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**For Release: Immediate**

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## **Pierce Transit Prepares for Major Reductions in Bus Service**

Lakewood, WA – Bus riders need to be prepared for significant changes in their bus service. Effective Sunday, October 2nd, Pierce Transit bus service will undergo considerable changes throughout the county. Weekday and weekend service will be reduced, segments of some routes will be cut, and in some cases entire routes will be eliminated.

Beginning Monday, September 12, yellow bags began covering signs at the bus stops that will be closing. The bags are printed with the message: Effective October 2, 2011, this stop will be CLOSED.

Transit riders can continue to use these stops through Saturday, October 1. We regret any inconvenience this may cause our passengers.

Approximately 600 bus stops, including 35 with shelters, will be closed on October 2. Following that, Pierce Transit Facilities Maintenance crews will begin physically removing the bus stops; the sign pole, shelter structure, or bench that may be at the site. The process is scheduled to be completed by the end of November.

This overall 35% reduction is necessary due to a \$51 million budget shortfall brought on by the economic recession and the loss of Proposition 1 at the February, 2011 election. Given the current economic projections, a 20% permanent service reduction went into effect on June 12th, with the final 15% service reduction effective October 2nd.

It is imperative for people who depend on a Pierce Transit bus to get to work, school, or appointments to find out how they will be impacted. Riders can get route-by-route information about the October 2<sup>nd</sup> service change after September 20<sup>th</sup> on the Pierce Transit's website at [www.piercetransit.org](http://www.piercetransit.org) or can call Customer Service at 253.581.8000. The Pierce Transit route and schedule booklets and Rider Alerts will also be available after September 20th on-board buses, at Bus Shops, and the normal distributions sites.

Pierce Transit will eliminate the following 16 bus routes in October. A significant number of these services operate in East Pierce County, east of Meridian in generally low-performing areas in the transit system.

### **East Pierce County / Bonney Lake/ Sumner/ Buckley**

- Route 406 Buckley
- Route 407 Prairie Ridge
- Route 408 Sumner-Bonney lake
- Orting Loop

### **Puyallup**

- Route 490 South Hill-Tacoma (NEW Route 400 provides this connection)
- Route 446 Canyon Rd – South Hill Bus PLUS

- Route 413 Wildwood

**Tacoma**

- Route 26 Martin Luther King Jr. Way
- Route 59 Manitou
- Route 60 Port of Tacoma (June 12 reduction)
- Route 61 NE Tacoma (modified route)
- Route 207 Fort Lewis (June 12 reduction)
- Route 220 Orchard Street (segments from Route 220 merged with Route 51)
- Route 603A Tacoma-Olympia

**Gig Harbor/Peninsula**

- Route 113 Key Peninsula Bus PLUS
- Route 601 Kimball-Olympia

**Parkland/Spanaway**

- Route 444 Parkland-Spanaway Bus PLUS

***Background information***

The October service plan focuses on maintaining ridership, improving cost efficiency, and serving the largest number of people. Most remaining routes are in areas with higher population with denser communities and more jobs, where transit service has been historically successful. These changes will get the most riders possible to their jobs, schools, shopping and appointments.

Subsequent to these changes, projections indicate higher overall annual passenger trips, an increase in average passengers carried on every bus, and a reduction in the overall cost-per-passenger trip from the previous level of \$9.00 a trip to an average of \$4.00 per passenger trip, a 44% reduction.

In addition to implementing the 35% reduction in service and eliminating all service to special events, including the Puyallup Fair and Tacoma's Fourth of July Freedom Fair, Pierce Transit recently conducted the third round of layoffs. By the end of the year the agency will have approximately 20% less staff, including 30% less management.

SHUTTLE, the Pierce Transit paratransit service for people with disabilities, will parallel the fixed route service reductions and will also occur on October 2nd. As directed by federal regulations, this service operates on the same days, during the same hours, and within three-quarters of a mile of bus routes. Where bus service is reduced or eliminated, SHUTTLE service will be reduced or eliminated.

The October plan will operate weekday bus and SHUTTLE service generally from 6am to 8pm, Saturday service from 8am to 8pm, and Sunday service from about 9am to 5:30pm.

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