

Kitsap Transit

Connecting Communities

PRESS RELEASE

First new heavy-duty transit buses in over a decade hit the road

August 12, 2016

Contact: Sanjay Bhatt, Kitsap Transit PIO

360-824-4926, sanjayb@kitsaptransit.com

Note: High-res photos of the new buses are available upon request.

BREMERTON, Wash. – Eight, 30-foot Gillig buses will hit the road in coming weeks, the first new heavy-duty transit buses in Kitsap Transit’s fleet in over a decade.

The 28-passenger, low-floor Gillig buses are designed to last at least a dozen years, reduce harmful emissions and offer additional safety features for riders and operators.



The eight buses are the first new heavy-duty transit buses in the fleet in over a decade.

Some buses will start in service “naked,” or before Kitsap Transit’s logo and graphics have been installed, in an effort to make them available to the public as soon as possible.

The new buses are part of a sweeping fleet-replacement initiative underway at Kitsap Transit to meet its sustainability goals and replace older vehicles with more than 200,000 miles.

“Ideally, we could plan to replace six buses each year,” said Hayward Seymore, vehicle and facilities maintenance director at Kitsap Transit. “Vehicles in the fleet could age out in small groups, the technicians could stay current on the latest technologies, and the agency could spread the replacement cost out over time.”

The heavy-duty Gillig buses replace 21-passenger ARBOC cutaways, which are shuttle buses built on a van chassis and designed to run for five years. Kitsap Transit has 26 ARBOC buses in its 72-bus routed-service fleet.

Manufactured in Hayward, Calif., each new Gillig bus sports a slew of improvements. Among them:

- The clean diesel engine achieves substantial reductions in emissions of soot, nitrogen oxide and sulfur over older diesel engines, burning as clean as compressed natural gas (CNG).
- The interior LED lighting in the ceiling and floors is more energy-efficient and lasts much longer than incandescent lighting installed in older buses.
- Seating upholstery, which often gets stained and stressed in normal transit use, is easy to maintain and replace.
- The forward section has two forward-facing wheelchair securement stations, called “Q-Pods,” which are designed to streamline the securing of wheelchairs, minimize bending by operators, and reduce tripping hazards.
- Equipped with security cameras, the buses are pre-wired for a host of smart technologies, like automatic passenger counts and vehicle location (GPS).

“These buses will serve the residents of Kitsap County for the next 12 to 15 years,” Seymore said.

“They bring a wealth of new technology that will enable our technicians to more easily and quickly diagnose problems. The new transmissions will improve our fuel mileage by 10 percent, and the fire-suppression system insures both passenger and fleet safety. All of this new technology will close an 11-year technological gap since our last large transit bus purchase.”



Kitsap Transit’s new transit bus, shown above, on the assembly line at the Gillig plant in Hayward, Calif.

The eight transit buses were purchased with federal grants and authorized by Kitsap Transit’s board in 2014 and 2015. Two more Gillig transit buses are anticipated to arrive next spring.

State law requires local governments to start shifting their fleets to more environmentally-friendly fuels, such as electricity, biodiesel, propane and compressed natural gas, by June 1, 2018.

Kitsap Transit’s new Gillig transit buses, which are equipped with fuel warmers, are ready to make the switch to biodiesel, Seymore said.

And since April 2015, Kitsap Transit has put into service 13 new propane-powered ROUSH shuttle buses, each built on a light-duty van chassis, in its ACCESS program. The new propane-fueled buses are expected to generate over \$51,000 in cost savings annually over similar diesel vehicles, Seymore said.

The agency earlier this month ordered 10 more propane-fueled shuttle buses. Kitsap Transit ranks second among transit agencies in Washington in the number of dedicated propane-fueled vehicles, behind only Clallam Transit.

About Kitsap Transit

Kitsap Transit has been operating friendly, convenient public transit since 1983. The Bremerton-based transit agency for Kitsap County carried more than 3.8 million riders last year across a multi-modal system of routed buses, paratransit shuttles, vanpools, worker/driver buses and a passenger-only ferry service.