Regional Bus Base Capacity
Maintaining service as congestion increases
4/4/19
NO ACTION REQUIRED TODAY

PRESENTATION FOR: Information | Feedback | Discussion
Presentation agenda

• Describe operational challenges faced by all regional transit providers.

• Describe near-term capacity constraints and need for interim bus capacity before Link openings in 2021, 2023 and 2024.

• Inform future Board decisions about ST Express service levels and business model.
Board Decisions About ST Express Service

• As Link expands, what are the appropriate service levels for ST Express?

• What is the best method for providing long-term capacity (2024 and beyond)?
  • Build ST2 bus base? Continue existing partnerships?

• What is the right approach for short-term service levels?
  • Reduce service on lower performing routes? Find interim base capacity?
ST Express Fleet Distribution

Total fleet 312 buses
100% contracted operations

As of March 2019
Fleet at PT will temporarily grow in Sept 2019

Community Transit Bases
ST Express 64 18% Community Transit 286 82%

King County Metro Bases
ST Express 119 7% Metro 1,491 93%

Pierce Transit Base
ST Express Pierce Transit
129 153 40% 60%
## ST Express Operators & Cost

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service Hours</th>
<th>Cost per Hour</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>153,000</td>
<td>$130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>311,000</td>
<td>$169</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>351,000</td>
<td>$153</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### 2019 Budget

Subcontracted to First Transit

- **Community Transit**
- **King County Metro**
- **Pierce Transit**
The Challenge: Regional Congestion

Service quality declines as congestion worsens

- ST Express speeds declined by 12 percent in the past 5-years
- Congestion caused longer & more variable travel times on nearly all routes
- Impact on Sound Transit passengers anticipated to continue until Link extensions open
Without congestion riders experience consistent service with room to board.

10 minutes between buses

In heavy congestion, rider wait longer than planned and board more crowded buses.

20 minutes between buses
Once on-board, riders experience longer travel times and greater uncertainty when they will arrive at their destination.

Riders spend more time on the bus and cannot rely on the published arrival time.

How late will I be?

Lower confidence in bus service may drive riders to an alternative.
Congestion Impacts Felt by Riders

Longer waits, more crowding, more uncertainty

• Longer waits for bus to arrive
• Less room to board, potential to be left at stop
• More uncertainty about journey, schedule, and arrival time
• Decreases confidence in reliability of service
Scale of the Rider Impact

*Congestion reduces service levels across the region*

- Most severe impacts to the **55% of daily riders** who use the system during peak commute times
- Up to **10% fewer trips** with the same number of buses
- **Increase crowding by 12%** per trip on average
Response to Congestion Impacts

Service planning to minimize impact on riders

• Focus on maintaining reliability
  • Reduce and adjust service to deliver less service more reliably
  • Maximize effectiveness of constrained bus fleet
• Make proactive changes to impact fewest riders possible
  • Reallocate resources from lower-performing to higher-performing routes
• Add resources when possible
ST Express Fleet Above Base Capacity

Fleet grows to meet demand. Exceeds bus base constraint
**ST Express Fleet Above Base Capacity**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Capacity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>280</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>305</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>307</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td>326</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Temporary squeeze of base capacity to address additional congestion impacts.
Continued Squeezing Capacity Strains Fleet

Over-utilization of capacity reduces service quality

- Longer maintenance and repair windows
- Increases likelihood of daily trip cuts
- Not sustainable in the long-term
Interim Need for Regional Base Capacity

2015: 280
2016: 305
2017: 307
2018: 312
2019: 326
2020: 343
2021: 353
2022: 363

BASE CAPACITY

2018-2022
Up to 56 buses above base capacity needed to mitigate congestion impacts
Defining Long Term Fleet Size

Major Future Changes as Link & BRT Projects Open 2023-2041
Project Openings Will Change ST Express

2021
- Lynnwood
- Federal Way
- Redmond
- BRT 522/405
- East Link
- Tacoma Link Hilltop
- Northgate

2025
- Ballard
- Tacoma Dome
- West Seattle

2030
- Everett
- Tacoma Community College

2035
- South Kirkland-Issaquah

2041
Long Term: Link & BRT completely or partially replace ST Express

- ST Express integrates with high-capacity service
- ST3 plan funds existing service levels on remaining routes
- Saved ST Express service hours re-allocated to Link operations
Finance Plan Shifts Hours into Link Operation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Buses</th>
<th>Annual Hours</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2023</td>
<td>363</td>
<td>805,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2024</td>
<td>349</td>
<td>736,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>2025</td>
<td>194</td>
<td>600,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>2031</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>462,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2042</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>346,000</td>
</tr>
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Key Questions for ST Express Post-2023

Service Levels

• Will funded service levels adequately meet demand?
• Will the need emerge for new ST Express routes?
• What are the budgetary impacts if ST Service is not reduced?

Base Capacity

• Is the current acute bus base shortage temporary?
• Will the growth of partner agency fleets outpace ST Express fleet reductions?
• Will partners fund additional regional bus base capacity?
Why we issued an RFP

Preserving service

• First priority to maintain service for customers and preserve ridership while Board decides long-term questions.

• Without congestion improvement, no additional bus capacity will mean fewer trips.

• New bus bases will take years for site selection + EIS, etc.

• Bridge interim needs until regional base capacity is provided.
RFP details

• Five year contract with five one-year options. Capacity for 55 buses.

• Unprecedented language in six separate parts of the RFP to eliminate possibility of non-union labor.

• Public agencies encouraged to apply.

• Would provide flexibility to adapt to ridership changes with light rail openings.
**RFP status**

*Pausing for additional outreach and Board feedback*

- RFP released on February 1, 2019.
- Included labor harmony requirement.
- Labor partners raised concerns.
- Agency partners raised concerns.
- CEO places procurement on hold on March 19, 2019.
Next Steps for RFP

**Immediate options about RFP**

**Continue with RFP**
- Issue new instructions and deadlines
- Public agencies can participate
- Evaluate responsive bids
- Board debates merits of ST2 bus base this summer

**Cancel RFP**
- Develop a plan to reduce bus service during congested peak periods
- Work with partners on previously unidentified interim base capacity options
- Board debates merits of ST2 bus base this summer
Long-term capacity options

Continued reliance on partner agencies
• Lower flexibility to determine ST Express service levels
• Lower ability to control ST costs
• Eliminates need for site acquisition and major capital project

Build ST-owned base(s)
• Could provide needed capacity for ST Express service and greater regional capacity
• The ST2 program funded a bus base for ST Express
• Significant capital investment could result in excess capacity when ST Express service levels are reduced
Next Steps

• ST requested one-year extensions for each partner’s intergovernmental agreement.
  • Allows time for Board to set future ST Express service levels.

• Determine appropriate service levels and whether to build ST2 bus base.
  • ST can then clearly articulate future ST Express needs to partner agencies.

• Determine interim service levels for ST Express until Link expansions.
Thank you.