

# Sounder: Expanded Service Levels during Peak, Off-Peak and Weekend Periods, and Related Track and Signal Improvements between Lakewood and Seattle

Project Number	S24
Subarea	Pierce/S. King
Primary Mode Impacted	Sounder
Facility Type	Sounder Service
Version Number	2.0
Date Last Modified	5/12/2006

Project Locator Map



## Short Project Description

Expand Seattle-Tacoma-Lakewood Sounder service beyond the level provided in *Sound Move*. Implement track improvements along the Seattle/Tacoma Sounder line to support the service expansion.

### Project Purpose:

Increase service levels on commuter rail to meet growing demand in South King and Pierce counties.

## Cost and Schedule

### Cost (in Millions of 2005\$)

#### Capital Costs

Miscellaneous Track Improvements (Seattle/Tacoma)

	Low	High
Agency Admin	\$9.3	\$10.6
Environmental Clearance and PE	\$13.4	\$15.4
Final Design, Specs, Permitting	\$13.4	\$15.4
ROW Acquisition	\$0.9	\$1.0
Construction	\$112.5	\$129.4
Vehicles	\$0.0	\$0.0
Contingency	\$14.0	\$16.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$163.5</b>	<b>\$188.0</b>

#### Schedule

Schedule Not Yet Developed

### Design Basis

Conceptual

Annual O&M*	\$11.4
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\* In Millions of 2005 dollars

## Environmental Documentation Required

- Environmental Impact Statement Required
- Environmental Assessment Required
- Environmental Checklist Required

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## Relationships to Other Projects

<i>Relationship</i>	<i>Project</i>
Dependent on	Service expansion requires track improvements east of Tacoma Dome Station (see Project S25)
Impacts	Increased parking demand at stations affected by expansion will necessitate other potential ST projects for parking expansion at Sounder stations (see projects S16 through S23)

## Project Partners

### Agency

BNSF	
City of Tacoma	
Amtrak	
WSDOT	

## Long Description

*The project scope and accompanying capital cost estimate are intended to include the entire project development cycle (administration, environmental clearance, design, all aspects of property acquisition, construction, testing, commissioning, and contingencies) from project initiation through start-up of operations.*

### Description:

Provide additional trips on Sounder service operating between downtown Seattle and Lakewood. Implement various track improvements along Seattle-Tacoma Sounder line.

### Project Elements Included:

#### *Service Expansion*

A total of up to 12 additional train trips per weekday will be added to the 18 trips that are planned to be operated under *Sound Move*. For weekend service, 4 northbound and 4 southbound trips will be provided each day. The affected route is 47 miles. A total of 255 days of service will be provided each year.

Operating costs shown represent the actual costs of increased Sounder service. However, the effective costs incurred by the South King and Pierce subareas would be somewhat higher due to the current formula used for reallocation of shared costs among all subareas with Sounder service. Subareas with Sounder service that are not served by this project would experience a decrease in their shared costs.

#### *Track Modifications*

The Construction Agreement between Sound Transit and BNSF (effective May 1, 2000) identifies "Phase III Projects" as projects that would be required under the agreement to be completed prior to Sound Transit implementing "Phase III" service levels. Phase III service, as described under the agreement, is the operation of 15 round trips per weekday between Seattle and Tacoma. A sample schedule of Phase III service is provided in the agreement, and includes trains departing Seattle and Tacoma generally between the hours of 5:00 a.m. and 10:30 p.m.

The Phase III construction projects identified in the agreement includes the following elements:

- land acquisition (as needed);
- relocation and protection of utilities (as needed);
- construction of a third main line at or near Auburn;
- completion of the remaining portions of railroad construction between Argo and Black River Junction through Union Pacific right-of-way;
- compliance with environmental, land use and construction permit conditions (as needed); and

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A preliminary cost estimate for the above projects is provided in the agreement; however, this estimate is not developed to the same degree of specificity as the Phase I and II construction projects that are identified in the agreement, i.e., the elements above have no itemized costs associated with them. The construction Agreement's preliminary cost estimate for Phase III projects is \$70 million in Year 2000 dollars. To update this estimate to Year 2005 dollars, an annual inflation factor of 5 percent was used, this factor being consistent with recent railroad labor rate increases.

**The result is a construction cost estimate of \$89.3 million in 2005 dollars. Similar to other ST2 projects, various allocated design contingencies and other factors were applied and added to the construction cost estimates to develop the total cost estimate.**

The agreement also stipulates that the initiation of work on the Phase III projects must occur by September 2004 for the Phase III service levels to be operated. Otherwise, the conditions of agreement regarding Phase III are not in force. Hence, the construction projects and related cost estimate provided above are only useful as an indicator of what could be required for expansion of Sounder service under ST2.

### **Utilities:**

As need per the Construction Agreement.

### **Right-of-Way and Property Acquisition:**

Allowance for permits, etc.

### **Mitigation**

The final project scope will include all mitigation(s) committed to by ST in pertinent, future project-level environmental documents

### **Exclusions:**

Potential additional service on weekends and for special events.

Potential agreements with agencies/jurisdictions other than BNSF

### **Permits Required:**

To be determined

### **Agreements Required:**

BNSF and City of Tacoma

*ST has developed scope definitions for ST2 project proposals for the purposes of developing cost estimates, implementation schedules, a financial plan, and the estimation of project benefits. This scope definition should not be construed as a commitment that all defined features will be included in the final developed project.*

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### Evaluation Measures

<i>Measure</i>	<i>Measurement/ Rating</i>	<i>Notes</i>
Average Weekday Ridership	1,600	
Capital Cost	\$163.5 - \$188.0	in Millions of 2005\$
Annual Operating Cost	\$11.4	in Millions of 2005\$
Travel Time & Reliability	High	
Connectivity & Integration	High	N/A
Land Use & Development	High	
Customer Experience	High	
Risk Avoidance	Low	

### Key Issues and Benefits

#### Issues:

- The capital improvements upon which this project's cost is based are outlined in a prior agreement with BNSF that is now expired. Hence, the cost estimate provided here is speculative, and the actual cost for the project could only be determined after a new and amended agreement is negotiated.
- Actual costs may not be based solely on a program of capital improvements and operating agreements as done under *Sound Move*.
- Potential capital improvements could involve a third party agreement with Union Pacific Railway.

#### Benefits

- Expands service on Sounder commuter rail, improving transit capacity and access to major employment/commercial centers along the line.
- Builds on major investment in rail infrastructure, stations, parking, right-of-way and rolling stock implemented under *Sound Move*.