

FAQ's

1. **Why are Metro and Sound Transit adjusting bus service to connect to the University of Washington Link light rail station?**

As early as September 2018, buses will stop operating in the Downtown Seattle Transit Tunnel (DSTT) and begin operating on surface streets. There is already growing congestion and major construction impacts to traffic in and through downtown Seattle. Transit agencies are planning ahead for these anticipated changes. Metro and Sound Transit are considering connecting bus service with Link light rail to improve travel-time reliability and reallocate saved service hours to improve bus service on the Eastside.

2. **What is happening at the Montlake triangle to improve the bus-rail transfer environment?**

King County Metro, Sound Transit, WSDOT, SDOT and the University of Washington are evaluating options to improve the bus-rail transfer experience in and around the Montlake triangle. Some possibilities include allowing customers to pay before they board to speed the bus loading process, providing real time arrival information, adding bus stops to increase capacity, moving bus stops closer to the Link station to reduce walking times, and providing additional shelter amenities for passenger comfort.

3. **How does the One Center City project relate to the Link Connections: SR-520 project?**

One Center City is an SDOT led planning process studying a range of strategies to keep people moving in and through downtown Seattle, as population and economic growth continues and major transportation projects move forward. Restructuring transit service is one of the near-term strategies that the One Center City plan is reviewing and evaluating to minimize the impacts of numerous transportation and development projects on riders. It's important to note that any near-term transit service restructure strategy presented or recommended by the One Center City plan will require a public outreach process and transit agency approval.

The Link Connections: SR-520 project builds on concepts introduced in the U-Link outreach process to adjust Eastside bus routes to connect to the University of Washington Station. The Link Connections project, now in Phase II of outreach, is a three phase public outreach process to gather input about improving service along the SR-520 corridor and gauge support for connecting service to the University of Washington Link station. The final service recommendation will be shaped by public and stakeholder feedback and, if adopted by the King County Council and Sound Transit Board of Directors, the service change could be implemented as early as September 2018.

4. **What is the transfer time at the Montlake area to and from UW Link light rail station?**

King County Metro, Sound Transit, WSDOT, SDOT and the University of Washington are evaluating capital and design improvements to accommodate the increased bus capacity and improve the transfer environment. The existing transfer time is between 3-5 minutes from the existing bus shelters on Pacific Ave to the University of Washington Link light rail platform.

5. What is the timeline for restructuring bus service?

Public input will help shape the final service change recommendations that will be transmitted to the King County Council early in 2018. Proposed changes to Sound Transit service will be considered by the Sound Transit Board of Directors in late 2017. The SR-520 restructure project depends on several factors, including eliminating joint bus-rail operations in the Downtown Seattle Transit Tunnel (which will increase transit operation on surface streets) as early as fall 2018. If the service recommendations are approved by the King County Council and Sound Transit Board of Directors and the DSTT begins rail-only operations, then the SR-520 service changes could go into effect as early as September 2018.

6. What is the advantage of restructuring SR-520 transit service?

King County Metro and Sound Transit have developed two draft service proposals based on input from the public during the first phase of outreach. The proposals adjust some or most of the service to connect to Link light rail at the University of Washington Station. The savings generated by having routes avoid traveling on I-5 and into downtown Seattle will be used to improve service on the SR-520 corridor, including improved frequency, offering more service earlier, later and on weekends and new direct connections to Seattle Children's or South Lake Union. Having buses connect to the University of Washington Link light rail station leverages the investment in the light rail system and connects riders to a fast, reliable trip to and from downtown Seattle. The travel time between the University of Washington Link Station and the Westlake Station in downtown Seattle is just 6 minutes. Travel time to the International District Station is just 12 minutes.

7. Is there capacity on the Link light rail system to accommodate more riders?

Currently, Link operates every 6-minutes with a mix of 2-car and 3-car trains, providing capacity to meet increased demand. When the DSTT begins rail-only operation, Link service will become more reliable. Sound Transit will continue to monitor and manage ridership increases and increase capacity in the DSTT as needed, and when more Link vehicles are available.