



2017 Service Implementation Plan Executive Summary



December 2016

Executive Summary

2017 Service Implementation Plan

Each year, Sound Transit prepares a Service Implementation Plan that guides delivery of ST Express bus, Sounder commuter rail, and Link light rail services. In coordination with the annual agency budget process, the Service Implementation Plan provides both a forward look at future service plans and a review of existing ridership and performance trends.

Following a significant 2016, where Sound Transit opened three new light rail stations, expanded bus and rail service, and experienced significant ridership growth, the coming year promises continued progress. In 2017, Sound Transit will continue work to expand the regional transit system and carry an estimated 47 million passenger boardings.

More Mobility Delivered in 2016

In 2016 Sound Transit significantly increased transit service in the region. Link light rail opened three new stations along 4.7 miles of new grade-separated alignment reaching Capitol Hill, University of Washington, and Angle Lake. A new round trip on the Sounder south line between Lakewood and Seattle expanded schedule flexibility for customers. An addition of 43,000 bus service hours, or over one hundred new weekday trips, increased passenger capacity and improved schedule reliability.

Nearly forty-three million people rode Sound Transit trains and buses in 2016, a 23.1 percent system-wide increase over 2015. Link light rail ridership surged 65.8 percent with the opening of new stations serving Capitol Hill, the University of Washington and Angle Lake.





More Service for 2017

The 2017 Service Implementation Plan includes service additions to meet growing demand and deliver voter-approved projects. Two new peak-hour Sounder round trips will be added on the busy south line. Additional investment in ST Express will improve schedule reliability and service quality.

Sounder south line

In September 2017, two new Sounder south line round trips will provide additional capacity and flexibility for customers between Lakewood and Seattle. The final schedule for the new round trips will be developed in early 2017 in coordination with BNSF Railway Company and Amtrak. Public release of the final schedule will occur ahead of the September 2017 service change. The two new trips will bring the total number of weekday trains to 13 on the south line.

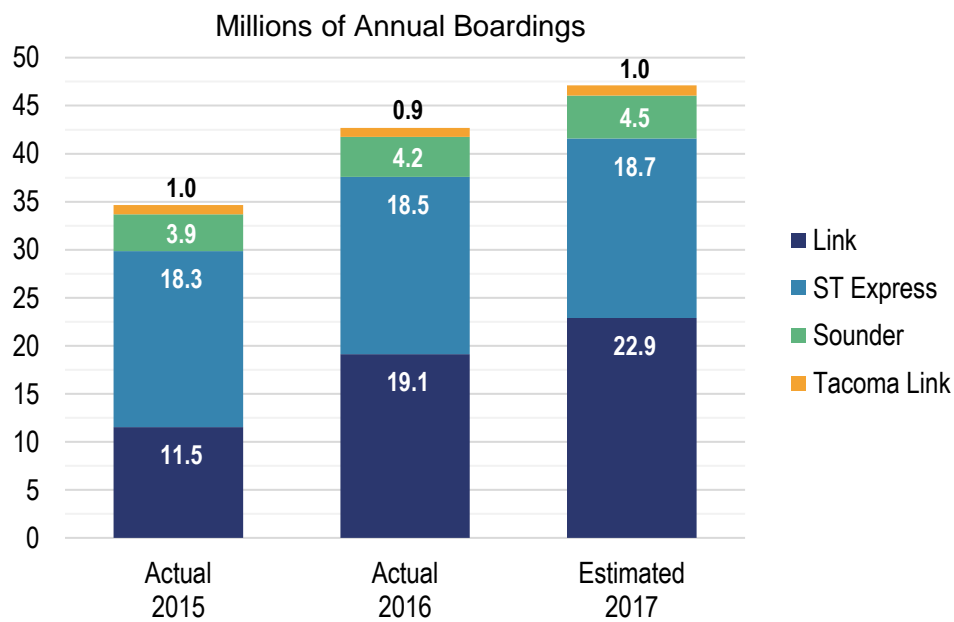
ST Express

Congestion along major highway corridors in Puget Sound continues to increase, leading to reduced travel time reliability. This increased congestion negatively impacts ST Express on-time performance. The 2017 budget includes 15,000 additional annual platform hours for ST Express service to improve schedule reliability and service quality. Additional hours will be implemented across the ST Express system beginning in September 2017.

Record Ridership Expected

Ridership on Sound Transit trains and buses will reach records levels in 2017. Ridership across all modes is estimated to increase by 36 percent over 2015, exceeding 47 million by the end of 2017. With the extensions to the University of Washington and Angle Lake in 2016, Link ridership is projected to almost double from 11.5 million passengers in 2015 to 22.9 million in 2017. New trains on Sounder will drive ridership in 2017 to increase by an estimated 16 percent over 2015. Projections for continued low gas prices temper estimated growth in ST Express to a two percent increase over 2015. Tacoma Link estimates predict ridership growth of about seven percent driven by PSRC growth projections. Figure 1 shows annual boardings by mode, with 2015 and 2016 actuals and estimates for 2017.

FIGURE 1 - ANNUAL BOARDINGS BY MODE 2015-2017



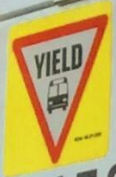


Light Rail Construction & Transit Integration Continues

Between 2016 and 2022, Sound Transit system ridership will grow by an estimated 65 percent driven by regional growth and the benefits of fast, reliable high-capacity transit. Transit integration offers opportunities to maximize the efficient use of transit resources in the region, while also improving customer experience. Sound Transit recognizes that coordination with partner agencies contributes to building an effective regional system. Sound Transit will engage partner agencies and the public to deliver an integrated transit network as build-out of the ST2 network continues. The Service Implementation Plan includes a preliminary service plan for the next five years to document upcoming system opportunities and challenges, informing customers and partner agencies of future service changes Sound Transit may consider.

Public Input

Customers and members of the public were encouraged to comment on the draft plan through email, letter, via telephone, or in-person at a public meeting. For 2017, Sound Transit received 156 responses and 231 total unique comments on the draft Service Implementation Plan. Major themes in the public comments included requests for more Link, Sounder, and ST Express service including more trips, longer trains, and service later at night.



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