



Light Rail on SR 99 – Northgate to Everett

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.

What is the question?

Sound Transit's Long-Range Plan calls for continuing the Link light rail line north from Northgate to downtown Everett, generally following the I-5 corridor. The Sound Transit Board has also asked to explore an alternative alignment that generally follows the SR 99 corridor. The paper provides preliminary comparative cost and ridership information to help the Sound Transit Board with its discussion as a supplement to the I-5 Corridor HCT Assessment issue paper.

What was studied?

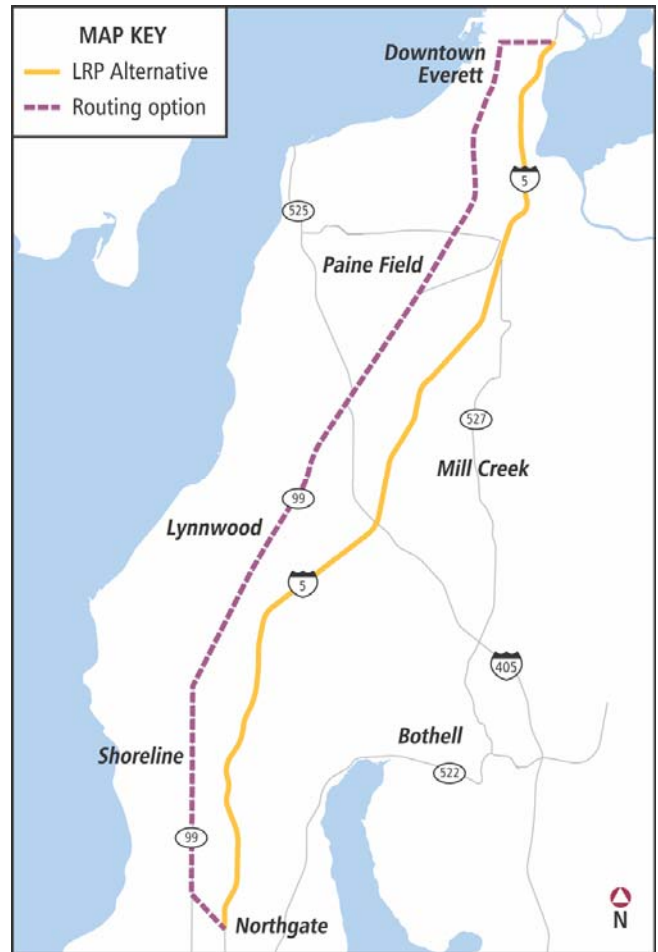
The map at right illustrates where light rail could run in the SR 99 alignment. For comparison to the I-5 alignment it was assumed that both routes would have similar:

- Number of stations (12)
- Parking demand
- Service levels and speeds

All cost information is expressed in 2005 dollars.

What did we learn?

- **The SR 99 option would carry approximately the same number of riders as the I-5 alternative**, with some variations at different points along the line.
- **Travel times for the SR 99 option and I-5 alignment are approximately the same.** Traveling from the Northgate Station to Everett would take about 49 minutes in either scenario.
- **Annual operations and maintenance costs would be 4% - 5% more** along SR 99 (\$94 million) than along I-5 (\$90 million).





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- **Building light rail along SR 99 would result in costs 40%-45% higher than along I-5.** The SR 99 option could range from \$4.6 to \$6 billion or approximately \$1.3 billion to \$1.8 billion more than the I-5 route. Higher capital costs along SR 99 are due to several factors:

- SR 99 is heavily developed along both sides, and rights-of-way for light rail are limited, especially at station locations. More space is available along I-5.
- Land would have to be bought for new park-and-rides. Light rail along I-5 would use existing park-and-rides.
- Getting from Northgate to SR 99 would require significant tunneling. Only minor tunneling would be required along I-5.
- After emerging from the tunnel, an SR 99 line would be elevated to maintain speed and reliability. A similar route along I-5 could run largely at-grade.
- All 12 SR 99 stations would be elevated, compared with 4 on I-5.
- SR 99 has significant overhead utilities requiring relocation or undergrounding. This is a minor issue along I-5.
- Putting light rail along SR-99 would increase traffic management costs.

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 Corridor/East King County High Capacity Transit Analysis
- SR 522 Corridor HCT Assessment
- I-5 Corridor Northgate to Everett HCT Assessment
- Convertibility of BRT to Light Rail
- Seattle Streetcar Options
- Rail between Burien and Renton
- HCT System Development Issues in the South Corridor
- Potential Rail Extensions to Frederickson and Orting
- Potential Tacoma Link Extension – East
- Potential Tacoma Link Extension – West
- Tacoma Link Integration with Central Link
- BRT in SR-99 Corridor