

Ballard transit expansion study

Exploring transit possibilities between downtown Seattle and Ballard Sound Transit and the Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) partnered on a study of possible transit improvements between Ballard and downtown Seattle. The study outcome supports:

- Implementation of the Seattle Transit Master Plan
- Future Sound Transit Board discussions on long-range high capacity transit (HCT) options. This study also examine HCT rail potential in this corridor, using light rail as the representative transit mode.

By partnering and increasing efficiencies, Sound Transit and the City of Seattle saved planning dollars during this project development phase. The study began in early 2013 and was complete in mid-2014.

Public input solicited throughout the course of the study helped the project team evaluate corridors between Ballard and Downtown Seattle, serving neighborhoods such as Fremont, Queen Anne, Interbay and Belltown. Three open houses and interactive online tools drew the interest of more than 2,500 stakeholders.

Construction of any potential future transit extensions would be subject to Sound Transit and City policy decisions and identification of funding sources. Voter approval is required for potential Sound Transit investments.

Highlights:

Project phase: Planning study

Milestone: Completed June 2014

Study area: Map

Partners: Sound Transit, Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT)

Sound Transit's role

Sound Transit's emphasis was studying "high capacity transit" (HCT) operating principally in exclusive rights of way. That means, for the most part, these services have their own lanes separate from traffic, providing faster and more reliable connections. This study considered a narrow range of HCT alternatives and evaluated routes and station locations. In 2008, voters approved the ST2 plan, which included studying potential HCT options between Ballard and downtown Seattle.

This study also supported work by the Sound Transit Board to update the Regional Transit Long Range Plan, a process that involved the public in discussing long-term possibilities and priorities.

SDOT's role

In April 2012, the Seattle City Council adopted the Seattle Transit Master Plan (TMP), which focuses on using transit to connect communities in Seattle. The TMP identified five corridors for investment and that the Ballard to downtown corridor would be the first one studied. The Ballard to Downtown Seattle Transit Expansion Study examined rail options such as rapid streetcar in this corridor as identified in the TMP.

[Project fact sheet](#)

Study activities:

In coordination with a comprehensive public involvement process throughout the study process, the following activities were completed in the Ballard to downtown Seattle Study:

1. Identified project goals and objectives
2. Identified possible alignments between Ballard and downtown Seattle
3. Evaluated and refined potential HCT light rail and rapid streetcar alignments and station locations
4. Developed general ridership estimates and cost estimates
5. Summarized and documented findings
6. Presented findings to City of Seattle leadership and Sound Transit Board for possible future action