Sound Transit Rider FAQs

Sound Transit (ST) is thrilled to provide the latest wireless technology to our Link Light Rail passengers and commuters that rely on mobile devices to remain connected to family, friends and work.

About the Project

What's happening?

We've been listening to rider feedback and understand the importance of cell service to our travelers. As such, we have partnered with Mobilitie, the largest privately-held wireless infrastructure provider in the United States, to bring seamless mobile wireless coverage to commuters across the greater Puget Sound region traveling with Sound Transit.

How will I get cell service underground?

Mobilitie has installed a Distributed Antenna System (DAS) to enhance coverage and meet high-capacity wireless service. DAS systems allow for multiple carriers and frequencies, so everyone can get the connectivity and speed they need.

When can I start experiencing these benefits?

Riders have been able to get underground cell service in U-Link stations since this summer. By next year (2017) we plan to deliver cell service to 100 percent of the underground Sound Transit stations.

Will it work with my phone carrier?

The DAS will provide service to most wireless operators and mobile devices, including T-Mobile, Verizon Wireless, AT&T and other carriers in addition to virtual carriers such as Consumer Cellular, TracPhone, Walmart etc. Mobilitie plans to roll out future deployments with additional network service providers down the road.

What Wireless Services You Can Anticipate

What is the roll-out timeline?

We'll be rolling out cell service connectivity in three different phases across our major rail stations:

- **Phase 1 - U-Link (Available now)** - U-Link will cover the Capitol Hill and University of Washington stations, and all of the tunnels between them, as well as tunnels from Capitol Hill and Convention Place;
- **Phase 2 - Downtown Tunnel (Late 2016)** - The Downtown Seattle Transit Tunnel (DSTT) will follow, set to be up and running by end of year. DSTT will include all the stations and tunnels from Westlake Station to International District Station;
- **Phase 3 Beacon Hill (2017)** - The project will round out with the Beacon Hill station, to be completed in 2017. Beacon Hill will cover the Beacon Hill station as well as all the tunnel traffic leading in and out of it.

With each new location that gets deployed, T-Mobile will be the first service network provider available for riders to connect to, followed closely by Verizon Wireless, AT&T, and other carriers.

NOTE: This phase schedule is just an estimate. Installing DAS systems underground without disturbing daily rail operations is a tricky process, so we may encounter installation delays.

Who should I contact if I have coverage problems?
Users experiencing connection issues should contact their respective carriers directly with any questions or concerns.

Will it cost me to use my phone? Will there be any roaming charges?
No. There will be no additional costs to users for accessing the network beyond whatever existing carrier rate plan is already applicable for mobile usage.

What kind of bandwidth and performance can I expect?
Users can anticipate good or better service underground, as the network has been designed specifically to provide service to transit riders.

Does this mean I can get Wi-Fi underground?
Although there is not a separate public Wi-Fi network, users can access Wi-Fi if they utilize a MiFi, personal hotspot, or similar device/capability that connects through the DAS network

The exception here is King County, which has separately started to provide free Wi-Fi at all four DSTT stations that users can connect to before/after boarding trains.

Will the system support future generations of services, such as 5G?
Yes, the system has been designed to support future generations of services.

Who is paying for the DAS system? Is this costing taxpayer money?
This deployment will not cost citizens or transit riders any tax dollars; Mobilitie is paying for the build-out, maintenance, and operations of the entire DAS system.

Will geo-location services like Google Maps work on my phone work underground?
Some of ST's stations are open air, allowing for a strong GPS signal, while some are deep underground and may have trouble connecting to one. The GPS signal service is completely dependent on the station in which commuters are trying to connect and will not in any way be affected by Mobilitie or this deployment.

If I need to call 911 while in underground facilities, how will the first responder locate me?
This is based solely on the carrier's existing E911 location services and not on the DAS system.