

Sound Transit Permit Parking Program

Purpose

The purposes of the proposed permit parking program are to increase the number of transit customers accommodated per parking space provided, to improve the efficiency of Sound Transit facilities and services, and to improve customer satisfaction.

Background

According to a customer survey conducted in 2011-2012 on Sound Transit services, about 36 percent of Sound Transit customers drive and park a vehicle to access transit when starting at home.¹ This percentage varies greatly by mode; Sounder customers have the highest parking dependence, Link customers have the lowest, and ST Express customers fall in between.

Sound Transit offers limited parking facilities to provide access to Sound Transit bus and train services for customers whose only reasonable access mode is driving and parking a vehicle. Currently, this is provided free on a first-come, first-served basis to the users of this amenity. However, not all transit customers need parking to access transit, nor can all who desire parking access it when they want it, causing circling in search of a space, frustration, and either parking in a less desirable location, driving all the way to the destination, or foregoing a trip that ostensibly had some utility. In any case, lack of parking can be seen as a deterrent to transit ridership for those riders with no other options to access transit.

Understanding the challenges faced by many riders and potential riders, the Sound Transit Board directed staff to test parking management strategies in a parking management pilot project. The pilot project included a test of High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) and Single Occupancy Vehicle (SOV) permits at select high-use Sound Transit park-and-ride locations for six months in 2014. The pilot project demonstrated permits' effectiveness at increasing efficiency and improving customer satisfaction with using Sound Transit park-and-rides, and thus is being developed into a permanent program proposal for the Sound Transit Board's consideration.

Proposed long-term parking management vision

At high demand locations, parking would be managed such that the maximum number of transit riders achievable would be accommodated per parking stall. This would be provided through a mix of permits for regular riders and day-use permits and/or transit customer validation for occasional riders. Parking management would be regionally integrated among all public owners of park-and-ride lots so that any facility could be included in the program at the owner's discretion, and the riding public would have a single interface through which to access program information for all park-and-ride lots in the central Puget Sound region.

¹ 2011-2012 Sound Transit Origin-Destination Survey

Proposed site selection criteria

A park-and-ride facility is proposed for inclusion in the permit program if Sound Transit has the authority to implement parking restrictions and to make the necessary facility changes (e.g., signage, pavement markings, equipment installation), and meets at least one of the following criteria:

- 97% or greater utilization for the most recent three consecutive months according to monthly occupancy counts from CFAS Division of ST Operations
- Constructed by ST as part of a Link light rail station

The proposed first priority for implementing the permit program would be at new Link light rail station lots, prior to opening. After new lots, the proposed priority for implementing a permit program at an individual facility would be based on the severity of over-subscription, starting with lots that fill the earliest in the weekday morning peak period.

Under these proposed criteria, the following lots would qualify for permits:

Facility Name	County	Capacity	Transit Service	Ownership
Angle Lake Station	King	1,050	Link, bus	ST
Auburn Station	King	633	Sounder, bus	ST
Federal Way TC	King	1,190	Bus	ST
Issaquah TC	King	819	Bus	ST
Kent Station	King	996	Sounder, bus	ST
Mercer Island P&R	King	447	Bus	ST
Overlake TC	King	222	Bus	ST
Puyallup Station	Pierce	364	Sounder, bus	ST
Sumner Station	Pierce	302	Sounder, bus	ST
Tukwila International Blvd Station	King	600	Link, bus	ST

The following facilities meet the proposed qualifying criteria but are either leased or shared, and therefore it needs to be determined whether or not permit parking could be implemented based on lease/operating agreements:

Facility Name	County	Capacity	Transit Service	Ownership
Federal Way Center Plaza Leased Lot	King	56	Link, bus	Leased
Lynnwood TC	Snohomish	1,398	Bus	Shared
Northgate Interim Parking Lot	King	156	Bus	Leased
Puyallup Eagles	Pierce	68	Sounder, bus	Leased
Puyallup Red Lot (Fairgrounds)	Pierce	219	Bus	Leased
South Everett Freeway Station	Snohomish	397	Bus	Shared
Sumner "Red Apple" Lot	Pierce	48	Sounder, bus	Leased

The following facilities would not qualify for permit program implementation under the proposed criteria at this time:

Facility Name	County	Capacity	Transit Service	Ownership
Bonney Lake Park-and-Ride	Pierce	359	Bus	ST
DuPont Station	Pierce	109	Bus	ST
Eastmont Park-and-Ride	Snohomish	389	Bus	Shared
Edmonds Station - Leased Lot	Snohomish	84	Sounder, bus	Leased
Edmonds Station - ST Lot	Snohomish	156	Sounder, bus	ST
Everett Station	Snohomish	1,107	Sounder, bus	Shared
Lakewood Station	Pierce	541	Sounder, bus	ST
Mukilteo Station	Snohomish	63	Sounder, bus	ST
South Hill P&R	Pierce	354	Bus	ST
South Tacoma Station	Pierce	220	Sounder	ST
Tacoma Dome Station	Pierce	2,337	Sounder, Link, bus	Shared
TIBS Seatac Center Leased Parking	King	62	Link, bus	Leased
Tukwila Sounder Station	King	390	Sounder, bus	ST

Proposed program phasing

After a site has been selected and approved for implementation, the proposed parking management program would be implemented in phases:

- 1) 2+ HOV permit parking
- 2) SOV permit parking
- 3) Day-use permit/transit customer validation

At this time, a day-use permit product is not available; once an approach to providing day-use permits/transit customer validation is determined, parking management could be expanded to entire facilities. In the interim, some parking spaces at each facility would remain free and available on a first-come, first served basis.

The first phase of the program (2+ HOV permit parking) would be implemented at select facilities in 2016. The second phase (SOV permit parking) would be implemented after a period sufficient to allow for customer acceptance and uptake of the HOV program. SOV permits would be priced such that a clear incentive exists to participate in the HOV program.

The third phase (day-use permits) is currently under evaluation. Ideally, a single payment interface that could be used for transit and parking would be developed to improve ease of use and convenience for the customer.

Proposed program design elements

Proposed program details could be adjusted to accommodate needs that may arise during or after implementation. Any changes to permit fees would need to be approved by the Sound Transit Board of Directors.

Phase 1: HOV permit program

- Free or low monthly fee
- Two or more transit riders per permit
- No limit to number of HOV permits issued up to the number of permits needed (including oversell) to fill 50% of capacity of lot
- Permits would be oversold to maximize parking stall utilization; oversell rate could be adjusted based on observed utilization.
- Changes in permit fee would be determined by ST Board of Directors

Phase 2: SOV permit program

- Pricing to be determined by ST Board of Directors, with potential low-income rate
- Permits would be oversold to maximize parking stall utilization; oversell rate could be adjusted based on observed utilization.
- Permits would be issued on space-available basis for no more than 50% of capacity of lot when combined with HOV permits, and maintaining some capacity for additional growth in HOV permit allocation

Phase 3: Day use permit/transit customer validation

- To be further developed
- ORCA integration is desirable
- If a day use permit/transit customer validation program is implemented, up to 100% of spaces at a facility could be managed, i.e., no first-come, first-served spaces

Monitoring and Enforcement

- Regular monitoring and enforcement of permitted spaces
- Spot check enforcement of HOV 2+ rider requirement
- Permit spaces generally reserved/enforced 6:00 – 9:30 a.m. Monday-Friday but could be adjusted on a facility-by-facility basis if needed
- If permitting and enforcement technology allows, multiple vehicles could be authorized per permit so long as only one vehicle at any given time is using the permit

Application criteria/procedures

- Customers must provide ORCA number and permission to review up to one month of ride history to validate that they are a transit rider (any fixed-route ORCA activity in past month qualifies an applicant during initial application process)

- ORCA numbers reviewed periodically after permits issued to ensure transit ridership of an average of three times per week, with flexibility for time away (vacations, etc.)
- HOV permit applicants must provide ORCA numbers and permission to access ride history for all applicants on the permit

Proposed implementation plan

If approved by the Sound Transit Board of Directors at its September 2015 meeting, the following implementation plan would be carried out.

- September, 2015: Title VI Fare Equity analysis on HOV & SOV permits completed
- October, 2015: Procurement of third-party parking management vendor initiated
- January, 2016: Contract with third-party vendor considered by Board of Directors; Notice to Proceed issued given Board approval
- Q1-Q2, 2016: Vendor preparation; marketing and outreach for HOV permit program; HOV permit applications open
- Opening of Angle Lake Station (Link light rail) – estimated fall 2016: HOV permit program implemented
- Approximately three to six months after HOV program initiated: Board of Directors considers rates for SOV permits
- (If SOV permit rate approved) Approximately six to nine months after HOV program initiated: SOV permit program implemented
- Ongoing: Research and development of daily fees or transit customer validation
- Date TBD: Title VI Fare Equity Analysis on daily fees program (if fees will be charged)
- Date TBD: Board of Directors considers rates (if any) for daily use
- Date TBD: Daily fees/transit customer validation implemented