

Expanding opportunities with transit

2021 Progress Report



SOUNDTRANSIT
Powering progress

Dear neighbors,

From the COVID-19 pandemic to calls for racial justice, from home schooling to encroaching fires, 2020 was a year that challenged all of us.

Through the difficult times, Sound Transit kept our trains and buses running, helping deliver essential workers to front-line jobs. And with new safety protocols designed to protect our own skilled workforce, we continued light rail construction in every part of the region.

We're still on track to open 28 new light rail stations by 2024, starting with service to Northgate opening this year. The Hilltop Tacoma Link Extension opens in 2022, and 10 new stations between downtown Seattle, Bellevue and Redmond's Overlake neighborhood open in 2023. In 2024 we reach Lynnwood, Federal Way and downtown Redmond.

But the recession caused by the pandemic will have lasting effects on our regional economy and will slow our delivery of other transit improvement projects currently in the planning stage.

Whatever the challenges, we remain steadfast. We're planning, building and operating fast, sustainable transit that connects more people to more places to make life better and create equitable opportunities for all.

Be safe and be well,



Peter Rogoff, Sound Transit CEO

Learn about transit projects in your area:

 **soundtransit.org/2021report**



"I'll be happy to see my passengers returning. I like helping all riders, especially those with disabilities, who sit in the car right behind me."

– Rob Lafever, Sounder South conductor

Ready to welcome you back

Throughout the pandemic, Sound Transit has continued to operate our fast, reliable trains and buses throughout the region. As worksites, classrooms, sports and recreation begin to reopen, we'll be there to welcome you aboard our growing network of Link light rail, Sounder trains, ST Express buses and, in the years ahead, our new Stride bus rapid transit lines.

Read on for progress updates ➤



A pandemic strikes

We keep rolling

Throughout the pandemic, Sound Transit has continued to run the trains and buses that provide essential trips for our passengers.

We've been hard at work helping keep everyone who uses our system safe by implementing daily disinfecting regimens, wearing protective gear, requiring all riders to wear face masks and offering contact-free payment options.

We keep building

Sound Transit construction workers have remained on the job under new safety protocols, building light rail extensions that will help move the region to economic recovery.

We're meeting rider demand while preserving taxpayer dollars

As more people worked from home, our ridership dropped by about 80%. In response, we cut Link light rail frequency and suspended several Sounder trips. We also adjusted our ST Express bus service to match demand, reducing or eliminating routes in some places while preserving service where ridership remained closer to normal, such as in Pierce and South King counties. We expect to welcome more riders with added service in the months ahead as vaccines become more widely available. We'll be there to keep you safe while keeping you moving.

COVID-19 spurs a recession while project costs rise

Revenues for transit expansion fall; construction costs increase

As people stayed home, the COVID-19 pandemic closed many businesses. The economy fell into recession and with it, sales tax revenues to fund future transit construction declined steeply. Despite the recession, costs for real estate and construction continued to increase steadily. *See page 13 for more about effects of the recession and cost increases on Sound Transit's finances.*

Realignment of project schedules and plans is required to address financial constraints

Current light rail construction remains on track. However, the recession and cost increases mean that we'll need to modify schedules and plans for many Link, Sounder and Stride bus rapid transit projects to match our strained finances. The Board of Directors is scheduled to make full program realignment decisions this summer.

What's important to you?

What should the Sound Transit Board consider as they make changes to project schedules and/or scopes? These are big decisions for the region, and we want to hear your voice.

Email, call or submit your comments online:
realignment@soundtransit.org or 206-553-3400



Scan the QR code or go to:
soundtransit.org/realignment



Photo: Light rail is on its way to Lynnwood, opening 2024.

On track for the biggest light rail expansion ever

Despite the recession, we're more than doubling our light rail service to every part of the region in just the next four years.

By 2024 we'll grow from 22 to 50 stations, from 22 to 62 miles.



We celebrated a lot of construction milestones in 2020.

Follow our progress building service to Northgate, Lynnwood, Bellevue, Redmond, Federal Way and Tacoma's Hilltop neighborhood.



VIDEO

Watch the light rail system grow.

Scan the QR code or go to:

soundtransit.org/2020progress



Transit boosts the economy

We've been here before

When most construction stopped during the Great Recession of 2008-2009, Sound Transit continued hiring tradespeople to build light rail. As the economy recovered, the new University of Washington, Capitol Hill and Angle Lake stations were among those most heavily used.

Fast forward to today — building light rail will directly employ thousands in the construction workforce, which in turn will support even more local retail and service jobs. As COVID-19 recedes, new extensions connecting Bellevue, Redmond, Federal Way and Lynnwood will help deliver tens of thousands of daily riders back to work and school, and yes, even to Mariners, Seahawks, Sounders and Huskies games!

Thousands of jobs for a diverse workforce

At Sound Transit we're making sure that the workforce building our projects today and for Central Puget Sound's next generation of riders reflects our region's diverse population. We're partnering with community nonprofits to train local talent, including people of color, native tribal members and women, for career opportunities at our worksites. We'll need thousands of trained workers in the years ahead. If you've been looking for the opportunity to join the construction trades, learn more on our website.

Seize your opportunity:

➡ soundtransit.org/apprenticeship

"I'm extremely happy that I've done this program. Now I'm looking for a better job, and I won't settle for less."

— Edekel Deglel, pre-apprentice

Full voter-approved system

On track to open in the next four years...

This year! **North Seattle:** Northgate, Roosevelt and U District light rail stations open.

Next year **Pierce County:** Six Tacoma Link stations open between the Theater District and the Hilltop medical district, and a new parking garage opens at the Puyallup Sounder Station.

2023 **Eastside:** Ten light rail stations open, including Mercer Island, Bellevue and the Microsoft campus.

2024 **Regionwide:** Nine light rail stations open to Lynnwood, Federal Way and downtown Redmond.

More transit projects in the works

Schedule and scope for the projects below are subject to the Board's realignment decisions in summer 2021.

Pierce and South King counties:

- Light rail extension from Federal Way to Tacoma Dome and extension of Tacoma Link to Tacoma Community College.
- More parking and better access to Sounder South stations.
- Expanded Sounder capacity to serve more riders.
- Two more Sounder South stations at Tillicum and DuPont.

East King County:

- Stride bus rapid transit on I-405 and SR 522 with connections to light rail at Tukwila, Bellevue, Shoreline and Lynnwood.
- Park-and-ride in North Sammamish.
- New light rail line from South Kirkland to Issaquah.


















Snohomish County:

- Parking and access improvements at Sounder North stations.
- Our longest light rail extension, from Lynnwood to Everett.

Seattle area:

- Light rail extensions to West Seattle and Ballard.
- New light rail stations on existing lines at NE 130th Street, South Graham Street and South Boeing Access Road.



 Link trains	 Sounder trains
Future service:	Future service:
 Ballard–Tacoma	 DuPont–Lakewood
 Mariner–Redmond	
 Everett–West Seattle	In service:
 S. Kirkland–Issaquah	 Sounder North (Everett–Seattle)
 Tacoma Dome–Tacoma Community College	 Sounder South (Lakewood–Seattle)
In service:	 Bus
 Univ. of Washington–Angle Lake	Future service:
 Tacoma Dome–Theater District	 Stride bus rapid transit
	In service:
 Added capacity	 ST Express bus
 Parking improvements	

Learn about transit projects in your area:
soundtransit.org/2021report



Advancing equity

Throughout 2020, the movement for racial justice focused the spotlight on embedded racist policies and practices. At Sound Transit, we're challenging ourselves to plan, build and operate public transit that provides equitable access to housing, education, medical facilities and job opportunities for all.

Transit advances racial equity by connecting everyone to good-paying jobs, medical facilities, education and other opportunities no matter where they live and whether they own a car. Our trains and buses become increasingly critical as housing prices rise in the central cities, pushing historically marginalized members of our community farther from critical destinations.

Transit can also help bring people to diverse neighborhoods, connecting local businesses to a regionwide market.

"We need people moving here and commuting from here and shopping here, and I'm really excited to see how we can partner with Sound Transit to make that a reality."

– Lyn Idahosa-Berry, Federal Way Black Collective

Learn about light rail coming to Federal Way in 2024: soundtransit.org/fwlink

Transit is for everyone

ORCA LIFT — reduced fares for income-qualified riders

Get all the benefits of an ORCA card for a fraction of the cost with our ORCA LIFT reduced fare program. Eligibility is based on your household income. To see if you qualify and to learn the location of your closest ORCA customer service office where you can apply for a card, call 206-553-3000 or 800-756-5437.

Seniors and riders with disabilities qualify for lower fares

The Regional Reduced Fare Permit is available for those over the age of 65 and riders with disabilities. The card is free. Apply for an RRFP card at an ORCA customer service office.

Find an ORCA customer service office near you:

📍 soundtransit.org/orca-customer-service


Riders of all abilities

Our facilities and vehicles are fully accessible including designated seating, audible and visual announcements, tactile strips and more. We offer free travel training by professional instructors to teach people with disabilities and seniors how to move about independently using public transportation.

Call 800-201-4900 / TTY: 711, or email accessibility@soundtransit.org.

Every person is welcome aboard Sound Transit.

Intolerance and disrespect are not.



"I am completely blind in the left eye and I only see through the top half of my right eye. I ride the Sounder train a lot, I ride the Link light rail. I commute from Kent. It's a really great transit system, and I'm grateful for that."

– Melvin Freeman, artist

How to ride

 soundtransit.org/how-to-ride

Plan

Use our mobile-friendly Trip Planner to see where to catch your ride and find schedules for your trip.

Pay and ride

To ride Link or Sounder



ORCA card

Buy your card for unlimited rides at ticket machines or at orcacard.com. You can also load cash value to pay as you go and save on transfers. Use ORCA LIFT and save money. Call to see if you qualify: 206-553-3000 or 800-756-5437.

Tap on at the start of your ride and don't forget to tap off at the end!



Single ticket

Buy a single ticket at the machine using cash or card.

To ride an ST Express bus



ORCA card

Tap your ORCA card when boarding.



Exact change

Pay with exact change when boarding.

Another touch-free way to ride our trains and buses



Transit GO Ticket app

Buy your single ticket wherever you are with the Transit GO Ticket app. Don't forget to activate your ticket before you board.





Keeping you safe while keeping you moving

We've got your ride covered

We're regularly disinfecting our vehicles, cleaning our stations and offering touch-free payment choices.

Do your part

Remember to wear a mask and maintain social distance when riding.

We'll all get there together!



Get service alerts

Whether it's COVID-19 or traffic or route changes as new light rail service opens, schedules can change. Sign up for rider alerts and get up-to-the-minute schedule information.

Get rider alerts via email or text:

▶ soundtransit.org/subscribe

Financial information

Financial pressures require Board of Directors to realign Sound Transit’s capital program

Sound Transit is facing an unprecedented and extremely challenging financial environment caused by two major, simultaneous factors: (1) a pandemic-driven recession that has created major impacts for consumer spending and agency tax revenues; and (2) unrelenting pressures in the real estate and construction sectors that are continuing to drive cost estimates to levels significantly beyond those foreseen in our prior projections.

Greatly decreased consumer spending reduces revenues

The sales and use tax generates approximately 58% of Sound Transit’s annual revenues. The pandemic has caused a steep decline in consumer spending and sales tax revenues. This, along with lower revenues from other taxes and fares, has greatly reduced funding to build new transit. We project a revenue shortfall of approximately \$6 billion in year-of-expenditure dollars through 2041, or substantially more in the case of a severe recession. We continue to monitor financial conditions and adjust long-range projections.

Real estate and construction cost increases continue to surge

The recession has not slowed the pace of growth in costs for real estate acquisition or for construction labor and materials. Light rail extension projects in early planning and design, as well as those that come later, are seeing cost estimate increases totaling approximately \$12 billion in year-of-expenditure dollars through 2041 as of the printing of this report, posing challenges for expansions in rapidly redeveloping urban environments. We have commissioned an independent review of our cost assumptions and underlying methodologies.

Projects currently in construction, including light rail extensions to Northgate, Lynnwood, Bellevue, Redmond and Federal Way are moving forward on budget and schedule.

2021 Sound Transit Board

Kent Keel , <i>Chair</i> , University Place Councilmember	Joe McDermott , King County Council Vice Chair
Dow Constantine , <i>Vice chair</i> , King County Executive	Roger Millar , Washington State Secretary of Transportation
Paul Roberts , <i>Vice chair</i> , Everett Councilmember	Ed Prince , Renton Councilmember
Nancy Backus , Auburn Mayor	Kim Roscoe , Fife Mayor
David Baker , Kenmore Mayor	Nicola Smith , Lynnwood Mayor
Claudia Balducci , King County Council Chair	Dave Somers , Snohomish County Executive
Bruce Dammeier , Pierce County Executive	Dave Upthegrove , King County Councilmember
Jenny A Durkan , Seattle Mayor	Peter von Reichbauer , King County Councilmember
Deborah Juarez , Seattle Councilmember	Victoria Woodards , Tacoma Mayor

Board set to make program realignment decisions this summer

Increased cost estimates combined with reduced revenue projections result in an \$11.5 billion affordability gap to complete the program as originally planned. The Board is currently developing realignment solutions required by the ST3 Plan that, in the absence of additional fiscal capacity, could include delaying construction of projects; phasing of projects; and/or modifying the scope of projects, such as reducing project elements. The Board has also directed staff to pursue new revenues to reduce or avoid the need to delay, phase or modify projects. This includes identification of potential federal, state and local sources (while not increasing rates of sales, property or motor vehicle excise taxes).

The public is encouraged to weigh in. The Board will consider public input before planned realignment decisions this summer.

What's important to you?

What should the Board consider as they make changes to project schedules and/or scopes? These are big decisions for the region, and we want to hear your voice.

Email, call or submit your comments online:

realignment@soundtransit.org or 206-553-3400



Scan the QR code or go to:

soundtransit.org/realignment





Union Station, 401 S. Jackson St., Seattle, WA 98104-2826

PRESORTED
STANDARD
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
SEATTLE, WA
PERMIT NO. 1832



Descubra de qué manera se está expandiendo su sistema de transporte público para llegar a más lugares.

해당 지역의 교통시스템 확장 내역을 확인하세요.

Узнайте как расширяется ваша транзитная система.

Alamin kung paano lumalawak ang inyong transit system sa mas maraming mga lugar.

Tìm hiểu về việc hệ thống giao thông công cộng của quý vị đang mở rộng tới nhiều địa điểm hơn như thế nào.

了解公共交通系統如何擴展至更多地方。



800-823-9230

➤ soundtransit.org/report-spanish

➤ soundtransit.org/report-korean

➤ soundtransit.org/report-russian

➤ soundtransit.org/report-tagalog

➤ soundtransit.org/report-vietnamese

➤ soundtransit.org/report-chinese