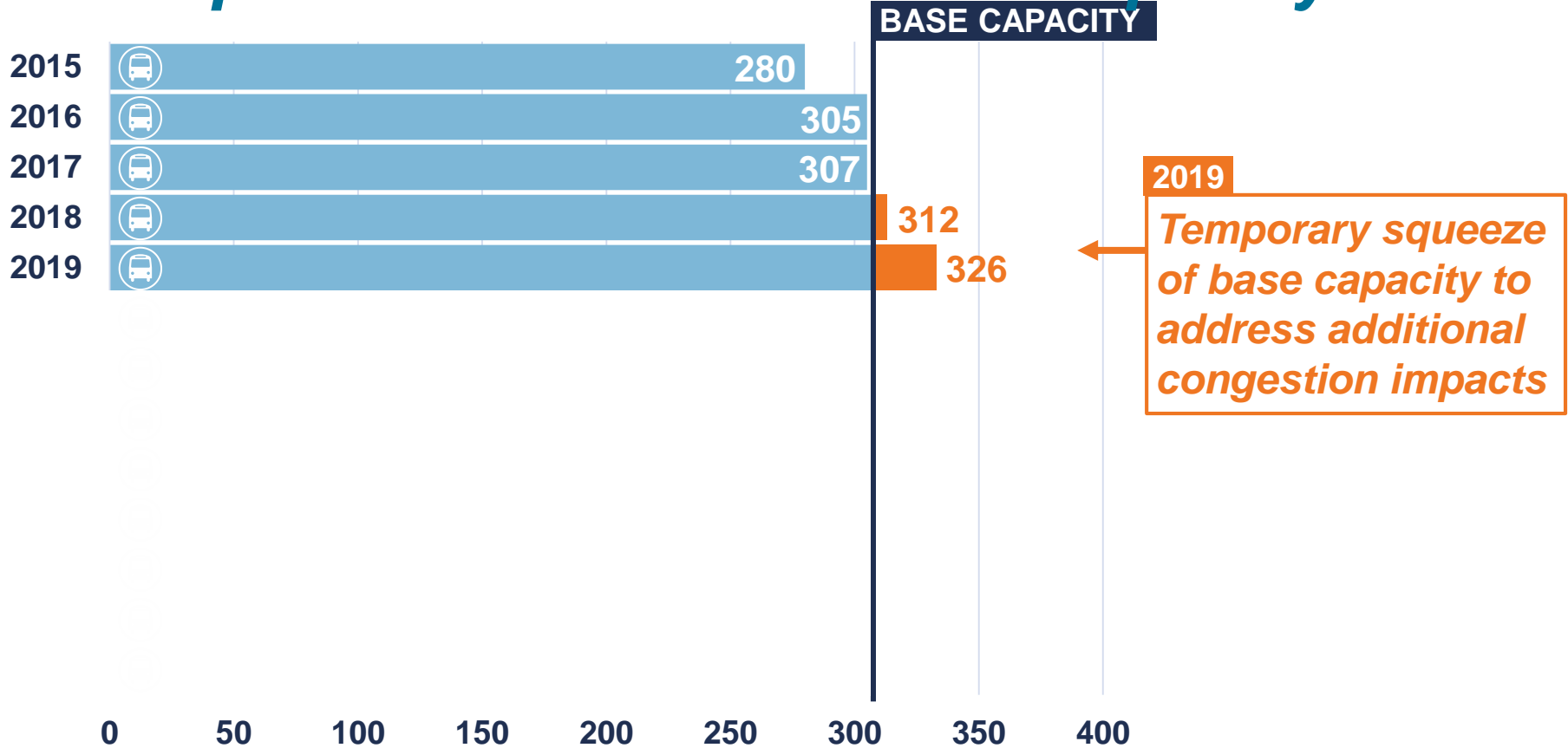
Service planning to minimize impact on riders

- **Focus on maintaining reliability**
 - Reduce and adjust service to deliver less service more reliably
 - Maximize effectiveness of constrained bus fleet
- **Make proactive changes to impact fewest riders possible**
 - Reallocate resources from lower-performing to higher-performing routes
- **Add resources when possible**

ST Express Fleet Above Base Capacity



ST Express Fleet Above Base Capacity

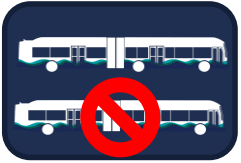


Continued Squeezing Capacity Strains Fleet

Over-utilization of capacity reduces service quality



Longer maintenance and repair windows

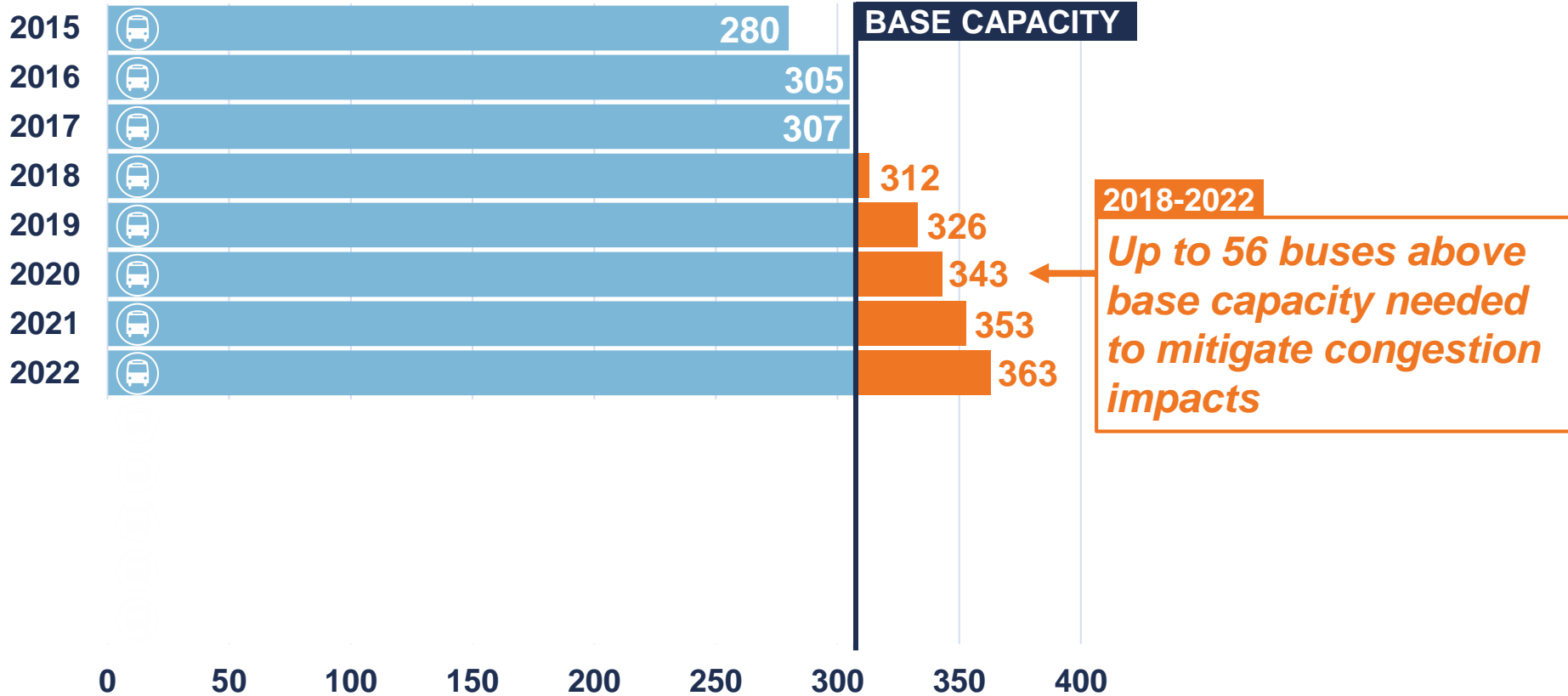


Increases likelihood of daily trip cuts

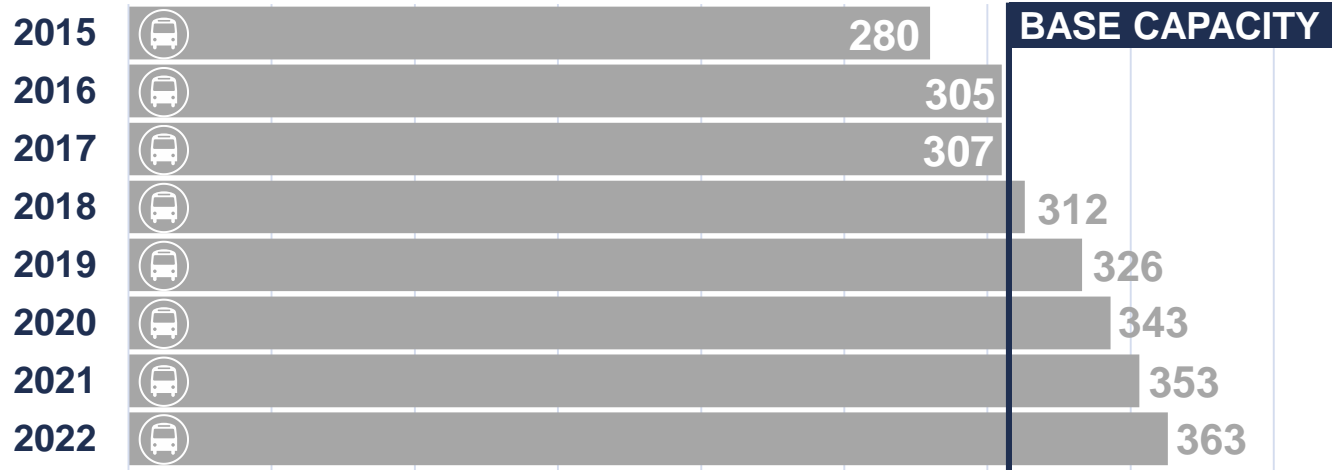


Not sustainable in the long-term

Interim Need for Regional Base Capacity



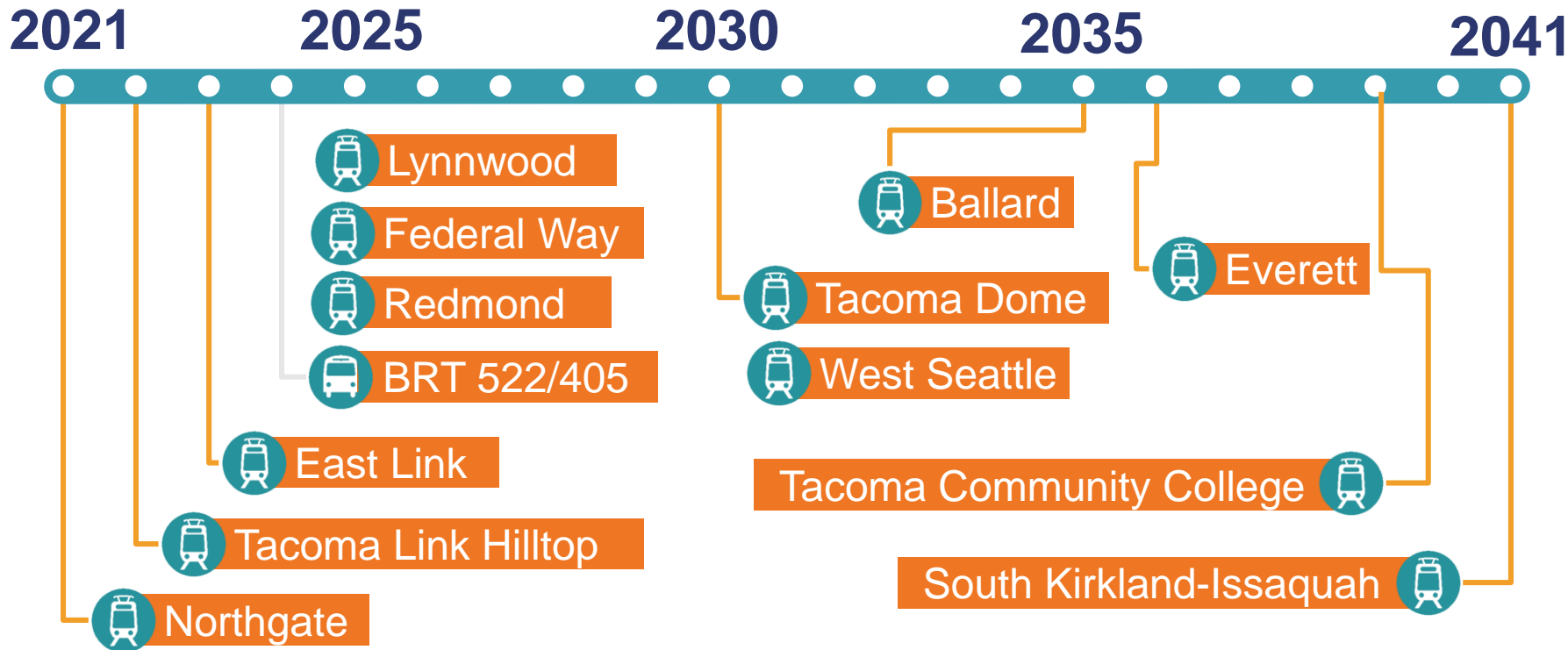
Defining Long Term Fleet Size



Major Future Changes as Link & BRT Projects Open 2023-2041

0 50 100 150 200 250 300 350 400

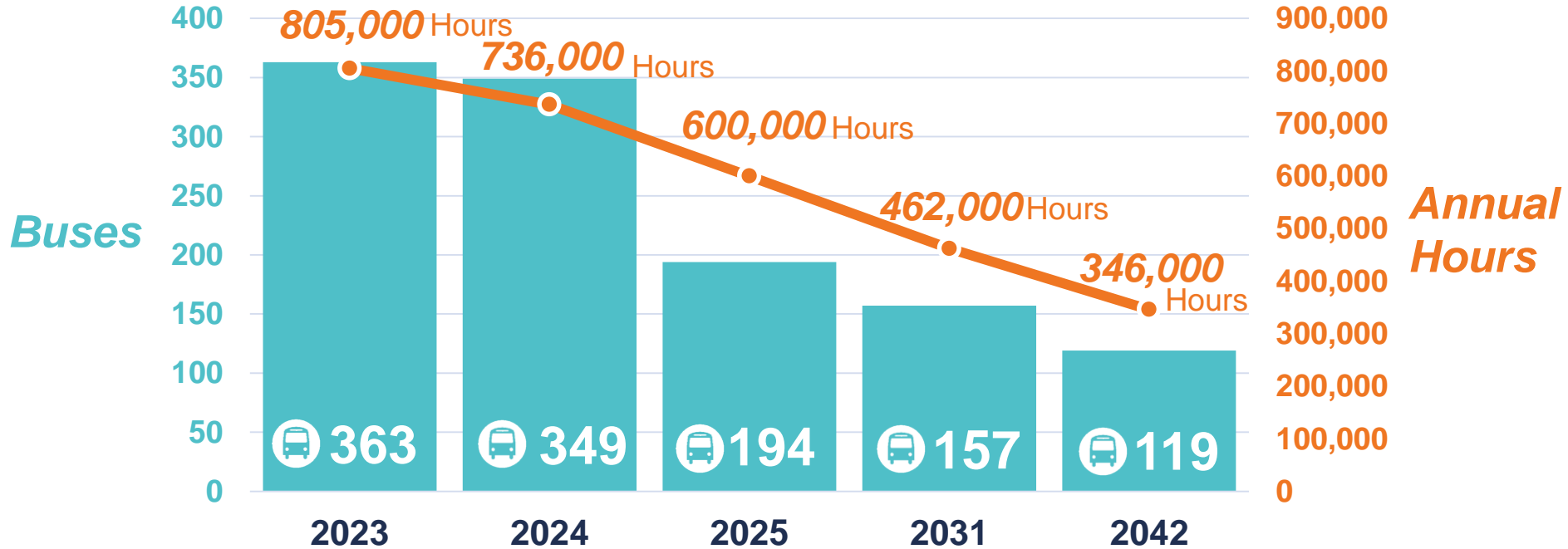
Project Openings Will Change ST Express



Long Term: Link & BRT completely or partially replace ST Express

- ST Express integrates with high-capacity service
- ST3 plan funds existing service levels on remaining routes
- Saved ST Express service hours re-allocated to Link operations

Finance Plan Shifts Hours into Link Operation



Key Questions for ST Express Post-2023

Service Levels

- Will funded service levels adequately meet demand?
- Will the need emerge for new ST Express routes?
- What are the budgetary impacts if ST Service is not reduced?

Base Capacity

- Is the current acute bus base shortage temporary?
- Will the growth of partner agency fleets outpace ST Express fleet reductions?
- Will partners fund additional regional bus base capacity?

Why we issued an RFP

Preserving service

- First priority to maintain service for customers and preserve ridership while Board decides long-term questions.
- Without congestion improvement, no additional bus capacity will mean fewer trips.
- New bus bases will take years for site selection + EIS, etc.
- Bridge interim needs until regional base capacity is provided.

RFP details

- Five year contract with five one-year options. Capacity for 55 buses.
- Unprecedented language in six separate parts of the RFP to eliminate possibility of non-union labor.
- Public agencies encouraged to apply.
- Would provide flexibility to adapt to ridership changes with light rail openings.

RFP status

Pausing for additional outreach and Board feedback

- RFP released on February 1, 2019.
- Included labor harmony requirement.
- Labor partners raised concerns.
- Agency partners raised concerns.
- CEO places procurement on hold on March 19, 2019.

Next Steps for RFP

Immediate options about RFP

Continue with RFP

- Issue new instructions and deadlines
- Public agencies can participate
- Evaluate responsive bids
- Board debates merits of ST2 bus base this summer

Cancel RFP

- Develop a plan to reduce bus service during congested peak periods
- Work with partners on previously unidentified interim base capacity options
- Board debates merits of ST2 bus base this summer

Long-term capacity options

Continued reliance on partner agencies

- Lower flexibility to determine ST Express service levels
- Lower ability to control ST costs
- Eliminates need for site acquisition and major capital project

Build ST-owned base(s)

- Could provide needed capacity for ST Express service and greater regional capacity
- The ST2 program funded a bus base for ST Express
- Significant capital investment could result in excess capacity when ST Express service levels are reduced

Next Steps

- ST requested one-year extensions for each partner's intergovernmental agreement.
 - Allows time for Board to set future ST Express service levels.
- Determine appropriate service levels and whether to build ST2 bus base.
 - ST can then clearly articulate future ST Express needs to partner agencies.
- Determine interim service levels for ST Express until Link expansions.

Thank you.



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