

2007 SERVICE IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Approved December 14, 2006

Executive Summary:

Every year since 1998, Sound Transit has prepared an annual update on the development of its express bus, commuter rail and light rail services. Called a Service Implementation Plan (SIP), it describes service additions and revisions proposed for the upcoming budget year that require Sound Transit Board approval. The SIP also includes preliminary proposals and financial estimates for the subsequent five-year planning period and a route-by-route report on the status of the system and performance objectives for the coming year, including ridership and productivity targets.

The initial 2007 SIP was issued as a draft. Following public outreach, the Board reviewed and approved the 2007 SIP on Dec. 14, 2006. The final 2007 SIP was prepared and distributed after the Board action, incorporating changes made during the review process.

New Bus and Rail Service Standards

Since 1999, Sound Transit has used the ST Express Service Standards & Performance Measures as guidelines to help design, evaluate and modify bus service. The standards include a process for rating the productivity of each bus route to help determine when remedial actions might be needed. The ratings, in turn, have been used in the SIP as documentation for proposed bus service changes. Sound Transit's Transportation Services Department prepared an updated version of the Service Standards & Performance Measures that includes revisions to the bus standards, together with proposed new standards for Sounder commuter rail and Tacoma Link light rail. The update, called Service Standards & Performance Measures- 2006 Edition, was approved by the Board on Oct. 12, 2006 prior to final action on the 2007 SIP. The route-level productivity ratings shown in the 2007 SIP are based on the methodology described in the new service standards.

ST Express Bus - 2007

In 2006, a Comprehensive Operational Analysis (COA) provided very detailed performance data for all ST Express bus routes. This analysis, together with further research and public outreach, led to a number of significant bus service changes that were approved by the Sound Transit Board and implemented in June and September 2006. There are fewer revisions to bus service in 2007, in part due to the need to monitor the results of the service changes implemented during 2006.

The major changes for ST Express bus during 2007 include:

- Restructuring SR-520 service to delete the Redmond-Kirkland segment of Route 540 Redmond-University District and eliminate weekend service due to low ridership. The buses and bus hours saved will be used to add more service on Route 545 Redmond-Seattle, which has experienced substantial ridership growth and is overcrowded during peak periods. The deleted Redmond-Kirkland segment will be replaced by a new King County Metro local route, Route 248 Kirkland-Avondale.

Changes to Routes 540 and 545 are contingent on King County Metro implementation of the new local route. That implementation could occur in either

September 2007 or February 2008, subject to action by the King County Council and King County Metro constraints on operator training related to the reopening of the downtown Seattle transit tunnel.

- The return of Route 550 Bellevue-Seattle from surface streets to the Downtown Seattle Transit Tunnel, following retrofit work on the tunnel to convert it to joint light rail/bus operation.
- Adding midday service on Route 554 between Eastgate Park-and-Ride and downtown Seattle.
- Adding trips on Route 577 Federal Way-Seattle, a route that started with the opening of the Federal Way Transit Center in February 2006.
- Later and more frequent evening service on Route 594 Tacoma-Seattle.

A complete description of all ST Express bus routes and bus service changes for 2007 is included in Chapter 2.

As bus ridership continues to increase, a fixed bus fleet and lack of bus base capacity continue to be major issues for ST Express. Since 1999, Sound Transit has utilized surplus capacity available at partner agency bus bases, but this capacity is being depleted as transit ridership increases throughout the region. Sound Transit buses are available for increased service during off-peak periods, but the ability to add extra trips during weekday peak hours is very constrained, particularly for ST Express services operated by Community Transit. Staff continually monitors the system for opportunities to deploy the existing bus fleet more efficiently, and the service changes in the 2007 SIP are intended to optimize fleet use. However, with completion of the final Sound Move park-and-ride projects, the need for additional buses becomes critical. To expand its fleet, Sound Transit must invest both in new buses and added bus base capacity. Discussions are underway with the transit agency partners to determine near-term base needs and several alternatives are being developed and evaluated. Building on this work, staff is also assessing long-term bus base needs if voters approve funding for a Sound Transit 2 program. Staff expects to bring specific bus base proposals to the Board for consideration in 2007.

Souder Commuter Rail - 2007

Following a major ridership increase, significant additions to Souder commuter rail service will occur in 2007. The additional trains are made possible by continued progress on track and signal improvements on the South Line and the issuance of permits for shoreline right-of-way improvements along the North Line. The specific additions include:

- One new peak-directional round trip on the North Line (Everett-Seattle), bringing the total number of round trips to three. The new North Line service is planned to begin during the fourth quarter 2007.
- One new peak-directional round-trip on the South Line (Tacoma-Seattle), together with one new reverse-peak directional round-trip. The reverse-peak service will operate from Seattle to Tacoma in the morning, and from Tacoma to Seattle in the afternoon. Existing trip times will be adjusted to allow the new trips to operate without the need for additional cars and locomotives. The new South Line trains are planned to begin running in September 2007.

In addition, the opening of Mukilteo Station on the North Line is anticipated for the first quarter of 2008. North Line schedules will be designed for convenient connections with

the Mukilteo-Clinton ferry. A complete description of Sounder service changes is included in Chapter 2.

Tacoma Link - 2007

There will be no changes to regularly scheduled Tacoma Link light rail service in 2007. During 2006, Sound Transit developed a pilot program to extend evening operation past the regular close of service on selected days when major public events are scheduled. In return, the event sponsor provides in-kind promotional services for Sound Transit. This program will continue during 2007. More details on Tacoma Link service are included in Chapter 2.

Preliminary Service Plans for 2008 - 2012

In addition to specific 2007 service changes, the SIP describes preliminary 2008-2012 service plans, including the startup of Central Link light rail service. These “out year” plans assume no Sound Transit 2 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 2008-2012 are used to develop the agency’s Long-Range Financial Plan. Here is a summary of preliminary service proposals during this time period:

2008

- Implementation of the seventh, eighth and ninth round trips on Sounder’s South Line.
- Implementation of the fourth round-trip on Sounder’s North Line.
- Major improvements to I-5 south bus service, including added midday service between Tacoma, Federal Way and Seattle and increased peak period service between the new Lakewood Station Park-and-Ride and Seattle.

2009

- Startup of Central Link light rail service between downtown Seattle and Tukwila International Boulevard Station, followed by an extension to SeaTac/Airport Station in Late 2009.
- Additional peak period bus service between Everett-Seattle and between Everett-Bellevue in conjunction with the opening of South Everett Freeway Station/Park-and-Ride lot.
- Everett-Seattle and Ash Way-Seattle bus routes modified to serve new Mountlake Terrace Freeway Station.

2010

- West Seattle-Bellevue and Lakewood-SeaTac bus routes modified to connect with Central Link at SeaTac/Airport Station.
- Sounder commuter rail service extended from Tacoma Dome Station to South Tacoma and Lakewood.

2011-2012

- Preliminary plans still under development

Additional details on preliminary “out year” plans are included in Chapter 3.

Mobility Initiative Program

Sound Transit's Mobility Initiative Program (MIP) achieved two major milestones in 2006. The Federal Transit Administration awarded a \$1.98 million grant to install and test a pilot "Talking Signs" program throughout Sound Transit's regional system. The pilot program will evaluate the benefits of Remote Infrared Audible Signs (RIAS) in providing way-finding and information to people with visual, cognitive or learning disabilities. Sound Transit also completed development of United We Ride in Puget Sound, the regional special needs transportation coordination plan. This plan is intended to improve connections and coordination among existing services by government agencies, non-profit and for-profit human services agencies, faith-based organizations, schools, public transit providers and paratransit providers. Additional information on MIP programs is available in Appendix E.

Quick Guide to the Draft 2007 SIP:

Chapter 1 summarizes the service changes approved for implementation in 2007 by the Sound Transit Board.

Chapter 2 includes a description and performance summary of Sounder, Tacoma Link and every ST Express route, together with detailed background information for each 2007 service change.

Chapter 3 describes preliminary plans for 2008-2012, including the startup of Central Link light rail service.

Chapter 4 includes estimates of ridership and fare revenue for all three transit modes through 2012, together with a description of the modeling and assumptions use.