

Agency Activities and Monitored Issues

Sound Transit 2 wins voter approval

In early November voters in Central Puget Sound, by a 57 percent margin, approved the Sound Transit 2 plan to expand the region's mass transit system. Voters approved adding 36 more miles of light rail, with trains eventually running north to Lynnwood, east to Redmond's Overlake Transit Center and south to Highline Community College and Federal Way at Redondo/Star Lake. The plan also includes 17 percent more express bus service and more Sounder commuter rail service, with 65 percent more capacity on the Tacoma-Seattle line.

U-Link federal grant transmitted to Congress

In November, the Federal Transit Administration transmitted Sound Transit's University Link \$813 million Full Funding Grant Agreement to Congress. The transmittal stated the FTA's intent to award the grant after the required 60-day congressional review period.

University Link is a 3.15-mile extension of Link light rail from downtown Seattle north to the University of Washington with stations at Capitol Hill and the UW. Construction will begin soon, with passenger service beginning in 2016.

UW Board of Regents approve U-Link construction

In November, the University of Washington Board of Regents unanimously approved building the U-Link light rail extension on UW property.

The line's University Station will be located near Husky Stadium, the UW Medical Center and research facilities, and will provide access to the main campus.

First University Link construction bids under engineer's estimate

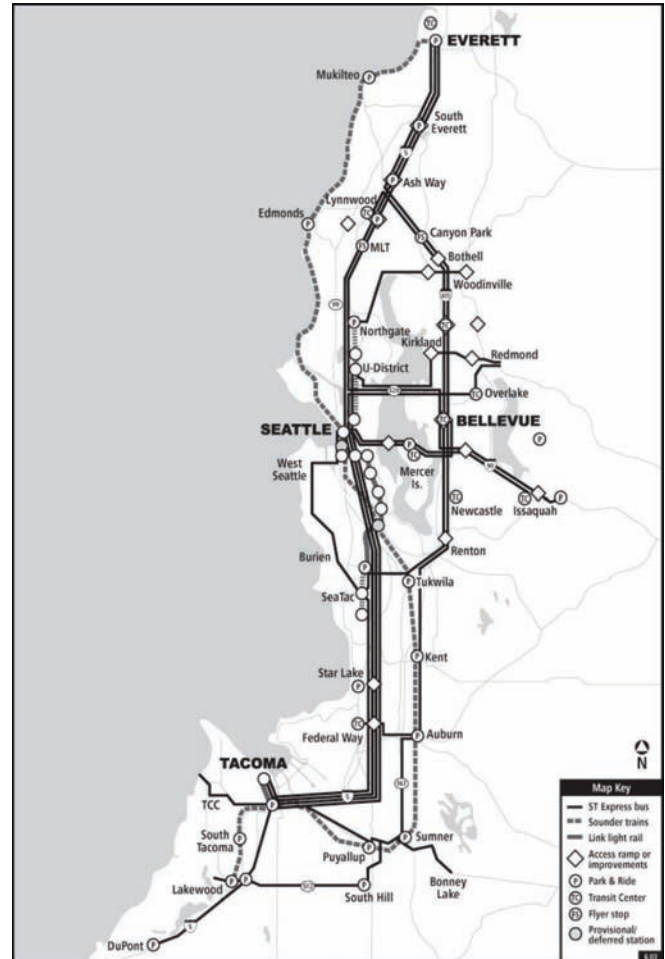
The University Link light rail project's first major construction contract came in below the agency's engineers' cost estimates. The apparent low bidder, Condon Johnson & Associates, Inc. bid \$19.4 million to prepare the area where a tunnel boring machine will pass beneath Interstate 5 in downtown Seattle. That bid is 34 percent below the \$29.6 million engineers' estimate.

Board adopts 2009 Budget

The Sound Transit Board approved the agency's 2009 budget. The budget reflects the importance of 2009 to the agency. For example in July, Link light rail trains will begin carrying passengers between downtown Seattle and the Tukwila International Blvd Station. By the end of the year, trains will run all the way to Sea-Tac Airport.

The 2009 Budget outlines \$721,162,126 in operating expenditures and capital outlays for the year.

In light of the current economic downturn, the agency is looking hard at ways to reduce costs. So, the 2009 budget includes a 5 percent reduction in non-salary staff, freezes non essential travel and equipment purchases and heightens the review of filling new



and open positions. The agency is closely monitoring economic issues in coming months and will continue looking for ways to reduce costs and find efficiencies.

The 2009 budget includes:

- \$7.4 million for Tacoma Link light rail transit operations
- \$31.8 million for Link light rail operations
- \$57.7 million for operating Sounder trains
- \$108.5 million for ST Express bus operations.

Totem Lake Transit Center Opens

More than 200 people joined together in Kirkland to help dedicate the new Totem Lake Transit Center. Sound Transit, Evergreen Healthcare, Metro Transit and the City of Kirkland all helped celebrate the new transit center. The new facility was made possible through a partnership between Sound Transit and Evergreen Healthcare. The transit center is integrated into the design of Evergreen Healthcare's newly constructed DeYoung Pavilion building on the southwest corner of the Kirkland hospital campus.

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King County Metro buses use the new transit center, which includes six bus bays with sheltered passenger waiting areas and bus layover space. Improvements were also made to the intersection of 120th Avenue Northeast and Northeast 128th Street to give buses and pedestrians safe and easy access to the facility.



Totem Lake Transit Center Grand Opening

Federal money for Tacoma track

Sound Transit was awarded a \$6 million competitive grant for the Point Defiance Bypass D-to-M Street project. The \$6 million, from the U.S. Department of Transportation, will help Sound Transit extend Sounder commuter rail service from Tacoma to Lakewood.

The grant also supports the state's effort to finish work south of Tacoma that will enable Amtrak trains to by-pass the freight corridor. The D-to-M improvements are essential for the region to add more passenger rail service with better travel times, and allow Amtrak trains to avoid the freight corridor in the Point Defiance area of Tacoma.

Sound Transit and the state Department of Transportation are using the funding for design, engineering and right of way acquisition in the D-M Street segment, which helps close the project's funding gap. Sound Transit expects Sounder commuter trains to reach Lakewood, south of Tacoma, in early 2012.

I-90 project ribbon cutting

About 50 people joined Sound Transit to celebrate new HOV lanes opening on Interstate 90 between Bellevue and Mercer Island. The opening completed the first phase of the I-90 Two-Way Transit and HOV project. Sound Transit, the state Department of Transportation and the Federal Transit Administration teamed up to add the HOV lane on I-90's westbound outer roadway.

The three-stage project includes adding new HOV lanes in both directions of I-90 between Bellevue and Seattle. The

new lanes will help commuters cross Lake Washington and enable the construction of light rail in the center lanes.

Ron Tober joins Sound Transit

Ron Tober, a longtime transit leader, agreed in December to join Sound Transit as Deputy CEO, starting in early 2009. He will remain at the agency for about a year helping with the launch of Link light rail in the summer of 2009. He will also assist in planning for and starting the ST2 program approved by voters in November.

Mr. Tober has over 35 years of transit capital and operating experience and retired not long ago as CEO of the Charlotte Area Transit System after recently opening Charlotte's first light rail line. Mr. Tober was CEO in Charlotte for about 8 years, and for 11 years before that was General Manager/Secretary-Treasurer for the Greater Cleveland Regional Transit authority. He also worked many years in Seattle and was Metro's Director of Transit in the mid-1980's.

East Link Draft EIS released

Sound Transit, along with the Federal Transit Administration and the state Department of Transportation, released the East Link's Draft Environmental Impact Statement. The Draft EIS studies light rail alternatives from downtown Seattle to the Eastside via I-90 with stations serving Seattle, Mercer Island, south Bellevue, downtown Bellevue, Bel-Red/Overlake and downtown Redmond. The release kicks off the public comment period for the Draft EIS.

Voter approval of Sound Transit 2 provides the funding to build East Link from Seattle, across the I-90 bridge to the Overlake Transit Center in Redmond. Public review and comment on the draft EIS will continue through Feb. 25, 2009 and will help inform the choice between alternatives, analyze potential impacts and identify measures to minimize adverse impacts.

Outgoing Boardmembers honored

At its final Board meeting of 2008, the Sound Transit Board honored outgoing Boardmembers John Ladenburg and Deanna Dawson.

Mr. Ladenburg joined the Board in 2001 and during his stay served four years as Board Chair. When he became Board chair in 2004, Link light rail construction was only about five percent complete—when he left the chair at the end of 2007, Link was over 80 percent done and well on the way to opening. During his tenure, he also kept alive the agency's string of clean financial audits and saw huge ridership increases on our buses and trains.

Boardmember Dawson served a year on the Board and was a strong, important advocate for Snohomish County and the region in helping shape and bring Sound Transit 2 to the ballot.