



Seattle Streetcar Options

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?

During the SEIS scoping phase Sound Transit was asked to assess the feasibility of three Seattle streetcar lines:

- South Lake Union to the University District via Eastlake
- Waterfront Streetcar extension east to 23rd/ Jackson in the Central District
- Waterfront Streetcar extension north to Prospect Street and the Amgen campus

Whether or not Sound Transit should involve itself in streetcar implementation is a policy decision for the Sound Transit Board, given that Sound Transit’s primary mission is providing regional High Capacity Transit (HCT) service. This paper provides information on conceptual costs and ridership to assist in the discussion.

What was studied?

The analysis was based on the City of Seattle’s 2004 “Seattle Streetcar Network and Feasibility

Analysis” study, which covered most, but not all, of these segments.

What are the key findings?

- South Lake Union, without a University District extension, has the greatest potential for riders. Once the area is built out, up to 4,100 daily riders are forecast. Initial costs are estimated to potentially be \$45 million for capital and \$2.1 million annually for operations. Potential ridership and costs associated with extending the streetcar to the University District are not yet known.
- Extending the Waterfront Streetcar east to 12th/Jackson from the International District would potentially carry 1,100 riders and cost approximately \$21 million in capital and \$700,000 annually for operations. Extending it further to 23rd/Jackson would cost an additional \$21 million in capital and \$700,000 to operate. Potential ridership for the 23rd/Jackson extension has not yet been identified.
- Extending the Waterfront Streetcar north to Amgen may produce an additional 200-300 riders for approximately \$17 million in capital and \$700,000 in operations costs. This extension would be impacted by reconstruction of the



Seattle’s Waterfront Streetcar arrives at Occidental Park Station.

Alaska Way Viaduct. The Port of Seattle recently announced a proposal to implement this extension.

- Double-tracking the existing Waterfront Streetcar could produce up to 3,600 riders. This would allow for more service along the waterfront and through the International District but would also be impacted by the Alaska Way Viaduct reconstruction.
- The City of Seattle study surveyed 15 streetcar systems and concluded that because streetcars are intended to serve local needs, not to make regional connections and operate in mixed traffic with no right of way priority, they may not meet the definition of HCT. However, they may fit within Sound Transit's mission as "supporting services and facilities necessary to implement such a (HCT) system." (RCW 81.104.015) Criteria for determining whether a streetcar qualifies as a supporting service could include:
 - Connectivity to the regional transit network
 - The potential for future integration as a regional HCT line segment
 - Potential to add a significant number of new riders to the regional HCT system
 - Level of Sound Transit investment v. other partners (host cities, business, private operators, etc.)
 - Level of exclusivity from other traffic

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

- Convertibility of BRT to Light Rail
- I-90 Corridor/East King County High Capacity Transit Analysis
- BRT in SR-99 Corridor
- I-5 Corridor Northgate to Everett HCT Assessment
- SR-522 Corridor HCT Assessment
- 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
- Rail between Burien and Renton