

Resolution No. R2021-19

2022 Service Plan

Meeting:	Date:	Type of action:	Staff contact:
Rider Experience and Operations Committee	11/04/2021	Recommend to Board	Don Billen, PEPD Executive Director
Board	11/18/2021	Final action	Matt Shelden, Deputy Executive Director of Planning & Integration, PEPD Brian de Place, Director of System Planning, PEPD

Proposed action

Adopts the 2022 Service Plan with major service changes for implementation in 2022.

Key features summary

- The 2022 Service Plan includes four major service changes. Three major service changes would be implemented as early as March of 2022 depending upon operational capacity at partner agencies, and one that would occur upon completion of the Hilltop Tacoma Link Extension. The specific revenue start date of the Hilltop Tacoma Link Extension is still to be determined.
- Due to on-going operator shortages at partner agencies, the changes may be partially implemented in both March and September 2022, or deferred to a later year depending on operational capacity.
- The 2022 Service Plan focuses on how Sound Transit will provide service as the region emerges from the COVID-19 pandemic. In response to new travel patterns, this plan refocuses the nature of the ST Express bus network to prioritize all-day frequency on both weekdays and weekends to serve a larger variety of trip purposes.
- The plan also focuses on equity by proposing increases to service where people need it most, specifically South King and Pierce County, and elevate the same level of service on several key South Sound routes to match the service levels currently offered on routes serving Snohomish and East King County. Ridership was resilient and higher during the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic in South King and Pierce County and the proposed service increases are a reflection of those travel patterns.
- This action seeks formal approval to implement the levels of service provided in the 2022 Service Plan.
- A draft Service Plan was presented for public comment from August 11, 2021 through August 22, 2021. Passenger and community feedback is part of every annual Service Plan process. However, this year, we started the community input process earlier in order to give additional time to modify proposals.
- After receiving a significant number of comments regarding the Sound Transit's plan for Route 592 (DuPont-Seattle), the proposal is no longer included as a proposed change.

2022 Service Plan Changes

Major service changes, as defined by the Sound Transit Service Standards and Performance Measures:

2022 Proposed Changes, timing subject to operational capacity at partner agencies

- Route 535 (Lynnwood-Bellevue): Increase midday and weekend service to every 30 minutes and introduce Sunday service.
- Route 590 (Tacoma-Seattle): Increase service to every 15 min or better all day every day with a combined frequency of the 594.
- Sounder South (Seattle-Lakewood/Tacoma): restore service to operate up to 13 round trips

The Hilltop Tacoma Link Extensions opens in 2022; specific revenue start date is to be determined:

- Tacoma Link (Tacoma Dome- Hilltop): 2.4 miles of new track serving six new stations. Service levels increased with trains arriving every 10 minutes most of the day (increased from existing 12 minutes) on weekdays and Saturdays, and every 20 minutes on Sundays (increased from existing 24 minutes). New service would connect Tacoma Dome station to Hilltop, serving new local connections and major medical institutions.

The 2022 service plan also includes a preliminary list of minor service changes for implementation no earlier than March 2022, subject to operational capacity at our partner agencies. While defined as minor changes, several proposed service changes will also have improvements for riders. Minor changes do not require Board approval, but are included for reference:

- Route 550 (Bellevue-Seattle): increase Sunday service to every 15 minutes by re-allocating a small number of weekday trips.
- Route 560 (West Seattle-SeaTac-Bellevue): increase weekend frequency to every 30 minutes.
- Route 577 (Federal Way-Seattle): increase midday and weekend frequency to every 15 minutes or better, combined frequency with 578.
- Route 578 (Puyallup-Seattle): increase weekend frequency to every 30 minutes.

Other minor changes consist of service adjustments aimed at improving service frequency, reliability, or changing traffic and ridership conditions.

Service remains suspended on peak-oriented ST Express routes 541 (Overlake-University District), 544 (Overlake-South Lake Union), 555 (Bellevue-Northgate), and 567 (Kent-Overlake) as other parallel all-day ST Express routes serve their respective corridors, but may have more stops or require a transfer to/from Link light rail or another ST Express route. Sounder North (Everett-Seattle) service will continue to offer two roundtrips per day. Staff will continue to monitor travel patterns as we recalibrate regional service to pre-pandemic levels while being cost-conscious.

Background

Each year, Sound Transit prepares the service plan (formerly the Service Implementation Plan, or SIP), an annual update of the Agency's light rail, commuter rail, and express bus service structure and levels. The 2022 service plan focuses on how Sound Transit will provide service as the region emerges from the COVID-19 pandemic.

The draft service plan was released to the public in August 2021. In general, Sound Transit received comments in support of both major and minor service changes. However, staff has revised some aspects of the proposed service plan in response to strong public feedback and further analysis.

Changes made since the draft proposal include:

- During the outreach process, the public weighed in on a concept to add a stop on Route 592 as a way to improve local connections within Pierce County. Pierce Transit does not serve communities south of Lakewood, therefore necessitating a transfer between DuPont and Tacoma. Due to the number of people expressing concerns with the proposal both in the online open house as well as providing comment during our virtual open house and public hearing, this proposal is no longer included as a proposed change.

Additionally, several commenters during the online open house and at the public hearing indicated the need for faster service along the I-405 South corridor between Kent/Auburn and the East Side. While Route 566 (Auburn-Redmond) continues to offer service, it has a slower travel time compared to suspended Route 567 (Kent-Overlake). Service planning will continue to monitor and analyze ridership trends on these routes for ways to improve I-405 South services.

Due to a nationwide shortage in operators, also affecting regional partners that operate Sound Transit ST Express bus service, some Pierce Transit-operated service will be temporarily reduced in November 2021. As operator availability improves, restoring the reduced service will be prioritized. The shortage in operators may impact the ability to implement the proposed 2022 Service Plan changes.

Fiscal information

The 2022 Service Plan is funded by the transit mode budgets for each operating service – Link, Sounder, ST Express, and Tacoma Link. Those budgets are included in the Proposed 2022 Budget scheduled for Board consideration in December 2021. Budget authority will be granted with the adoption of the 2022 Budget, subject to any changes made by the Board.

The Proposed Budget for each mode is shown below (in thousands).

Modal Budget	2022 Proposed Budget (\$000)
Link	201,365
Sounder	81,119
ST Express	150,736
Tacoma Link	11,083
Total	\$444,304

Disadvantaged and small business participation

Not applicable to this action.

Title VI Compliance

Overall, the changes proposed for 2022 increase service for Sound Transit passengers.

The following table summarizes major service changes for 2022. Each route adds platform hours without taking away service from existing ST routes while improving service frequency and reliability. Therefore it was determined that no major proposed service change results in an adverse effect.

Routes	Service Change Proposal	Title VI Populations	Adverse Effect
535 (Lynnwood-Bellevue)	Increase midday and weekend service to every 30 minutes and introduce Sunday service.	- Minority Population: ST District average: 40.4% Route 535 service area: 37.4%	No

		- Low Income: ST District average: 15.3% Route 535 service area: 10.8% - LEP: ST District average: 10.1% Route 535 service area: 10%	
590 (Tacoma-Seattle)	Increase service to every 15 min or better all day every day with a combined frequency of the 594.	- Minority Population: ST District average: 40.4% Route 590 service area: 43.2% - Low Income: ST District average: 15.3% Route 590 service area: 23.3% - LEP: ST District average: 10.1% Route 590 service area: 7.5%	No
S Line (Sounder South) Seattle-Lakewood/Tacoma	Restore service to operate up to 13 round trips by September 2022.	- Minority Population: ST District average: 40.4% Route Sounder South service area: 46.6% - Low Income: ST District average: 15.3% Route Sounder South service area: 19.4% - LEP: ST District average: 10.1% Route Sounder South service area: 12.2%	No
Tacoma Link (Hilltop-Tacoma Dome)	Increase frequency to 10 min on weekdays and Saturday, 20 min on Sundays, expand service with 2.4 miles of new track serving six new stations connecting Tacoma Dome to Hilltop.	- Minority Population: ST District average: 40.4% Tacoma Link service area after project: 42.6% - Low Income: ST District average: 15.3% Tacoma Link service area after project: 21.2% - LEP: ST District average: 10.1% Route Tacoma Link service area after project: 8.7%	No

Public involvement

The public involvement process began in spring 2021 beginning with early discussions with community and business groups to understand transit needs and receive feedback on initial service concepts. The draft proposals for the Service Plan and a survey requesting feedback on the proposed changes was available in an online open house format, which allowed for a fully in-language experience for non-English speakers. We translated the online open house into Spanish, Chinese, Vietnamese, Somali, and Russian. The survey was open from August 11 to August 22, 2021. We received 1,243 English respondents, three Spanish survey respondents and three Chinese survey respondents. There were also two virtual events where the public was able to learn more, engage with project staff by asking questions and providing comment. In addition, the public was invited to learn more about the project by phone or email.

The public were notified of the opportunity to provide feedback on the service plan through email and text alerts that were sent to over 26,963 riders who had opted to receive updates concerning Sound

Transit service. Additionally, fact sheets describing the plan were distributed to our stakeholders via email. The fact sheet provided in English, Spanish, Simplified Chinese, Vietnamese, Somali and Russian explained the project and the corresponding goals of the 2022 Service Plan and how to provide feedback. Lastly, the plan was distributed via a blog post, social media, and a July 28, 2021, press release that was delivered to 280 standard media outlets.

The survey asked respondents to identify demographic information, which was used to understand impacts to Title VI populations and inform the final equity analysis.

Time constraints

A one-month delay would create a significant impact to our operating partners' ability to deliver this service. Operating agencies require time to create and fill operator shifts and plan for maintenance.

Prior Board/Committee actions

Resolution No. R2020-18: Adopted the 2021 Service Plan with major service change for implementation in March and September 2021.

Environmental review – KH 9/22/21

Legal review – AJP 10/29/21

Resolution No. R2021-19

A RESOLUTION of the Board of the Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority adopting the 2022 Service Plan, and authorizing the chief executive officer to implement recommended service changes in 2022.

WHEREAS, the Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority, commonly known as Sound Transit, was formed under chapters 81.104 and 81.112 of the Revised Code of Washington (RCW) for the Pierce, King, and Snohomish Counties region by action of their respective county councils pursuant to RCW 81.112.030; and

WHEREAS, Sound Transit is authorized to plan, construct, and permanently operate a high-capacity system of transportation infrastructure and services to meet regional public transportation needs in the Central Puget Sound region; and

WHEREAS, in general elections held within the Sound Transit district on November 5, 1996, November 4, 2008, and November 8, 2016, voters approved local funding to implement a regional high-capacity transportation system for the Central Puget Sound region; and

WHEREAS, express bus, commuter rail and light rail service will be implemented in phases, providing a program for route implementation and service increases over time which meet the commitments in Sound Move, Sound Transit 2, and Sound Transit 3; and

WHEREAS, the proposed service changes included in the 2022 Service Plan are consistent with the proposed 2022 Agency Budget and Long-Range Financial Plan.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of the Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority that the 2022 Service Plan is adopted, and the chief executive officer is authorized to implement the 2022 service changes included in the plan as described below:

March 2022 (subject to deferral due to operator availability)

ST Express Bus

Route 535 (Lynnwood – Bellevue) will increase midday and weekend service to every 30 minutes and introduce Sunday service.

Route 590 (Tacoma– Seattle) will increase service to every 15 min or better all day every day with a combined frequency of the 594.

Sounder

Sounder South (Seattle – Lakewood/Tacoma) will restore service to operate up to 13 round trips.

Tacoma Link Hilltop extension opens in 2022. Specific revenue service start date to be determined

Tacoma Link (Hilltop-Tacoma Dome) will increase frequency to 10 min, expand service with 2.4 miles of new track serving six new stations connecting Tacoma Dome to Hilltop.

ADOPTED by the Board of the Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority at a regular meeting thereof held on _____.

Kent Keel
Board Chair

Attest:

Kathryn Flores
Board Administrator