

Agency Activities and Monitored Issues

Kurt Triplett, King County Executive, joins Board

Kurt Triplett, King County Executive, is the newest member of the Sound Transit Board. Mr. Triplett takes the place of Ron Sims, who resigned in May to become Deputy Director of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Mr. Triplett, who was Mr. Sims's chief of staff for the last five years, has spent 17 years in leadership, policy development, and management roles in King County government.

ORCA arrives

For the past few years, Sound Transit, King County Metro, Pierce Transit, Everett Transit, Community Transit, Kitsap Transit, and the Washington State Ferries worked together to bring ORCA (One Regional Card for All) to the Puget Sound region. A regional "limited rollout" of ORCA began in April.

Basically, ORCA is a simplified fare collection program – using smart card technology – for bus, train, rail, and ferry travel throughout King, Kitsap, Pierce, and Snohomish counties. ORCA uses a microprocessor that automatically calculates any fare due. Passengers tap their ORCA card on the card readers located on the buses, near the ferry terminal turnstiles, and at train station platforms. The card registers a valid pass or deducts the appropriate fare from an "E-purse" account. The system also automatically calculates any transfer credit.

Federal U-Link money on the way early

Sound Transit learned in May that it will receive \$44 million in federal economic stimulus funding for our University Link project sooner than expected. Senator Patty Murray and U.S. Department of Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood announced that Sound Transit will receive the \$44 million the agency was expecting in 2016. The \$44 million brings the agency's total federal payment in 2009 to \$144 million.

Construction is underway on the 3.15-mile U-Link project that extends light rail from Westlake Station in the Downtown Seattle Transit Tunnel to the University of Washington with stations at Capitol Hill and on the University of Washington campus near Husky Stadium. University Link is scheduled to open in 2016 and add more than 70,000 daily riders to the system.

Contract approved for Tacoma-to-Lakewood rail improvements

Two issues that have generated interest in the Puget Sound region are federal stimulus dollars and the much-needed improvements to the Tacoma-to-Lakewood rail corridor.

Those two issues merged in April when the Sound Transit Board, helped with \$4.6 million in federal stimulus package



dollars, approved a contract for track and signal improvements to the Tacoma-to-Lakewood corridor. Those improvements will help bring Sounder commuter rail service to South Tacoma and Lakewood.

The stimulus money, along with other project savings, is helping close a funding gap for work between D and M streets in Tacoma, which is needed to expand Sounder service south by 2012.

The \$4.6 million grant is part of the \$23 million Sound Transit received in federal stimulus funds.

East Link preferred route identified

Following years of study and considerable interest and involvement by Eastside business, city, and neighborhood leaders, the Sound Transit Board in May identified a preferred route for extending light rail to Mercer Island, Bellevue, and Redmond. The route includes both tunnel and surface options in downtown Bellevue.

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The action is part of the East Link Light Rail Environmental Impact Statement process that continues into 2010, when the final route will be chosen.

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Mountlake Terrace Freeway Station underway

Work has begun on the Mountlake Terrace Freeway Station. The new station, located in the I-5 median, will bring regional, express bus service to Mountlake Terrace for the first time.

The Mountlake Terrace Freeway Station included \$4.6 million in federal stimulus money and a \$5 million grant from the state's regional mobility fund. Overall, the project includes new bus ramps and a freeway station connecting to the existing transit center with a new sheltered pedestrian bridge. Buses will start using the freeway station in 2011.

Everett Station project

In May, Sound Transit opened a new 440-space parking lot and pedestrian bridge leading to the Sounder platform and bus area.

The lot is located on the east side of the station and is connected by a pedestrian bridge that spans the railroad tracks. The project also provides a plaza area, bus layover space, landscaping, and public art.



Everett Station Pedestrian Bridge

Recycling efforts on Capitol Hill

In its ongoing efforts to conserve resources and promote sustainability, about 2,890 tons of material was recycled from the building demolition on the future University Link Capitol Hill Station. Those items included:

- 224 doors
- 180 cabinets
- 18 restaurant booths
- 50 light fixtures
- 29 ranges
- 31 refrigerators
- 13 claw foot tubs
- 21 sinks and toilets
- 60 radiator fins
- 121 feet of wrought iron railing
- 90 feet of wood railing
- Hundreds of feet of trim and molding
- 3500 square feet of fir flooring
- 500 square feet of tin ceiling panels

Customer satisfaction survey

Sound Transit's annual customer satisfaction survey results show the agency with an overall grade of B, down slightly from the B+ from a year earlier. This is the fifth year in a row for the survey, which came from 961 interviews conducted in late 2008. The survey also showed that:

- 44% of Sound Transit's riders say they want more service.
- 37% are new riders, an increase from 2007 when 29% were new riders.
- 13% of those new riders used to drive.
- More than a third (39%) of Sounder riders have been assisted by Station Agents. These riders give the Station Agents excellent ratings for their performance.
- The vast majority of riders feel safe on Sound Transit vehicles.

Newcastle Transit Improvements project work begins

The City of Newcastle and Sound Transit reached a 2009 milestone recently when construction kicked off on the Newcastle Transit Improvements project.

Transit improvement work includes four new bus shelters and major upgrades to Newcastle's main intersection, including signal system improvements, bike lanes, re-aligned crosswalks, and new sidewalks. Construction is scheduled to continue through November.