

2006 Service Implementation Plan
Executive Summary
April 5, 2006

Each year, a Draft Service Implementation Plan (SIP) is prepared by Sound Transit's Transportation Services Department for ST Express bus, Sounder commuter rail and Link light rail services. Developed in close coordination with the agency's budget and Long-Range Financial Plan, the Draft SIP describes service additions and revisions proposed for the next budget year, together with preliminary proposals and financial estimates for the subsequent five-year period. The Sound Transit Board approved the Draft 2006 SIP on Feb 9, 2006. This document is the Final 2006 SIP, reflecting updates going back to when the draft was released in October 2005.

Key Strategies – 2006 Service Changes

The key strategies of the 2006 service changes include:

- *Increase ridership and productivity*
- *Maximize benefits of new capital projects*
- *Optimize use of the Sound Transit bus fleet*
- *Coordinate short-term planning with Sound Transit 2*

Increase ridership and productivity

A Comprehensive Operational Analysis (COA) was conducted on ST Express bus and Tacoma Link services during the spring of 2005. This analysis provided detailed performance data for both services at the trip and stop level. Using the Board-adopted ST Express Service Standards and other criteria, proposals were developed to delete or modify services with low ridership and productivity and to shift the resources saved to routes with better performance and growing ridership. The key changes intended to improve productivity and increase system ridership include:

- Delete **Route 530 (Everett-Bellevue via Bothell)** and replace with added service on **Route 532 (Everett-Bellevue Express)** and **Route 535 (Lynnwood-Bellevue)**.
- Delete off-peak service on **Route 582 (Bonney Lake-Tacoma)** and add service on **Route 586 (Tacoma-University District)**.
- Delete **Route 585 (Auburn-Lakewood via South Hill)** and replace the Auburn-South Hill segment with an extension of **Route 564 (Overlake-Auburn)**.
- Add more midday service on **Route 510 (Everett-Seattle)**, a route that has grown significantly since the last major service change in 2003.
- Modify **Route 555 (Northgate-Issaquah)** to serve the Factoria area with a minor reroute via SE 36th Street.

Maximize benefits of new capital projects

During 2006, new capital projects are expected to be completed in Federal Way, Eastgate, Issaquah Highlands and Totem Lake. The SIP calls for service changes to support these new projects and maximize their benefit to the public. A new route, **Route 577 Federal Way-Seattle**, was approved by the Board in the 2003 SIP and began serving the new Federal Way Transit Center and nearby I-5 direct access ramps in February 2006. Also in February, **Route 554 Issaquah-Seattle** was extended to the new Issaquah Highlands Park-and-Ride garage, across the street from the leased interim facility established by Sound Transit in 2003. The SIP calls for extending **Route 555/556**

Issaquah-Northgate to the Issaquah Highlands Park-and-Ride garage in September 2006, and extending **Route 554** weekend service to the Highlands facility at the same time. New freeway stations and direct access ramps at Eastgate and Totem Lake are expected to be complete by September 2006. Sound Transit will serve the Eastgate facility with **Route 554 Issaquah-Seattle** and **Routes 555/556 Issaquah-Northgate**. Sound Transit service will be deleted at the I-405/Houghton freeway stop, so that buses on **Route 535 Lynnwood-Bellevue** can use the I-405 HOV lanes continuously between the new Totem Lake Freeway Station and downtown Bellevue.

Optimize use of the Sound Transit bus fleet

The ST Express bus fleet is expected to be fully utilized following the start-up of the new Federal Way-Seattle route in February 2006. Fleet maintenance spare ratios should be adequate, but few buses will be available for future park-and-ride expansion or other sources of ridership growth. Existing maintenance base capacity at the partner transit agencies limits the number of additional buses Sound Transit can add to its fleet, at least in the near term.

In developing the Draft SIP, staff made sure that service changes proposed for 2006 require no additional buses. Where additional buses are required for a given route, an equal number of peak buses were shifted from another route. This is a recurrent theme in Chapter 2, which describes each individual route and service change proposal in detail. To address the lack of capacity for growth, staff proposes to acquire a total of **12 new highcapacity buses**. These buses are included in the proposed fleet plan (Appendix B-1), and would be assigned to ST Express routes operated by Community Transit and King County Metro. The expanded fleet would permit Sound Transit to increase service in the Snohomish and East King subareas.

Coordinate short-term planning with Sound Transit 2

Sound Transit's Transportation Services Department and Office of Policy and Planning (OPP) worked together closely to develop preliminary Sound Transit 2 service concepts and projects. In turn, the SIP proposals were reviewed by OPP staff for feedback and coordination with the development of ST2 proposals. These efforts are underway to ensure a smooth transition from *Sound Move* to a potential new program, if an ST2 plan is eventually approved by the Board and area voters.

Preliminary Service Plans for 2007-2011

In addition to specific 2006 service changes, the SIP describes preliminary 2007-2011 service plans, including the start-up of Central Link light rail. These "out year" plans were developed using several assumptions: no ST2 program, and proposed services are driven by completion of the final *Sound Move* capital projects, expected increases in transit demand; and projected operations and maintenance funding available in each subarea. Service levels, ridership and fare revenue estimates shown in the SIP for 2007-2011 are used to develop the agency's Long-Range Financial Plan. The Sound Transit Board will review preliminary service plans for 2007 and later years as part of the annual SIP process.