

What is a Service and Fare Equity (SAFE) Analysis?

As a recipient of federal financial assistance, Sound Transit must ensure it follows regulations set in Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. These regulations, along with Sound Transit policies, require Sound Transit to conduct service and fare equity analyses prior to adding a new service, implementing major service changes, or making changes to fares. These analyses determine the potential benefits and adverse effects of proposed changes and consider the impacts of these changes on two historically overlooked groups: minority and low-income communities. Public feedback helps shape these analyses and resulting changes. The analysis methodology and definitions for Disparate Impact, Disproportionate Burden, Major Service Change, and adverse effect are determined by Sound Transit's Title VI Program.

A **Disparate Impact** is when a facially neutral policy or practice adversely affects members of a group identified by race, color, or national origin by 5% or more.

A **Disproportionate Burden** is when a facially neutral policy or practice adversely affects low-income populations more than non-low-income populations by 5% or more.

A **Major Service Change** is when vehicle hours on a route change by 25% or more, or a stop/station is eliminated or moved by more than ½ a mile for rail and ¼ mile for bus service.

East Link Starter Line Service Equity Analysis

Sound Transit conducted a service equity analysis for the proposed East Link Starter Line since it is a Major Service Change (service addition) and uses FTA CIG funding. There are no fare changes associated with this Starter Line implementation, so no fare equity analysis was needed. This section of the East Link Extension (2 Line) will be ready for service prior to the rest of the project. Its operations could provide immediate benefits to residents by opening rail access to essential jobs, healthcare facilities, and other important destinations. The ELSL will operate 14 miles from South Bellevue to Redmond Technology with access through eight stations. Opening in 2024, it is slated to run every 10 minutes, seven days a week. Sound Transit continues to evaluate how many service hours will be provided per day, based on available staffing levels. Overall, the project adds more service, including improvements to both midday and weekend service, without taking away service from any existing Sound Transit or partner agency routes.

The service equity analysis found no Disparate Impact or Disproportionate Burden associated with the opening of the ELSL. The minority population in the ELSL service area is larger than the minority population in the Sound Transit District and the limited English proficiency population is slightly larger in the ELSL service area. The low-income population in the ELSL service area is smaller than the low-income population in the district, but the analysis found no adverse effects exceeding a 5% threshold. With the ELSL opening without any changes or reductions to other services in the region, everyone in the ELSL service area stands to benefit from increased service. Sound Transit will complete a SAFE analysis on the entire 2 Line, and its accompanying changes to connecting routes, closer to the full line's opening.

