

Executive Summary:

The Service Implementation Plan (SIP) is Sound Transit's annual update on its express bus, commuter rail and light rail services. The SIP describes service additions and revisions planned for the upcoming budget year, together with preliminary proposals and financial estimates for the subsequent five-year period. It also includes a detailed report on the status of each bus and rail route and performance objectives for the coming year, including ridership and productivity targets.

The 2009 SIP was developed in two phases. Work on the first draft started in mid-2008 and assumed no Sound Transit 2 ("ST2") program, consistent with Board direction on the 2009 agency budget. The Draft 2009 SIP was released in October 2008 and included the start-up service plan for Central Link light rail and revisions to ST Express bus routing in the Eastgate area. The Sound Transit Board approved the SIP on Dec. 11, 2008. Work on the second phase of the 2009 SIP began in November 2008 following voter approval of the ST2 program. The Final 2009 SIP, as amended by the Board on May 28, 2009, includes specific ST Express bus service improvements funded by the ST2 program in September 2009 and February 2010, together with the schedule for implementing the remaining bus improvements through 2011.

The most significant component of the 2009 SIP is the opening of Central Link light rail, the largest single expansion of transit service in the region's history. Following almost six years of design, construction and testing, the successful launch of Link is a major goal for the agency in 2009. The Final 2009 SIP includes plans for expansion of Link service as light rail is extended to Sea-Tac Airport in late 2009.

ST Express Bus

During 2008, express bus service improvements were implemented to support two new park-and-ride facilities, Lakewood Station and South Everett Park-and-Ride. Additional buses delivered during the year increased the total fleet from 228 to 240 vehicles. In Pierce County, seven older 42-seat buses were replaced by seven new 57-seat models and 20 new 42-seat models. Despite these improvements, unprecedented demand for transit service resulted in peak period overcrowding on several ST Express routes. Schedule efficiencies, optimizing bus assignments, sharing resources with Sound Transit's partner transit agencies and promoting ridership during off-peak times are some of the approaches that will be used to meet this challenge until new buses funded by the ST2 program can be put into service.

Service Changes Approved by the Board Dec. 11, 2008 (Resolution R2008-18)

In East King County, changes to Eastgate-area bus routes were approved to speed service, improve efficiency and provide more frequent midday service to the new Issaquah Transit Center. Effective May 30, 2009, **Route 554 Issaquah-Seattle**, **Route 555 Issaquah-Northgate** and **Route 556 Issaquah-U District-Northgate** now use a streamlined routing through the Eastgate area to speed service. Travel time savings from this change permitted a major increase to Issaquah-Seattle service with no increase in cost.

Since most Sounder park-and-ride lots are at capacity, Sound Transit staff has continued to work closely with partner agencies to expand connections between buses and Sounder trains whenever possible. An example of this is the **Route 497 Lakeland Hills Shuttle**, a new Pierce Transit connector bus route between Auburn's Lakeland Hills neighborhood and Auburn Station that began operation in February 2009. A true partnership, this route provides guaranteed connections

to and from Sounder trains and is jointly funded by the City of Auburn, Sound Transit and Pierce Transit during its first year of service.

Service Changes Approved by the Board May 28, 2009 (Resolution R2009-10)

The Final SIP, as amended, includes specific ST2-funded bus service improvements that will be implemented in September 2009 and February 2010. Normally, 2010 service changes would be considered during the 2010 SIP process; however, the February 2010 improvements were included in the Board decision package since they are interdependent with approved King County Metro service changes taking place at that time.

The September 2009 improvements consist of major off-peak service enhancements on Route 510 (Everett-Seattle), Route 511 (Lynnwood-Seattle), Route 550 (Bellevue-Seattle) and Route 554 (Issaquah-Seattle), described in detail in Chapter 2.

The February 2010 changes support the opening of light rail service to Sea-Tac Airport and are closely interconnected with changes to Metro bus service. King County Metro will discontinue Route 194 between downtown Seattle, Sea-Tac Airport and Federal Way in February 2010, with replacement service provided by Link light rail between downtown and the airport, ST Route 574 between the airport and Federal Way, and ST Routes 577 and 578 between Federal Way and downtown Seattle. Service levels on ST Routes 574, 577 and 578 will be expanded to accommodate the passengers now using Metro Route 194. These changes are described in detail in Chapter 2.

The February 2010 changes will also restructure ST Express service along the State Route 167 corridor. The objectives are to improve on-time performance, increase productivity and better integrate bus service with Sounder commuter rail. Experience with Routes 564 and 565 has shown that the routes are too long to provide acceptable on-time performance and reliability during peak periods, so they will be combined into a single route (566) which will operate between Overlake and Auburn only. Pierce County riders will use Sounder trains or ST Route 578 to connect with Route 566 at Auburn Station.

In addition to authorizing specific service changes in September 2009 and February 2010, Resolution R2009-10 sets the schedule for implementing the remaining bus service improvements in the ST2 program. This schedule is described in Chapter 3.

Sounder Commuter Rail

Ridership on Sounder commuter trains continued to build during 2008, significantly improving productivity and cost efficiency performance measures. The new Mukilteo Station opened on the north line (Everett-Seattle) in May 2008, and a fourth round trip train was successfully implemented between Everett and Seattle in September. September also saw the launch of a seventh and eighth round trips on the south line (Tacoma-Seattle), coinciding with completion of the Tacoma-Seattle track and signal improvement project. Board approval of the 2008 SIP authorized the start-up of a ninth round trip train, but implementation was delayed by the need to expand yard storage space in Tacoma. The yard expansion was completed in April 2009, and the ninth round trip started June 1. The entire fleet of Sounder cars and locomotives is now in service and the schedule revisions on the south line have provided a large increase in peak-period capacity. This capacity will be needed in 2010 as King County Metro plans to convert existing express bus service in the corridor to feeder service connecting with Sounder trains. Other service changes planned for 2009 will focus on schedule refinement and optimizing connections with ferries on the north line. **Route 599 Lakewood-Tacoma Dome**, a temporary bus route

implemented in September 2008 to provide guaranteed connections with south line trains at Tacoma, started an expanded schedule on June 1, 2009 to coordinate with the additional Sounder trains. This service is funded from the ST Express budget.

A complete description of Sounder service changes for 2009 is included in Chapter 2.

Tacoma Link

In February 2008, early morning and Sunday service was reduced on Tacoma Link to fund extended weeknight service. Light rail service now operates until 10 p.m. six nights a week. At first, Sunday boardings dropped significantly, and the initial night ridership was modest. More recent data shows that there has been an overall increase in ridership. More details on the results of the 2008 change are included in the Tacoma Link section of Chapter 2. No service changes are proposed for 2009.

Central Link

Under construction since 2003, Link will open for passenger service in two phases. On July 18, 2009, service will begin operating between Westlake Station and Tukwila International Blvd. Station, about 1.7 miles north of Sea-Tac Airport. By the end of the year, light rail service will extend to the SeaTac/Airport Station. This station will be connected to the airport terminal via an overhead pedestrian bridge and walkway through the airport garage. The station is designed and situated to permit future extensions of light rail service farther south.

Before the extension to Sea-Tac opens, a temporary bus shuttle will transport light rail passengers to and from the airport. Once trains are running to the airport, the shuttle will be discontinued. The shuttle will operate under a purchased transportation service contract with Pierce Transit.

The Link opening represents a huge increase in transit capacity in the corridor. Each two-car train can carry as many as 400 passengers seated and standing, and frequent service will minimize wait time at stations. Separated right-of-way and signals that provide priority over other traffic at intersections will provide fast, dependable service all day and in all kinds of weather. Changes to King County Metro routes planned in coordination with the start-up of Link service are expected to reduce bus overcrowding and provide new cross-town bus connections that otherwise would not be possible. Ridership on the initial Westlake-Tukwila segment is projected at about 15,900 average weekday boardings during the first six months of operation, increasing to about 26,000 boardings in 2010 following the opening of Airport Link and the full implementation of connecting bus service.

Chapter 2 includes the initial service levels for Link, including headways by time of day and hours of service. Board approval of Resolution R2008-18 authorized these service levels to be implemented, consistent with the operations plan and costs described in Sound Transit's 2009 Budget.

Preliminary Service Plans for 2010 - 2014

Chapter 3 of the SIP describes preliminary 2010-2014 service plans. These “out year” plans were updated following voter approval of the Sound Transit 2 (ST2) program, and reflect the Board-approved schedule of ST Express bus service expansion and expected completion dates of the remaining *Sound Move* projects and services. Service levels, ridership and fare revenue estimates shown for 2010-2014 are used to develop the agency’s Long-Range Financial Plan; however, the actual implementation of service changes is still subject to Board approval of the SIP for each calendar year. Here is a preliminary summary of “out year” service proposals:

2010 (September)

- New Redmond-University District service (Route 542) with two-way peak period service every 15 minutes.
- Extend Overlake-Auburn service (Route 566) from Overlake Transit Center to downtown Redmond.

2011

- Improve service on Route 511 (Ash Way-Seattle) from every 30 minutes to every 15 minutes during weekday peak periods. Modify routing to serve the new Mountlake Terrace freeway station and park-and-ride garage.
- Expand service on Route 513 (Everett-Seattle via Eastmont) with three new morning and four new afternoon trips. Possibly modify routing to connect with Swift Bus Rapid Transit along Evergreen Way.
- Increase Woodinville-Seattle service on Route 522 from every 30 minutes to every 15 minutes during weekday peak periods in the peak direction.
- Everett-Bellevue service on Route 532 expanded with four new afternoon trips.
- Increase Issaquah-Seattle service on Route 554 from every 30 minutes to every 15 minutes during weekday peak periods.
- Other trip level bus service improvements as needed based on latest ridership data.

2012

- Sounder commuter rail service extended from Tacoma Dome Station to South Tacoma and Lakewood; temporary bus routes 593 and 599 discontinued.
- Potential addition of new round trip on Sounder South Line.

2013

- Coordinated improvements to East King County service with the start-up of King County Metro’s Bellevue-Redmond “Rapid Ride,” which could include enhanced service on ST Express Route 550 (Bellevue-Seattle).

Preliminary service plans for 2014 are still under development. Additional details on preliminary “out year” plans are included in Chapter 3.

Accessible Services

With the beginning of Central Link service in 2009, Sound Transit will have a paratransit obligation under provisions of federal regulations. This service, operated for Sound Transit under contract with King County Metro, will provide rides to eligible persons with disabilities within 3/4-mile of the Central Link alignment.

Sound Transit will continue to plan and implement actions and programs under *United We Ride in Puget Sound*, the Regional Special Needs Transportation Plan. The complete Plan is available at: <http://www.soundtransit.org/x1873.xml> or by e-mailing accessibility@soundtransit.org .

Sound Transit received New Freedom Program grants from the Puget Sound Regional Council to implement two projects from the Plan. The Volunteer Transportation Programs and the Bus Buddy/Travel Ambassador Programs will continue to be funded through December 2009. At that time the funding will be assumed by local special needs transportation coalitions.

Sound Transit will complete testing and report to Congress on the Remote Audible Infrared Signage program, which received an FTA grant of \$1.98 million.

Quick Guide to the 2009 SIP:

Chapter 1 summarizes the service changes approved by the Board for implementation in 2009 and February 2010.

Chapter 2 includes a description and performance summary of Sounder, Link and each ST Express route, with detailed background information for each 2009 SIP service change.

Chapter 3 describes preliminary plans for 2010-2014.

Chapter 4 includes estimates of ridership and fare revenue for all three transit modes through 2014, and a description of the modeling and assumptions used to develop the estimates.