



Bus Rapid Transit in the SR-99 Corridor

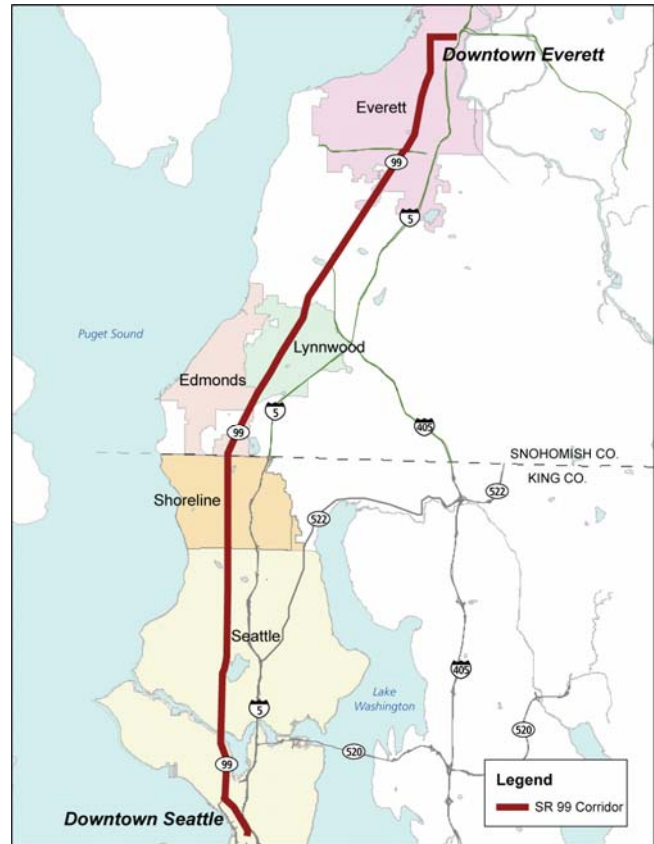
Sound Transit Long-Range Plan – Time for an Update

Sound Transit’s Long-Range Plan update is being supported by two efforts: a Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS), which updates the 1993 EIS, and several issue papers addressing specific long-range planning issues. These issue papers provide a level of detail beyond what is considered in the EIS, and are designed to help the Sound Transit Board and the region identify any needed additions to the existing Long-Range Plan. All of this information will be reflected in a draft Long-Range Plan, scheduled for public review in late spring this year. For a list of all the Long-Range Plan issue papers, please see the reverse.

investment by adding frequent and dependable limited-stop service, completing remaining business access and transit (BAT) lanes, prioritizing signals to move transit more quickly, and attracting riders with distinctive vehicles and stations and new passenger amenities.

What is the question?

Sound Transit’s Long-Range Plan designates the 30-mile SR-99 corridor as an ST Express bus corridor from downtown Seattle to Everett. Today, Everett Transit, Community Transit and King County Metro combined carry about 12,000 riders per day along the corridor, but transfers are generally required to travel between Everett, south Snohomish County and King County. Now, as part of the Long-Range Plan update, the Sound Transit Board is considering whether continuous BRT from Everett to Seattle makes sense as a long-term transit choice for the corridor.



BRT= Bus Rapid Transit is a system of frequent bus service, dedicated running ways, distinctive vehicle and station designs, added passenger amenities and branding improvements that are intended to emulate the convenience, reliability and comfort of rail systems.

What was studied?

Community Transit recently finished a feasibility study for a BRT system from Everett to Seattle on SR-99, which served as the basis for this issue paper. Sound Transit built on that work to examine a system that could leverage existing

What did we learn?

- Upgrading to BRT in the corridor would mean many more riders in 2030. The Community Transit SR-99 BRT Study forecast about 21,000 daily BRT riders in 2030, but assumed light rail only to the Northgate. In contrast, Sound Transit's SEIS forecasts up to 10,000 daily riders, but also assumes light rail all the way to Everett, which would draw riders away from SR-99. Real ridership potential is likely somewhere between the two forecasts, depending on how the rest of the regional high capacity transit system develops. Analyses also showed that only about 10 percent of travel along the corridor is across the county line – so providing a one-seat ride along the entire corridor wouldn't necessarily make a big difference in ridership.
- The type of BRT described for SR-99 is different than any other bus operated by Sound Transit. Most ST Express bus routes generally use regional freeway HOV lanes, stop only at major transit facilities and operate roughly every half hour during the day, with more frequent rush hour service. As described, this BRT service on SR-99 would operate more frequently in an arterial environment, and would rely heavily on a coordinated set of lane and signal improvements to make it fast and reliable.
- Capital facility and bus costs to complete a BRT system would range from \$250 to \$300 million, and operating costs would require \$5 to \$6 million every year. Most of the capital cost would go to completing BAT lanes, which could be controversial with adjacent property owners. Operating costs for some local transit service might be re-dedicated to pay for BRT service, but the amount or availability of those funds is not known.

- Partnerships would be key to success. Implementation of BRT along the SR-99 corridor would require significant coordination and cooperation between transit agencies, WSDOT, local jurisdictions and businesses. Issues include funding and operations responsibilities, ridership and fare revenue sharing, and branding and agency visibility.

As issue papers are presented to the Sound Transit Board, they will be available at: www.soundtransit.org/projects/longrange/issuepapers.asp

See other Long-Range Plan Issue Papers

- I-90/East King County Subarea High Capacity Transit Analysis
- SR-522 Corridor HCT Assessment
- I-5 Corridor HCT Assessment
- Conversion of BRT to LRT
- Seattle Streetcar Options
- Potential Rail between Burien and Renton
- Evolution of HCT in the South Corridor
- Potential Rail Connections to Sounder Stations
- Potential Tacoma Link Extensions
- Tacoma Link Integration with Central Link