

Agency Activities and Monitored Issues

Link light rail launches passenger service

More than 92,000 passengers boarded the Link light rail trains on opening weekend, July 18-19.

Regular light rail service began Monday, July 20, with trains carrying fare-paying passengers for the first time. Throughout that entire week, teams of Sound Transit employees were at the stations and platforms helping customers use the ticket vending machines and answering questions about the new service.

The start of service went very well with the trains and operators performing as expected.

Building Central Link created about 4,000 jobs and required 100 million pounds of steel, 450,000 cubic yards of concrete, 7,700 railroad ties, 69 miles of OCS wire and planting 3,220 trees.

Kenmore SR-522 improvements dedicated

Sound Transit and its partners, including the City of Kenmore and the state Department of Transportation, teamed up to make HOV improvements in the City of Kenmore along SR-522 between 73rd and 83rd avenues.

SR 522 was widened to allow the addition of east and west Business Access and Transit (BAT) lanes. The project also included replacing the Swamp Creek Bridge and improvements to 80th Avenue, sidewalks, a retaining wall, new traffic signals and improved illumination.

The Kenmore project is helping provide a more dependable commute for bus riders using the SR-522 corridor.

U-Link light rail tunnel bids under engineer's estimate

Bids to dig the University Link tunnels from Capitol Hill to the Downtown Seattle Transit Tunnel came in about \$20 million below the engineer's estimate.

The apparent low bid was submitted by JCM U-Link Joint Venture, with a bid of \$153.5 million, which was 12 percent below the engineer's estimate of \$174.3 million.



The \$1.9 billion University Link extension, located entirely underground, is expected to open in 2016, adding more than 70,000 riders a day to the system.

Airport Link bridge goes up

In September, Port of Seattle contractors successfully installed the pedestrian bridge that connects the new airport Link light rail station with the airport parking garage. Traffic was temporarily detoured.

The bridgework was a significant step in the construction of the SeaTac/Airport light rail station. Service to the new station begins in December 2009.

Agency Activities and Monitored Issues *continued . . .*



ORCA Big Splash Event

ORCA media event

With the limited launch period completed in April, Central Puget Sound's seven transit agencies in September officially rolled out the ORCA (One Regional Card for All) card. The event, which took place at the Amtrak Holgate yard in the SODO neighborhood of Seattle, kicked off an extensive effort to promote ORCA, including a regional advertising campaign.

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 to the region.

Board approves bond issue

At a special meeting in September, the Sound Transit Board approved the issuance of \$400 million in bonds to continue building the regional transit system.

Timing for the bond issue was good and the agency locked in very favorable interest rates of above 3.5 percent. In addition, the agency learned that, despite the nationwide recession, Sound Transit maintained its AAA/Aa2 bond rating on its senior bonds, which signals strong investor confidence in the agency's financial health and outlook.

More bus service starts

Starting in September, another round of Sound Transit 2 bus service improvements began, including longer hours and better connections to Link light rail.

Service was added on ST Express routes 510 Everett-Seattle, 511 Everett-Seattle, 550 Bellevue-Seattle and 554 Issaquah-Seattle. In addition, more than 20 King County Metro bus routes were revised to reduce duplication of transit services and better connect with light rail service.

10 years of ST Express service

September 21 was the 10th anniversary of the start of ST Express bus service. ST Express buses have carried about 82 million passengers the last 10 years, 12 million last year alone. In addition, ST Express buses have provided five million hours of service over the last decade and in doing so traveled 106 million miles.

2010 draft Budget rollout

The 2010 draft budget, which this year is split into two volumes to make it more transparent and easier to read, was released to the Sound Transit Board in September.

One volume includes the annual staff, operating and capital budgets for 2010; the other is a new multi-year Capital Improvement Program that provides project details and outlines the lifetime capital budgets. The new capital volume is designed to be periodically updated as the agency reaches important project milestones.

The 2010 Budget proposes spending more than \$945 million for the continued expansion and operation of regional and high capacity transit service operations. That \$945 million includes \$188 million to deliver train and bus service for the year. Sound Transit projects \$794 million in revenues next year with the majority, about \$531 million, from sales tax collected in the Sound Transit District.