

**SOUND TRANSIT
STAFF REPORT**

RESOLUTION NO. R2009-10

2009 Service Implementation Plan Amendment

Meeting:	Date:	Type of Action:	Staff Contact:	Phone:
Executive Committee	5/07/09	Meeting Cancelled	Bonnie Todd, Director, Operations Department	(206) 398-5367
Finance Committee	5/07/09	Discussion/Possible Action to Recommend Board approval	Mike Bergman, Program Manager, Operations Department	(206) 398-5358
Board	5/28/09	Discussion/Possible Action		

Contract/Agreement Type:	✓	Requested Action:	✓
Competitive Procurement		Execute New Contract/Agreement	
Sole Source		Amend Existing Contract/Agreement	
Agreement with Other Jurisdiction(s)		Budget Amendment	
Real Estate		Property Acquisition	

PROJECT NAME

2009 Service Implementation Plan Amendment

PROPOSED ACTION

Provide direction on the preferred implementation schedule of ST2-funded bus service improvements, and amend the 2009 Service Implementation Plan (SIP) to authorize implementation of specific bus service improvements in September 2009 and February 2010.

KEY FEATURES of PROPOSED ACTION

- The 2009 Service Implementation Plan (SIP), adopted by the Board on December 11, 2008, had been developed assuming no ST2 program. This action would provide direction on the preferred schedule of ST2-funded bus service improvements and amend the SIP to authorize the implementation of specific bus service improvements in September 2009 and February 2010.
- In light of reduced sales tax revenues, two service implementation schedules are being presented for consideration by the Board: **Alternative 1** would authorize bus service improvements phased in over four start-up dates, September 2009, February 2010, September 2010 and February 2011. This alternative implements ST2 service improvements in the shortest possible time frame. **Alternative 2** would authorize bus service improvements phased in over three start-up dates: February 2010, June 2011 and September 2011. In this alternative, about 75 percent of planned ST2 service implementation would be delayed until 2011, with Board action on the final service improvements taking place in December 2010 as part of the 2011 Service Implementation Plan. Alternative 2 implements service more gradually over a longer period of time, but results in estimated cost savings of approximately \$10.0 million through 2011.
- In both alternatives, ST2-funded service improvements for June 2009 are already committed and will be implemented administratively.

BUDGET IMPACT SUMMARY

There is no action outside of the Board-adopted budget; there are no contingency funds required, no subarea impacts, or funding required from other parties other than what is already assumed in the financial plan. However, the choice of alternatives could have an impact on other ST2 implementation decisions as is described below:

BUDGET and FINANCIAL PLAN DISCUSSION

The proposed action would authorize service changes in 2009 and in February 2010 to add additional service in accordance with a revised Service Implementation Plan for 2009. The bus service described in the SIP is funded by the ST Express transit operations budget. The Adopted 2009 Budget has a provision of \$76,407,570 for purchased transportation services. The 2009 service changes will be funded within the current budget resources under either alternative. Since the adoption of the 2009 transit operations budget, fuel prices have dropped drastically and have held well below budgeted levels. The savings accruing to ST Express from these fuel price savings would be sufficient to fund the additional service contemplated in either implementation schedule for 2009.

Future service changes beyond 2009 will be funded through the 2010 budget and financial plan. The choice of alternatives will impact the total spending on purchased transportation from 2009 to 2011. Beyond 2011, the service profiles are not significantly different. The difference in annual costs of the two scenarios is as follows:

Estimated ST Express Costs under Alternatives

	2009	2010	2011	Total
Alternative 1: Baseline ST2 Implementation	86,638,483	97,935,044	106,209,507	290,783,034
Alternative 2: Phased-in ST2 Implementation	86,039,204	93,347,795	101,339,790	280,726,790
Savings from Phased-in Implementation	599,278	4,587,249	4,869,717	10,056,244

Note: Costs do not include contingency funds

BUDGET TABLE

The 2009 Service Implementation Plan is funded by the transit operations budgets for all Sound Transit modes including Sounder commuter rail, ST Express bus, Tacoma Link light rail, Central Link light rail and Accessible Services. The 2009 service described in both Alternative 1 and Alternative 2 will be funded within existing resources for 2009. The Adopted 2009 Budgets are highlighted below:

Summary for Board Action (Year of Expenditure \$000)

Action Item: Adoption of the Amended 2009 Service Implementation Plan.

ALTERNATIVE 1 - BASELINE ST2 IMPLEMENTATION

ST Express bus transit operations budget	Adopted 2009 Budget ¹	Committed to Date ²	This Action ³	Total Committed and Action	Uncommitted (Shortfall)	Future Years ⁴
Purchased Transportation	\$ 76,408	\$ 71,422	\$ 2,880	\$ 74,302	\$ 2,105	\$ 212,111
All Other Expenses	12,336	12,336	0	12,336	0	N/A
Contingency	2,659	0	0	0	2,659	N/A
Total Transit Operations	\$ 91,403	\$ 83,759	\$ 2,880	\$ 86,639	\$ 4,764	\$ 212,111

ALTERNATIVE 2 - DELAYED ST2 IMPLEMENTATION

ST Express bus transit operations budget	Adopted 2009 Budget ¹	Committed to Date ²	This Action ³	Total Committed and Action	Uncommitted (Shortfall)	Future Years ⁴
Purchased Transportation	\$ 76,408	\$ 71,422	\$ 2,281	\$ 73,703	\$ 2,704	\$ 202,653
All Other Expenses	12,336	12,336	0	12,336	0	N/A
Contingency	2,659	0	0	0	2,659	N/A
Total Transit Operations	\$ 91,403	\$ 83,759	\$ 2,281	\$ 86,040	\$ 5,364	\$ 202,653

Notes

- ¹ The proposed action would authorize an amendment to the 2009 Service Implementation Plan. The Adopted 2009 budget was prepared on the basis of the service described in the 2009 SIP. This budget is reflected in the Adopted 2009 Budget book. Both alternatives would be funded through the existing budget levels.
- ² Represents the amount committed for service related to the baseline Service Implementation Plan.
- ³ Represents the projected cost of adding additional service related to ST2 service implementation. This represents the 2009 portion of the ST2 additional service only.
- ⁴ Represents the estimated cost of additional service beyond the draft SIP levels in the proposed ST2 service implementation scenario for the years 2010 and 2011. See a description of the service changes in the Project Description section of this staff report.

Subarea Impacts 2009 - 2011	Baseline Financial Plan ¹	Alternative 1: Baseline ST2 Implementation	Additional Costs of Alt. 1 ²	Alternative 2: Delayed ST2 Implementation	Additional Costs of Alt. 2 ³	Difference Between Alt. 1 and Alt. 2
Snohomish County	34,432	42,747	8,316	40,526	6,094	2,221
South King County	30,388	32,562	2,174	31,894	1,506	667
East King County	140,623	153,065	12,441	146,091	5,468	6,973
Pierce County	69,406	72,968	3,562	72,734	3,367	194
Total Transit Operations	274,849	301,342	26,492	291,246	16,436	10,056

Notes

- ¹ Represents the total cost for ST Express from 2009 - 2011, as programmed the draft 2009 SIP
- ² Represents the total cost for ST Express from 2009 - 2011, as programmed in Alternative 1 for ST2 implementation
- ³ Represents the total cost for ST Express from 2009 - 2011, as programmed in Alternative 2 for ST2 implementation - the phased in scenario

PROJECT DESCRIPTION and BACKGROUND for PROPOSED ACTION

Background

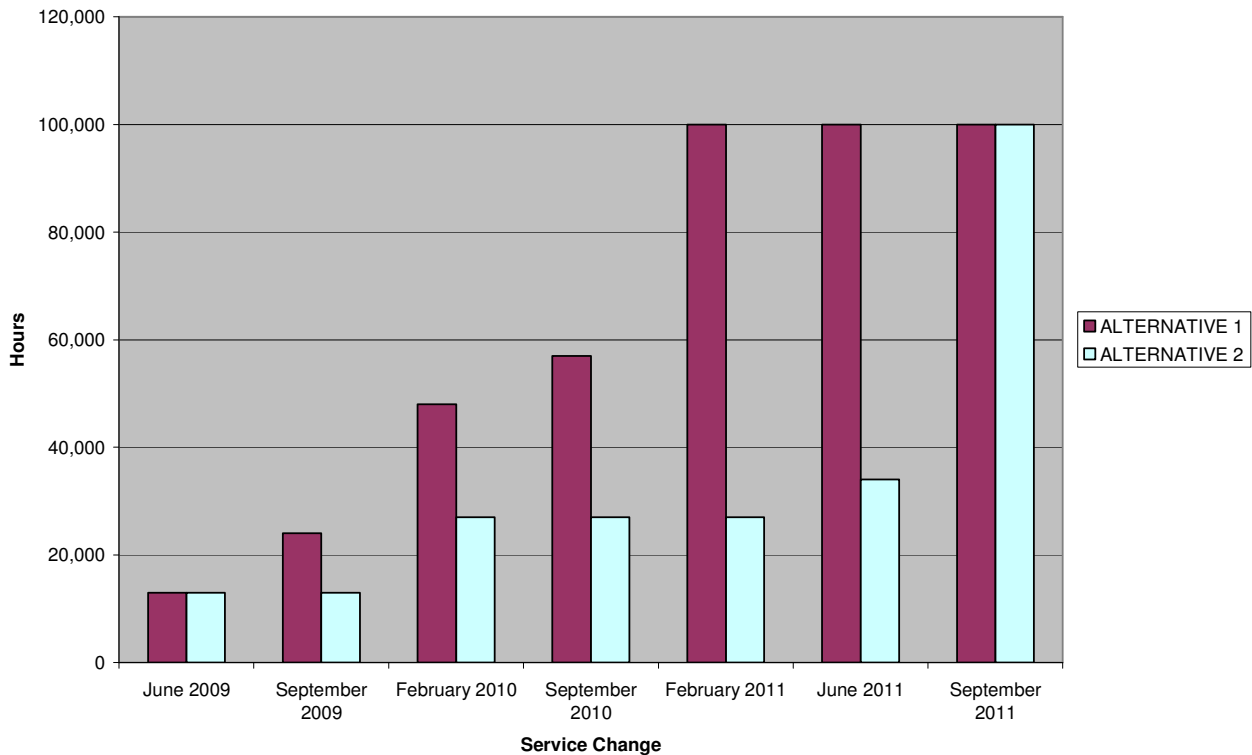
Following voter approval of the ST2 program in November 2008, staff prepared a discussion paper for the Board's Finance and Executive Committees that outlined the general approach and schedule for implementing ST2 bus service improvements. The paper, presented to the committees in January 2009, outlined a four-phase, 15-month implementation plan starting in June 2009 with off-peak service improvements and concluding in September 2010 with the delivery of the last new buses for added rush hour service. As called for in ST2, the plan implemented approximately 100,000 additional bus hours and increased the bus fleet by 60 vehicles. A recent project schedule assessment found that bus base improvements and bus fleet delivery would not be completed until late 2010, so a more realistic

completion date for full ST2 service levels is the February 2011 service change. This schedule, referred to here as **Alternative 1**, would implement all ST2-funded service in the shortest possible time frame.

Since January, sales tax revenue has declined as a result of the economic recession, and the Board has been evaluating strategic trade-offs that would allow the full ST2 program to proceed as originally planned. As a result, staff has developed an alternative schedule for ST2 bus service that stretches the implementation timeline and allows the Board more discretion to consider the final and largest phases of start-up. Compared with the approach outlined to the Board in January, this schedule, called **Alternative 2**, delays implementation of about 75 percent of the new service until June and September of 2011. In addition, initial South Corridor bus service improvements proposed for the February 2010 service change would be limited to 14,000 annual bus hours rather than the 24,000 annual hours originally programmed. The remaining 10,000 South Corridor bus hours would be implemented in September 2011. ***This “stretched timeline” alternative would save approximately \$10.0 million in operating costs compared with Alternative 1.*** Alternative 2 still provides immediate service improvements with the implementation of 30 additional bus trips systemwide in June 2009. While ST Express bus ridership is currently up compared with the same period one year ago, weekday boardings are down by about 10 percent compared with the exceptionally high ridership experienced during the summer of 2008. A more gradual deployment of new service with Alternative 2 may be appropriate given the reduced number of overloaded bus trips and lower ridership growth rate.

The bar chart below summarizes the difference between the Alternative 1 and Alternative 2 implementation schedules:

Accumulative Annualized Hours Added by Service Change



Authorization for Specific Service Changes: September 2009 and February 2010

The proposed action would also authorize the implementation of specific ST2-funded bus service improvements based on the schedule alternative selected by the Board. If Alternative 1 is selected, off-peak service improvements would be implemented in September 2009, together with the full level of South Corridor service improvements in February 2010. If Alternative 2 is selected, there would be no

improvements in September 2009, and the February 2010 South Corridor changes would be implemented but with reduced service levels compared with Alternative 1. The Board would retain the ability to speed up or slow down later improvements during the process of developing the 2010 and 2011 SIP's. With either alternative, the full 100,000 bus service hours and 60 additional buses would be implemented as called for in the ST2 plan. A summary of the two implementation schedules is shown in the tables below. For full details of the service change proposals, please see Appendix A.

Summary of Alternative 1 Schedule

Service Start Date	Proposed Changes	Estimated Increase in Annual Bus Hours	Board Action Date
June 2009	30 new trips implemented system-wide, mostly during off-peak periods.	13,000	Included in both alternatives and implemented administratively
September 2009	Midday and weekend frequency improvements on Snohomish and East King routes	11,000	May 14, 2009
February 2010	Bus improvements in South King and Pierce County tied with opening of Airport Link and expanded South Sounder service	24,000	May 14, 2009
September 2010	Improvements to East King service, including Route 566 extension from Overlake to Redmond Transit Center and expanded Bellevue-Seattle service.	9,000	December 10, 2009
February 2011	Remaining ST2 bus improvements, including new Redmond-UW route, Snohomish improvements (Routes 511, 513 and 532) and expanded peak service systemwide	43,000	December 10, 2009

Summary of Alternative 2 Schedule

Service Start Date	Proposed Changes	Estimated Increase in Annual Bus Hours	Board Action Date
June 2009	30 new bus trips implemented system-wide, mostly during off-peak periods	13,000	Included in both alternatives and Implemented administratively
February 2010	Bus improvements in South King and Pierce County tied with opening of Airport Link and expanded South Sounder service	14,000	May 14, 2009
June 2011	Snohomish County improvements (Routes 511, 513 and 532)	7,000	December 2010
September 2011	Remaining ST2 bus improvements	66,000	December 2010

Modified Route 560 Proposal

The largest number of public comments received on a single issue concerned Route 560 (West Seattle-Bellevue), where the segment of the route between White Center and West Seattle Junction was proposed for deletion. The proposal was developed because this segment has lower ridership and productivity than the rest of the route and because alternative service is available on parallel Metro Route 54, which also connects White Center with West Seattle Junction. Results of the outreach, including comments from customers at the West Seattle open house, showed that Route 560 serves West Seattle commuters during early weekday morning hours when the Metro route does not operate, and that there were on-time performance issues with Route 54 that would make reliable connections between the Metro and Sound Transit routes problematic.

Based on the outreach results, staff modified the original proposal to retain the White Center-West Seattle Junction route segment. However, midday and evening service on weekdays, which now operates every 30 minutes over the full length of the route, would be reduced to every 60 minutes between Burien Transit Center and West Seattle Junction. The reduced level of service on this segment would be operated between about 9:00 A.M. and 3:00 P.M. and after 6:00 P.M. Peak period service would continue to operate every 30 minutes over the full length of the route.

TITLE VI

In compliance with Title VI and Sound Transit policy, staff conducted an analysis of the proposed September 2009 and February 2010 service changes to assess whether the changes might disproportionately affect minority or disadvantaged populations. The September 2009 changes are solely additions to service and would not result in negative service impacts. The proposed February 2010 changes would delete or restructure service in some areas while adding service in others; however, it does not appear that any of the proposals disproportionately affect minority or disadvantaged populations. Where service is proposed for deletion, alternative service would be provided either by Sound Transit or Sound Transit's partner agencies.

Prior Board/Committee Actions

Motion/Resolution Number and Date	Summary of Action
R2008-18 12/04/08	Board approval of the 2009 Service Implementation Plan (SIP)

CONSEQUENCES of DELAY

Staff has worked to coordinate the Board decision process with the planned King County Council action on the February 2010 Metro bus service changes, since the Sound Transit and Metro proposals for that service change date are very interdependent. King County Council action on the Metro service changes is expected during May 2009. If the Board action is delayed until June, then the King County Council action may also be delayed or made contingent on Sound Transit Board approval.

In addition, Alternative 1 includes ST Express service improvements that would begin in September 2009. The contractual deadline for submitting the September service change package to the transit agencies is June 5, 2009.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

The public involvement process for the SIP Amendment started in January 2009 with the release of the Winter edition of "Regional Transit News" (RTN). This publication describes the service changes proposed for June 2009, September 2009 and February 2010 using both a written narrative and maps. A postage-paid questionnaire was included to encourage customers to provide feedback. Approximately 10,000 copies were printed, compared with the 5,000 produced for the fall 2008 outreach process. Street Teams and Station Agents were at park-and-rides, transit centers, commuter rail stations and on board ST Express buses distributing RTN's during late January. The publication was also distributed at transportation fairs and through the Employee Transportation Network (hard copy as well as e-mail). The RTN link was sent to anyone who subscribes to Sound Transit's Service Planning e-mail list, together with the list of other stakeholders and interested parties in Sound Transit's data base.

During February, six open houses were conducted in the communities that would be affected by the proposals, including a joint open house with King County Metro in Federal Way. Other open houses were held in Everett, Bellevue, Renton, Sumner and West Seattle. Information on these open houses was included in RTN and reinforced with posters on board buses and through advertisements printed in local newspapers. At the close of the public comment period on April 1, a total of 773 comments had been received via U.S. Mail, e-mail and comment forms submitted at open houses. A public hearing was conducted on the proposed service changes April 30, 2009 in the Ruth Fisher Boardroom at Union Station.

ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE

SSK 4-24-09

LEGAL REVIEW

LA 4/30/09