

ST3 PLAN Q&A

Note: This document, intended for internal reference, is constantly evolving. Please contact Geoff Patrick or Janet Pelz with comments or ideas for additions.

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A: The basics (the ST3 Plan and its goals)

1. What is Sound Transit 3 and what would it do?

- As the region's population grows, Sound Transit 3 would provide fast, predictable alternatives to traffic congestion, with new light rail, Bus Rapid Transit and commuter rail stations opening every few years.
- With the ST3 Plan, Sound Transit weekday ridership will roughly quadruple from what it is today, increasing from approximately 145,000 boardings each weekday to between 561,000 and 695,000 daily riders. With ST3, weekday boardings will nearly double from the 350,000 weekday boardings which are forecasted to follow the completion of the Sound Transit 2 (ST2) plan.
- With ST3, the share of all transit travel in the region on Sound Transit rail lines will grow from 17 percent today to 69 percent in 2040. This means more than four times as much transit travel would occur on vehicles that don't get stuck in traffic, regardless of time of day, day of the week, weather conditions or other factors.

2. Why did the Sound Transit Board propose this measure?

- **Population and economy are booming:** Recovering from the Great Recession, population and businesses are booming in the Puget Sound region. Last year, 52,000 people moved here. That represents 1,000 new residents every single week, and at average rates of car ownership, about 100 more cars every single day. This pace is expected to continue, with the region growing by 800,000 by 2040.
- **We're spending more time stuck in traffic:** As the region's population and economy grow, more people are competing for limited road space, increasing travel times – and travel headaches – dramatically. For example, hours of delay on I-5 between Everett and Federal Way increased by almost half (45 percent) between 2012 and 2014 alone (WSDOT).
- **Buses are moving slower and slower:** Sound Transit's express buses rely heavily on regional HOV lanes that are performing worse each year. Between 2012 and 2014 alone, the Washington State Department of Transportation reported major deterioration of HOV lane travel times:

- ✓ I-5 Everett to Seattle: weekday morning average HOV travel time increased 22 percent to 45 minutes. Reliable* HOV travel time increased 17 percent to 74 minutes.
- ✓ I-5 Federal Way to Seattle: weekday morning average HOV lane travel time increased 18 percent to 39 minutes. Reliable* HOV travel time increased 20 percent to 55 minutes.
- ✓ I-405 Lynnwood to Bellevue: weekday morning average HOV lane travel time increased 23 percent to 27 minutes. Reliable* HOV lane travel time increased 30 percent to 39 minutes.
- ✓ I-405 Tukwila to Bellevue: weekday morning average HOV lane travel time increased 38 percent to 22 minutes. Reliable* HOV lane travel time increased 65 percent to 33 minutes.

* Defined as the time allowance required to arrive on time 19 out of 20 times.

- **A quality of life issue:** Sound Transit has heard extensive input that lack of access to transit diverts people from work, family activities and other productive activities.
- **Building a healthy environment:** Regionally, transportation is the largest source of the air pollution that causes global warming. Transit helps lower pollution by alleviating traffic congestion, reducing the number of vehicles on the road and supporting community development that reinforces smart regional land use and growth management goals.
- **Jobs:** ST3 would support over 78,000 direct jobs and more than 144,000 indirect jobs over the 25-year period of construction, for a total of over 223,000 jobs. A job is defined as full-time employment of one person for one year. (Sound Transit 3 Plan, Appendix 3)

3. What projects would be built?

The ST3 plan would add 62 new miles of light rail serving 37 additional station areas for a 116-mile regional system from Tacoma to Everett and from Ballard and West Seattle to Redmond, Bellevue, South Kirkland and Issaquah. The plan would also:

- ✓ Expand light rail to Everett via Paine Field, which would open five years earlier than projected in the draft plan. Extensions to downtown Redmond and Federal Way would be completed four years sooner, while the Ballard, West Seattle and Tacoma extensions would open three years sooner. The agency would work with partners to further improve timelines where feasible.
- ✓ Build light rail between South Kirkland, Bellevue and Issaquah
- ✓ Among its earliest investments, begin Bus Rapid Transit service on I-405 and SR 518 from Lynnwood to Burien and on SR 522 from Bothell and Kenmore to the NE 145th Street light rail station, with faster buses running every 10 minutes during peak commute hours.
- ✓ Expand the capacity of fast-growing Sounder commuter rail service linking Seattle, Tukwila, Kent, Auburn, Sumner, Puyallup, Tacoma and Lakewood, with extension of the line to reach Tillicum to serve Joint Base Lewis-McChord and DuPont.
- ✓ Expand the Tacoma Link light rail line from Hilltop to Tacoma Community College.
- ✓ Provide more parking and better bike and pedestrian access that would make it easier to use the system.
- ✓ Include Sound Transit's ST Express regional bus system, which led the nation in number of Commuter Bus boardings for 2014, would continue to build ridership in key long distance corridors in anticipation of future light rail investments with 600,000 annual service hours. Funds are dedicated to explore opportunities to speed up

existing bus routes by enabling them to run on the shoulders of freeways where possible. Details of the plan are available at soundtransit3.org.

- ✓ Serve approximately 84 percent of Sound Transit District residents and 93 percent of district employees with convenient access to the region's high-reliability rail system in 2040. This includes residents and employees within 2½ miles of rail stations with park-and-ride access, ¼-mile of other rail stations, and ¼-mile of existing local bus services that would allow access to the rail system with one transfer.

4. What would ST3 mean for the region?

Sound Transit 3 is focused on providing alternatives to driving. Every transit rider represents one less car competing for limited space on freeways, leaving that for delivery trucks, emergency vehicles and for other people who can't or choose not to take transit.

As the region matures and grows, travel patterns are changing. Traffic jams aren't reserved for Seattle commuters – jobs and residential communities are growing throughout the region. The plan focuses on developing a more complete regional transit system that connects job and residential centers. Also, the Sound Transit Board developed the plan to promote economic benefits including encouraging firms to locate and expand here.

5. How will expanding light rail affect development in our region?

Rail investments are not only focused on moving people efficiently but helping to shape future growth, a key element of Sound Transit's mission under state law.

- Well-coordinated transit and zoning can encourage transit-oriented development (TOD) that is compact, higher density, mixed-use, walkable and environmentally friendly.
- The ST3 draft plan includes policies and funding to encourage TOD, including development of affordable housing near stations.
- As the region's population grows, people are having to move farther and farther away from jobs in order to afford housing. Mass transit connects affordable housing to the places where people work and it reduces the costs of transportation for the people who need it most.

6. If these transit projects are built will they reduce congestion?

Light rail expansions will dramatically increase the people-moving capacity of our transportation system. Every rider is someone who does not contribute to rising congestion, helping to ease the movement of drivers and freight on our roads. However, when additional road space becomes available, whether by building new highway lanes or move people out of cars into transit, freed up capacity quickly fills with cars, a phenomenon known as [induced demand](#). Congestion will very seldom reduce from today's levels, but without mass transit transportation would be worse. What light rail offers is an alternative to driving that also helps promote vibrant and dense urban development where people rely less on cars, benefitting all travelers as well as our environment.

7. How is transit demand growing?

Annual Sound Transit ridership continues to set records year after year. Following the March 2016 opening of University Link light rail, April light rail ridership surged 78 percent over April 2015 to more than 60,000 each weekday. In February 2016, before the opening of University Link weekday light rail ridership was up 11 percent over the preceding February. The Puget Sound Regional Council reports that transit boardings region-wide have been [growing](#) twice as fast as population since 2010.

8. How much capacity does light rail offer, and how does that compare to other transportation investments?

Transit is the region's primary tool for adding capacity in the busiest corridors. In our dense, geographically constrained region, there is no room for new highway lanes sufficient to meet demand. While a freeway lane moves as few as 700 cars per hour and in ideal conditions up to 2,000 cars per hour, a four-car light rail vehicle can move up to 16,000 per hour in each direction (4-car trains every 3 minutes).

One four-car train offers a capacity of about 10 buses. Moving the same number of people on buses would require 200 drivers and 200 buses competing for space on roadways. However, this would not be physically possible since a bus would have to depart every 18 seconds.

9. How will rail investments work in tandem with local bus service?

The benefits of light rail extend far beyond the immediate neighborhoods of rail stations. Sound Transit works closely with many transit partners to extend the benefit of rail services with local bus service to communities throughout the region.

For instance, King County Metro integrated its bus routes with the new U Link light rail service. From UW Station riders can access downtown Seattle within six minutes no matter how bad the weather or traffic. Reconfiguring buses to connect with University Link enabled 80,000 North Seattle residents to benefit from buses that now come more often and at more times of the day.

10. How is Sound Transit ridership expected to grow in the future under ST2 and ST3?

- **June 2016 Sound Transit ridership: 150,000 each weekday**
 - Following the March opening of University Link weekday light rail ridership increased by 30,000. June ridership on Link is up 69 percent over the same period last year.
- **2030 following ST2 completion: 350,000 each weekday**
 - Sound Transit remains on track to open 35 additional miles of light rail by 2023
- **2040 with ST3: 561,000 to 695,000 each weekday**
 - Around four times more than current ridership

11. How many miles of light rail would ST3 build?

ST3's light rail investments are roughly equivalent to Sound Move and ST2 combined

- SM+ST2: 27 years, 54 miles of light rail, 46 stations
- ST3: 25 years, 62 miles of light rail, 37 new stations

SM+ST2: 46 stations	ST3: 37 new stations	SM+ST2+ST3: 83 stations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Snohomish: 3 stations • North King: 18 stations • East King: 9 stations • South King: 4 stations • Pierce: 12 stations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Snohomish: 6 stations • North King: 12 stations • East King: 6 stations • South King: 4 stations • Pierce: 9 stations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Snohomish: 9 stations • North King: 30 stations • East King: 15 stations • South King: 8 stations • Pierce: 21 stations

B: Project timelines

1. Why do light rail projects take so long to build?

Sound Transit heard loud and clear strong interest from around the region for shortening project timelines where feasible, and is exploring options for schedule savings. Major infrastructure projects require significant time to plan, design and build. Variables can include lengthy environmental review and coordination with local jurisdictions. The Puget Sound region's high level of existing development and its challenging geography and geology further adds to project complexity and timelines.

Due to these factors, planning and building major light rail projects typically takes 12-17 years, and longer for projects that are particularly complex due to design, construction and permitting challenges, such as the extensive underground construction through downtown Seattle for extending light rail to Ballard.

2. What has Sound Transit done to speed up projects?

Improvements introduced following public comment on a draft plan in April sped up most of the proposed light rail extensions by two to five years in comparison to the draft plan that was released for comment in March 2016. Completing projects more quickly was by far the number one interest expressed by residents during the public comment period. Light rail to Everett via Paine Field would open five years earlier than the draft plan released by the Board in March. Extensions to downtown Redmond and Federal Way would be completed four years sooner, while the Ballard, West Seattle and Tacoma extensions would open three years sooner. The agency would work with partners to further improve timelines where feasible.

3. How can Sound Transit potentially further speed up projects?

There is very strong potential for close collaboration with local jurisdictions to further streamline the planning, permitting and approval timeline for projects. Early and ongoing community engagement prevents time delays later in the schedule. Sound Transit is exploring potential time savings of combining multiple environmental studies together rather than doing that work sequentially, as well as expediting procurement processes to facilitate earlier start times.

Given that cash flow constraints can limit the speed of project delivery, Sound Transit would research other financing tools and funding partnerships that might be available to the agency, including work with local and state governments as well as with the private sector. Work to speed up projects and save money would continue throughout every phase of project delivery. The project dates in the final measure should be considered targets that Sound Transit would constantly work to beat when feasible based on factors including cash flow.

Finally, Sound Transit would evaluate alternative delivery mechanisms, such as Public-Private Partnership and Design Build to determine what impact these might have on construction timelines.

4. Why does it take so long to get to Ballard?

This is by far the most complex project in ST3. It includes 3.5 miles of tunnel through downtown Seattle, the West Coast's most densely developed area north of San Francisco. There are six subway stations. Four are assumed to use cut-and-cover construction techniques to excavate station areas approximately 560 feet long, each almost long enough to lay the Space Needle on its side. Two subway stations would require sophisticated underground mining techniques because they are too deep to excavate from the top down. There is also a crossing of the ship canal required to reach Ballard.

These factors have shaped the currently assumed 18 years of planning, engineering and construction time to reach Ballard. While the construction timeframe is less subject to acceleration, Sound Transit would put particular focus on working with the City of Seattle to identify options for speeding up the environmental review, planning and permitting if possible based on finances.

5. How can downtown Redmond and Federal Way be completed more quickly than the others?

Much of the planning and environmental study of these two projects has been completed. Sound Transit already has a federal record of decision on the route to Redmond and is currently working to obtain one for the preferred alternative alignment that has been identified for Federal Way. As a result, the Redmond extension would open in 2024, immediately following completion of Eastlink to the Redmond Technology Center, opening in 2023. Extending light rail south from Angle Lake, Kent/Des Moines and Federal Way would begin service in 2024.

6. What can be done to increase regional mobility before other light rail projects are completed?

The ST3 Plan recognizes that travelers in our region face increasing challenges daily, and mobility improvements need to be made right away. The plan includes an Early Deliverables Program that would focus on establishing relief in key corridors while longer-term projects are planned and constructed. The program includes, but is not limited to, Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) on I-405 and SR-522, capital investments on Metro's RapidRide C and D lines to bring earlier improvements to Ballard and West Seattle, capital investments to increase bus speed and reliability on Pierce County routes and on Madison Street in Seattle.

D: Finances: (funding, tax sources, regional equity)

1. What's the additional ST3 tax burden that could be seen by the average resident?

The estimated cost to a typical adult living in the Sound Transit District would be approximately \$169 more annually, or about \$14 more per month. In combination with federal grants, existing Sound Transit taxes, fares and bonds, new tax sources would finance the next generation of mass transit, providing fast, reliable travel times for riders throughout the region.

2. How does the \$169 per adult estimate break down, and what methodology was used to come up with that amount?

ST3's \$53.8 billion in investments would be enabled by: (1) a sales tax of 0.5 percent (\$.50 on a \$100 purchase) in addition to the 0.9 percent currently collected; (2) a motor vehicle excise tax (MVET) of 0.8 percent (\$80 annually per \$10,000 of vehicle value) in addition to the 0.3 percent MVET Sound Transit is collecting through 2028; and (3) a property tax of 25 cents for each \$1,000 of assessed valuation.

Here's how it breaks down. The calculations for all three of the proposed new taxes use median values, or the amounts at which 50 percent of people would pay more and 50 percent would pay less.

- **Motor vehicle excise tax (MVET):** A typical adult would pay \$43 more annually based on the \$5,333 median value of vehicles in the Sound Transit District. MVET taxes are determined by a state of Washington depreciation schedule for a specific vehicle's model and production year.

- **Property tax:** The typical adult would pay \$47 more based on the median \$360,658 assessed value for homes in the Sound Transit District. For renters, this conservatively assumes \$47 as the median cost passed on by a landlord.
- **Sales tax:** An adult at the median income level would pay an additional \$79 per year in sales and use taxes if ST3 were passed. This is based on a median household income level of \$73,359 according to 2015 data from the Washington State Office of Financial Management (OFM) for Snohomish, King and Pierce counties.

3. Is it true that the sales tax in the Sound Transit District would be among the highest in the country?

A website run by an organization called the Sales Tax Institute indicates that the following states have higher rates in some or all of their local jurisdictions: Alabama (12.5%), Arizona (12.7%), Arkansas (12%), Colorado (10.9%), Illinois (11%), Kansas (11.5%), Louisiana (12.5%), Missouri (10.4%), New Mexico (11.7%), Oklahoma (11%), and Utah (10.95%). If Sound Transit 3 passed the highest rate in the district would be 10.4%, which is still lower than all 11 of the above states. Washington State is the only one among these that doesn't also levy an income tax.

4. What factors enabled the \$50 billion cost for the March 2016 Draft Plan to increase to the current cost figure of \$54 billion?

Refinements were made to the financing plan for the ST3 measure to modestly increase the issuance of bonds, improving the region's financial capacity by approximately 8 percent or \$4 billion. Additional money available through earlier bond sales was applied to speed up delivery of light rail projects included in ST3.

5. How do taxes in Seattle compare to other major cities following other transit investments such as Move Seattle and the recent Metro funding measure?

According to one study, Seattle's tax burden remains one of the lowest in the country, at least for people with a middle income or better. The District of Columbia annually tracks the tax burden in the biggest cities in every state and found that in 2013, the latest data available, Seattle placed around the seventh-lowest overall. State and local taxes in Washington are much lower as a share of personal income than they were 20 years ago. In 1991, Washington residents paid about 12.2 percent of their income in state and local taxes. By 2011, this had declined to 9.9 percent. Washington's tax burden is now well below the national average. (Dwight Diveley, 2015)

6. What is the level of existing ST taxes from Sound Move and ST2?

\$159 per typical adult.

7. What equity provisions are part of the ST3 funding structure?

The Sound Transit 3 Plan would continue the agency's subarea equity framework. Under that framework, the revenues raised in each of the five geographic subareas focus on projects and services deemed by the Board to represent that area's highest priorities and an equitable regional allocation of costs and benefits.

8. How long would the taxes extend?

Legally binding provisions in ST3 would require that ST3 taxes be rolled back following the completion of projects and the repayment of bonds unless a future public vote directs otherwise. The rollback will reduce the taxes to the level required only to cover the costs of operating and

maintaining the system. Staff will conduct financial modelling to estimate when the rollback could occur and this will be a matter of public record.

9. What's the cost of not expanding transit?

- **Inflation:** Depending on specifics, a project that costs \$1 billion today will cost around 60% more in 15 years, or 100% more in 20 years.
- **Cost of gridlock.** An effective transportation system is critical for the economy. It allows workers to get to their jobs and products to market. [WSDOT's 2015 Corridor Capacity Report](#) estimates that travel delay cost drivers and businesses in Washington \$808 million in 2014 compared to \$773 million in 2012 (Page 7). As the Puget Sound region contributes to 96.8 percent of total statewide delay, it is estimated that \$783 million in delay costs occur in the Puget Sound region. In the Everett to Seattle corridor, congestion costs a commuter \$3,400 per year annually, while the cost for a commuter in the Lynnwood to Bellevue corridor is \$3,300 annually (pages 12 and 16).
- **Increased greenhouse gases:** Transportation is the largest contributor to greenhouse gas emissions in the state.
- **Economic competitiveness:** A strong transportation system is considered important to a region's economic competitiveness, influencing companies' decisions about where to locate and expand.
- **Commuting costs:** Transit expansions not only give people access to riding fast, frequent and congestion-free transit but can save them thousands of dollars each year. For example, a commuter who rode rail instead of driving a medium-sized car on the 60-mile round trip between Everett and Seattle each weekday and paying \$10 for parking would save more than \$3,400 each year. This factors in the cost of a transit pass and assumes \$2.50-per-gallon gas. A rider whose employer provides a transit pass would save \$5,000 annually. Savings in both scenarios will increase by more than \$1,000 annually if gas prices return to \$4 per gallon.

10. How much will the costs of ST3 be offset by the savings and economic benefits commuters and residents experience?

Expansions that give more people access to riding fast, frequent and reliable transit instead of driving offer potential for riders to save more money each year than they would pay in additional taxes. For example, a commuter who rode rail instead of driving a medium-sized car on the 60-mile round trip between Everett and Seattle each weekday and paying \$10 for parking would save more than \$3,400 each year. This factors in the cost of a transit pass and assumes \$2.50-per-gallon gas. A rider whose employer provides a transit pass would save \$5,000 annually. Savings in both scenarios will increase by more than \$1,000 annually when gas prices return to \$4 per gallon. Scenarios with different inputs can be explored using the transit savings calculator at apta.com.

11. During the 2015 legislative session there was discussion of \$15 billion in new authority. What accounts for the difference between \$15 billion and the \$54 billion total of the plan?

People frequently talked about "\$15 billion" during the 2015 legislative session since this is the amount of new revenue the tax authority the region was granted could generate within the first 15 years. However, the Sound Transit Board responded to strong public support for broader mass transit investments by proposing a 25-year plan. This extended timeframe would generate \$28 billion in new taxes. Federal grants, existing taxes, bonding and fares increase available funding to \$53.8 billion.

12. How certain are Sound Transit's cost estimates at this point? What is the methodology underlying them and what amount of contingency do they include?

To develop Sound Transit 3 cost estimates, Sound Transit drew on its proven experience planning and building major capital projects. Sound Transit's cost estimates were developed with the prudent methods that have kept the Sound Transit 2 measure on track. They include ample contingency and reserve funds for the very early stage of design they are based on. Along with all other technical work to shape a ST3 ballot measure, the cost estimates were independently reviewed by an Expert Review Panel appointed by the state of Washington.

13. How much funding does Sound Transit assume will come from federal grants?

The current financial plan assumes a 13 percent federal partnership on the capital program, an estimate that has been borne out by prior Sound Transit experience. This represents \$4.7 billion, or 8.7 percent of the entire ST3 budget.

14. How much of the Sound Transit 3 Plan would be paid for through borrowing?

Similar to financing for the majority of infrastructure around the country, Sound Transit would sell bonds, generating funds to complete projects much sooner. Under the revised assumptions, Sound Transit plans to use borrowing to cover approximately 30 percent of the plan's investments. This would compare to buying a house with a 70 percent down payment and funding the rest through borrowing.

15. What is a "year of expenditure" cost, and why is it so much higher than a constant-year cost?

"Year of expenditure" — or YOE — cost estimates are higher than constant-year 2014 estimates used in project summary templates because they estimate the significant cost of compounded inflation. Depending on the specifics, a project that costs \$1 billion today will cost around 60 percent more in 15 years or 100 percent more in 20 years.

Sound Transit builds its cost estimates based on constant year dollars, breaks the estimates down to the amount that would be spent during each year of a project's construction, and then inflates the costs based on when they would actually incur. Presenting costs in YOE dollars is not normally done for other public capital levies but is part of Sound Transit's practice of financial transparency.

16. What is the Board's rationale for such an ambitious package?

Our region is playing catch-up from years of under-investment in mass transit infrastructure. Following the rejection of transit measures in 1968 and 1970 that sent the region's federal funding to other cities, no mass transit funding or construction happened here for more than a quarter of a century. Meanwhile, our population is continuing to increase rapidly and our congestion growing to among the worst in the nation.

Strategic transportation investments like light rail systems create long-term economic benefits far exceeding their short-term costs, including incentives for firms to locate and expand here. Major infrastructure projects only grow more expensive with time.

17. What sales tax provisions for ST3 did the Legislature adopt in 2015, and how will the revenues support education?

The state's recent transportation package contains a provision increasing the sales tax by 1-2 percent that Sound Transit must pay on construction of all future projects (those included in ST3, but not in ST2). The projected cost to Sound Transit projects for the sales tax is \$518 million. The

Legislature added a provision that dedicates these fees to an education fund that would be distributed to the Pierce, King and Snohomish county governments based on their share of the population within the transit district's boundaries.

18. What are the implications of the affordable housing requirements?

The 2015 Transportation Bill provides Sound Transit with new tools to help with the funding and development of affordable housing. The ST3 plan must include the following elements:

- **Revolving Loan Fund:** Beginning within three years of voter approval of ST3, Sound Transit must contribute at least \$4 million dollars annually for five consecutive years to a revolving loan fund to support the development of affordable housing related to equitable transit-oriented development (TOD) within Sound Transit's boundaries.
- **New Rules for Surplus Property:** The new rule requires 80 percent of Sound Transit's surplus property (property obtained for construction staging that is no longer needed) suitable for housing be offered to qualified entities for development as housing that includes 80 percent of units offered to families/individuals who are at or below 80 percent AMI (average medium income).
- **Quarterly TOD Report:** At the end of each fiscal quarter, Sound Transit must send a report to the appropriate committees of the legislature detailing (1) Any transfers of property in the previous quarter that occurred pursuant to the new law and (2) any progress in implementing its regional equitable TOD strategy for diverse, vibrant, mixed-use and mixed-income communities. Sound Transit must also post a copy of this report on its website.

19. Would the proposed property tax supporting Sound Transit 3 negatively impact other jurisdictions?

A property tax increase of \$.25 per \$1,000 of assessed valuation is one of the three new taxes that are proposed to fund the Sound Transit 3 ballot measure. The property tax would provide 14.4 percent of the measure's \$27.7 billion in revenue from new taxes. The ST3 property tax would make up a relatively small portion of overall property taxes paid by homeowners. In the sample cities of Tacoma, Everett and Seattle shown at right, the total amount of property tax to support ST3 would range from 1.5 percent to 2.5 percent of total property taxes. The mix of property taxes for a given city and sometimes within cities varies depending on local levies.

If ST3 passes in November, and property taxes begin getting collected in 2017, no other taxing districts will be impacted. There are many caps on property tax rates (the amount of tax per \$1,000 of assessed property value), three of which are relevant to this matter:

- **State:** \$3.60.
- **Local:** \$5.90; includes cities, counties, library districts, fire districts, park districts, hospital districts, etc. There are various exceptions to this limit and some local governments aren't included.
- **Constitutional:** 1% of true and fair value (not assessed value); includes the State, local governments included in the \$5.90 limit, flood districts, emergency medical services, conservation futures, and if passed, Sound Transit. Note that most voter-approved levies, such as school levies and bonds, are NOT included in the 1% limit.

Sound Transit's property tax isn't in the same category as other local property taxes like cities, counties, libraries, fire districts, parks, and hospitals, so Sound Transit will have no impact on any of them.

20. What support for property taxes is available for senior citizens?

Senior citizens and people with disabilities whose primary residences are in Washington State and who meet household income and other eligibility requirements can utilize programs that help reduce or defer property taxes and/or special assessments. For information about the property tax exemption program, see the Property Tax Exemption for Senior Citizens and Disabled Persons fact sheet at http://dor.wa.gov/docs/pubs/prop_tax/senior exempt.pdf. For information about the property tax deferral program, see the Property Tax Deferral for Senior Citizens and Disabled Persons fact sheet at http://dor.wa.gov/docs/pubs/prop_tax/senior defers.pdf.

21. Recently a state legislator posted a diagram on social media stating the proposed ST3 property tax would "squeeze out existing levies for parks, libraries, ferries, buses, affordable housing, flood and fire districts, and emergency medical services." Is this accurate?

There is no jurisdiction within the Sound Transit District with existing levies that would be impacted by ST3. The diagram did not show current actual levied taxes, but rather illustrated the process that would apply in a scenario where the above-described 1 percent limit was exceeded.

22. The "No on ST3" website asserts that ST3 "costs \$529,000 per new rider." Is this accurate.

No. The ST3 light rail investments will have a useful life of many decades, but the website divides the entire cost of ST3 by a number of so-called "new riders" (See Q&A item in section G) who would ride on one single weekday right after the system is completed. This claim takes a methodology for estimating "new riders" that the Bush administration abandoned many years ago and then subjects it to mathematical nonsense.

F. How was the ST3 Plan developed

1. What process did the Board follow for arriving at this ST3 draft plan?

For almost two years, the Sound Transit Board has been laying the groundwork for this plan, starting with an update to the Long-Range plan in 2014.

During the past twelve months, Sound Transit staff and Board members engaged stakeholder organizations, local jurisdictions and the broader public in shaping this draft plan. The public process held in summer, 2015 had more than 25,000 people responding to an online survey about which candidate projects staff should study. Subsequent analysis of those projects, combined with input from the public and local jurisdictions, was critical information that shaped Board perspectives in shaping a draft plan. That draft plan was taken out to the public in seven meetings throughout the district in addition to dozens of presentations to jurisdictions, stakeholders and the public. Almost 35,000 people took the online survey and more than 1,000 submitted letters and emails with their comments. More than 90 stakeholder organizations and jurisdictions submitted letters to the Board, who took all this input into consideration before making adjustments to the draft and finalizing the plan.

2. A Seattle Times editorial claimed that Sound Transit moved too quickly to send the ST3 plan to voters. What is your response?

There has been more than 3-1/2 years of discussion leading to the Sound Transit Board's development of the Sound Transit 3 plan, with four rounds of formal public involvement. The Board's first Sound Transit 3 workshop took place on Nov. 29, 2012. At that time, the Board decided to move forward with a timeline to enable a November 2016 ballot measure in response to strong public interest across the region for further regional transit expansions. Process steps since then have included:

- **Fall 2013:** public involvement on what potential changes to the Regional Transit Long-Range Plan (LRP) should be studied.
- **Summer 2014:** public involvement on the Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement for updating the Regional Transit Long-Range Plan.
- **Winter through summer 2015:** Extensive legislative and public debate over the funding authority the Washington State Legislature and governor ultimately granted for the ST3 measure.
- **Summer 2015:** public involvement on which (LRP) projects should be studied as candidates for the ST3 ballot measure.
- **Spring 2016:** public involvement on a ST3 Draft Plan very similar to the final plan the Board adopted.

All four of the formal public involvement periods included meetings around the region and online surveys and included extensive public input following promotional efforts that included districtwide mailers, advertising and other means. Public participation levels were very strong, particularly in April when Sound Transit received 2,320 written comments and 34,706 online survey responses, 40 percent more than the 2015 online survey. In addition more than 1,250 people attended the seven open houses in April. The agency received more than 90 letters from local jurisdictions, agencies and stakeholder organizations. Public interest in transit investments was also reflected in a scientific telephone survey fielded in April.

3. Why did Sound Transit work toward voter consideration of a ST3 measure in 2016?

Every year that the region delays considering mass transit expansions means those publicly supported expansions and the benefits they would create are one year further away. Public approval of further expansions in 2016 means they would begin progressing through the required environmental review and project development steps while previously approved projects are in construction, enabling continuous work to expand the light rail system. Sound Transit needs to start the project development phases now to deploy the projects within the targeted completion timeframes, which are already longer than people would like.

G: Effectiveness of ST3 Plan Elements

1. How would the ST3 Plan change transit ridership and riders' experience?

By 2040, the region's population is projected to increase by over 800,000 residents. Replacing crowded bus routes with deteriorating service levels and reliability with congestion-free light rail and significantly faster and more frequent bus rapid transit services would materially improve travel for thousands of commuters. ST3 would enable Sound Transit to serve a significant portion of the commute trips spurred by the region's rapid population and job growth. With the ST3 Plan, Sound Transit weekday ridership will roughly quadruple from what it is today, increasing from

approximately 145,000 boardings each weekday to between 561,000 and 695,000 daily riders. With ST3, weekday boardings will nearly double from the 350,000 weekday boardings which are forecasted to follow the completion of the Sound Transit 2 (ST2) plan.

2. Why not just invest in buses instead of rail?

Both light rail and buses can be very effective high-capacity transit modes. Each has its place in a regional transit system. Sound Transit's express buses rely heavily on regional HOV lanes that are performing worse each year. Between 2012 and 2014 alone, the Washington State Department of Transportation reported major deterioration of HOV lane travel times:

- **I-5 Everett to Seattle:** weekday morning average HOV travel time increased 22 percent to 45 minutes. Reliable* HOV travel time increased 17 percent to 74 minutes.
- **I-5 Federal Way to Seattle:** weekday morning average HOV lane travel time increased 18 percent to 39 minutes. Reliable* HOV travel time increased 20 percent to 55 minutes.
- **I-405 Lynnwood to Bellevue:** weekday morning average HOV lane travel time increased 23 percent to 27 minutes. Reliable* HOV lane travel time increased 30 percent to 39 minutes.
- **I-405 Tukwila to Bellevue:** weekday morning average HOV lane travel time increased 38 percent to 22 minutes. Reliable* HOV lane travel time increased 65 percent to 33 minutes.

** WSDOT defines "reliable" as the time allowance required to arrive on time 19 out of 20 times.*

Bus service is most effective in corridors where demand isn't heavy enough for light rail. In high-demand corridors, buses have much lower capacity and higher per-rider operations costs as light rail, and they cannot operate at a similar level of performance in terms of travel times and reliability. Factors include:

- It takes 10 articulated buses to provide the capacity of one four-car train.
- While bus rapid transit (BRT) can be very effective in some applications, it is impossible for it to match light rail's capacity to move up to 16,000 passengers per hour in each direction. This would require around 200 buses, one every 18 seconds, which is not feasible.
- It would also require 200 operators compared to light rail's 20 operators, with dramatically higher operating costs.
- Buses get stuck in the same traffic as cars and contribute to rising gridlock, while rail operates in its own right-of-way. In some areas such as busy downtowns it is not conceivable to operate vastly greater numbers of buses.

3. Would bus rapid transit (BRT) utilizing construction of new fully dedicated lanes be cheaper and more effective than light rail?

No. BRT encompasses a spectrum of capital investment options, with new dedicated lanes representing the most intensive application. Extensive additions of new lanes, ramps and other vehicle and pedestrian infrastructure to keep buses from getting stuck in traffic would carry very extensive capital costs, especially in high-density areas, without offering anywhere near the same capacity or long-term operational savings.

Even when buses can perform more reliably, it still takes 10 articulated buses to provide the capacity of one four-car train. It is impossible to match light rail's capacity to move up to 16,000 passengers per hour in each direction. This would require around 200 buses, one every 18 seconds, which is not feasible. It would also require 200 operators compared to light rail's 20 operators, with dramatically higher operating costs.

Another key reason that regions of comparable size to ours emphasize rail rather than BRT is that rail offers vastly greater flexibility to combine elevated, underground and surface configurations to efficiently reach the hearts of busy population and employment centers. Realizing the mobility, economic and environmental benefits of transit requires the investments to be in the right areas.

4. BRT on I-405 is a big component of the ST3 plan. How would BRT improve the speed, frequency, reliability and capacity of service in the corridor compared to current bus service?

Bus Rapid Transit delivers greater speed and reliability because the buses operate in freeway managed lanes or BAT lanes (Business Access/Transit). Because BRT would utilize planned improvements to existing lanes, it could begin increasing mobility along I-405 within seven years. BRT also offers sufficient capacity to meet demand in the corridor.

For the ST3 draft plan, BRT on I-405 would provide riders the advantage of higher speeds and reliability in Express Toll Lanes without having to pay the tolls; operate service frequently: every 10 minutes in the peak periods and every 15 minutes in the off-peak, nights and weekends. It would have limited stops and less diversions on local streets, to provide faster speed. Additional parking is proposed at several stations to improve access. BRT riders would be able to connect with the major Eastside hub of downtown Bellevue from the north and south ends of the corridor, transferring with East Link to Seattle and Redmond and new light rail service between south Kirkland, Bellevue and Issaquah. At the south end of the I-405 corridor, riders could connect with Link at the Tukwila International Boulevard Station to travel south to Sea-Tac Airport or further south to Tacoma.

5. How about people who don't live near light rail/commuter rail – how do they benefit from ST3?

Benefits of regional mobility extend far beyond the immediate neighborhoods of light rail stations. Sound Transit works closely with its many transit partners to extend the benefit of rail services to communities throughout the region. King County Metro adjusted many bus routes to feed the new light rail service to Capitol Hill and the University of Washington, taking several lines off I-5 and instead directing them to the light rail stations. This allowed Metro to repurpose those buses for more frequent neighborhood service at the same time it removes buses from a congested I-5 – in fact, Metro projects they will free up 100,000 service hours for this purpose annually.

Sound Transit 3 would serve approximately 84 percent of Sound Transit District residents and 93 percent of district employees with convenient access to the region's high-reliability rail system in 2040. This includes residents and employees within 2½ miles of rail stations with park-and-ride access, ¾-mile of other rail stations, and ¼-mile of existing local bus services that would allow access to the rail system with one transfer.

Everyone benefits when people and businesses are able to get where they need to go. Every transit rider represents one less car competing for limited space on freeways, leaving that for delivery trucks, emergency vehicles and for other people who can't or choose not to take transit.

6. Is it true that light rail carries less than 3 percent of trips in the region?

This misleading claim ignores the record-level congestion playing out every day during peak commute hours on the region's busiest transportation corridors. The calculation spans trips across every road in the four-county Puget Sound Regional Council area during a 24-hour period, including areas and times with no congestion whatsoever. It counts not only commutes, but every single trip by every person, including taking kids to school and activities. Driving two kids to a soccer game,

pizza, the grocery store and back home again generates 12 trips in this calculation, where a 30-mile commute during peak hour generates only one. Light rail is a cost- and space-efficient means of moving large numbers of people, especially during most heavily congested times.

7. Why do we need mass transit with self-driving cars on the horizon?

Under any conceivable scenario for the future of automated vehicle technology, mass transit will continue to be critical both during its evolution and ultimate implementation. At the end of the day there will be fixed constraints on how many vehicles, automated or standard, can fit into the region's most congested areas. It all boils down to space, which dense and growing cities inherently lack. There will always be demand for congestion-free travel.

At such time that fleets of fully automated vehicles do become feasible, mass transit will be highly complementary, providing potential significant improvements to last-mile connects between transit centers where people can access congestion-free travel without sending more vehicles into high-demand areas.

In the meantime, although AV technology is moving quickly, there are significant uncertainties around when and how it may expand beyond safety and convenience features available for purchase on individual cars. The timeline for fully-automated (including completely unoccupied) cars is very uncertain and requires the resolution of numerous policy issues. Depending on answers to those questions, the technology will not necessarily or automatically have a net positive impact on congestion or transportation system capacity. Gains could easily be cancelled by unoccupied cars returning to other locations after dropping off passengers rather than parking, or by people sending cars on trips that would not have otherwise occurred if an occupant had to endure the congestion.

8. Some think it is critical to build and expand parking at stations, and others have concerns. How does the ST3 Plan address parking?

In most metropolitan areas, transit agencies are unable to fulfill the high demand for park-and-ride capacity. Sound Transit has constructed and operates facilities offering a total of approximately 14,100 spaces, the majority of which are filled up by 8 a.m. The challenges around providing more parking relate to the costs as well as the compatibility of parking facilities in the many different types of areas where we have stations and stops and management of those properties to assure their use by transit riders.

In our highly developed region, the land uses and density surrounding many transit facilities and the land use codes and preferences of local jurisdictions do not allow for large surface parking lots. The costs of building parking garages are significant: at least \$30,000 per space. In shaping plans for expanding the regional transit system, Sound Transit looks closely at the options and preferences specific to each area served, working to emphasize opportunities for people to access services through walking, bicycling and local transit connections, while making parking investments in areas where other access modes are more challenging. Significant parking investments are assumed to be part of many ST3 projects.

Sound Transit is exploring innovative parking strategies, including a recent pilot project for selling permits to transit riders who park high-occupancy vehicles, as well as providing access to real-time parking availability information via handheld devices.

9. What is the rationale for incurring the additional funding and time it would take to reach Paine Field?

The Southwest Everett Industrial Center is a growing hub of manufacturing jobs in the region, recognized in the PSRC's 2040 Regional Growth Strategy. Snohomish County, the City of Everett and other Snohomish County communities expressed strong support for a light rail connection to this critical job center. The capital cost to reach this area is not insignificant, but regional representatives are confident that the benefits of including the SW Everett Industrial Center far outweigh those costs. Those benefits include the potential for more long-term transit supportive land use changes in station areas along this alignment. This alignment may also provide additional opportunities for locating a new light rail operations and maintenance base.

10. How much improvement to service can be obtain by operating bus on freeway shoulders? What if any future approval actions would be needed by the state and/or other parties?

As part of the plan's Early Deliverable Program, Sound Transit would expedite running buses on the shoulders of freeways where feasible. Bus-on-shoulders is a concept that allows buses to move out of the most congested highway sections, bypassing traffic to deliver riders to their destinations more quickly. The service improvements will need to be developed in close coordination with WSDOT and approved by the Federal Highway Administration.

11. Would high-occupancy toll (HOT) lanes and congestion pricing be cheaper and more effective than building light rail?

HOT lanes and congestion pricing are terms that describe directly charging drivers for using the highways. The toll would be established such that demand on the facility would be limited to only those people willing to pay for the privilege, and at a level that keeps the cars and buses on those lanes moving at close to free-flow speeds. Light rail, BRT and congestion pricing are all needed to make traffic movement better in our region.

Generally, this approach to transportation systems is coupled with an effective transit system. Experience with tolling systems show that people will make different choices if they must pay to drive. But that means they need alternatives. Not surprisingly, most congestion pricing approaches rely on transit systems to provide that alternative. So, in contrast to the question above, it is not an either/or situation.

12. Sound Transit provided "cost per new rider" statistics to the WSDOT-appointed Expert Review Panel. Are these a valid indicator of the ST3 Plan's benefits?

No. Those calculations and the underlying ridership estimates draw on multiple layers of speculative assumptions to estimate transit riders switching from driving to transit as a direct result of ST3. The number of "new" transit riders each project would attract is defined as people who were not previously riding buses. The Federal Transit Administration no longer evaluates the cost effectiveness of transit projects based on "new" riders but on all riders. The FTA moved away from measuring costs per new rider back in 2003 during the Bush Administration due to the narrowness of the measure.

Transit agencies seek to develop high-capacity transit in corridors where there is already very high bus ridership. That means that by the explicit intent, most of the riders are people who are moving over from buses. This enables riders to graduate from crowded and underperforming buses that are reaching their destinations more slowly each year, even when they are operating in HOV lanes. Rail

extensions enable bus routes previously operating in the same corridors to be redeployed to serve other corridors where they can be more productive.

The estimates for new riders are based on a number of other assumptions.

- The model does not take into account the public's well-documented preference for using rail services over buses, only taking into account travel times for a given trip irrespective of transit mode.
- The calculations assume WSDOT and other transportation agencies will have the political will to initiate a new per-mile driving fee on all miles driven across the region. Fees would apply to all trips, including going to the convenience store for a gallon of milk. Because this assumption is imbedded in PSRC regional planning, it therefore must be reflected in the ST model.
- In the future bus travel times on HOV lanes are assumed not to deteriorate. In order to assume no future reduction in bus travel times, the model accepts that future leaders will have obtained the political consensus to impose new, more stringent HOV limitations (HOV-3 or HOV-4) or convert the HOV lanes to bus-only lanes.
- Because the model assumes faster bus travel times related to the policy assumptions described above, it may overstate the level of bus ridership for the no-build scenario. The calculations assume full build-out of local agencies' long-range plans by 2040. Put another way, their calculations assume that every proposed road and transit improvement in the region will be built without regard for whether they will actually secure the necessary funding.

13. Why are the costs per new rider so high for the Kirkland-Issaquah and DuPont projects?

The 2040 forecasts for both of these projects are for around the timeframe of their completion, while their ridership and benefits will continue to grow for many decades thereafter.

In the Kirkland-Issaquah corridor, the proposed light rail investment responds to Eastside communities' advocacy that light rail should not only focus on moving transit riders across Lake Washington but also on moving citizens between cities on the Eastside. In connecting Kirkland, Bellevue and Issaquah, this project would provide easy connections for riders to destinations across a 116-mile regional system while acting as a powerful catalyst for shaping future development within the corridor. The City of Issaquah in particular, which is a designated regional growth center, has put intensive focus on making transit a centerpiece of its long-term development plans, and this intra-Eastside project would for once get a step ahead of future development.

The DuPont extension would serve the significant population growth that is occurring in South Pierce County, including the 72 percent growth that is forecasted for DuPont by 2040. Its cost per new rider is high due to factors including that commuter rail, as a premium transit service, carries the highest per-rider costs of all Sound Transit's modes, in part because most trips are long distance. Each trip taken on Sounder represents a significantly higher number of miles not travelled on the region's freeways. This project will also finally serve the many armed services members and their families who travel to and from Joint Base Lewis-McChord.

H. Sound Transit historic project delivery and productivity

1. Why don't we already have a regional mass transit system like other major cities?

The region is paying for rejecting transit in the 1970s. Had voters then approved Forward Thrust, the region would have benefited from \$900 million in federal funding to construct a regional mass transit system that would have begun operations decades ago.

2. **How do the ultimate costs of Sound Move compare to the estimates in the 1996 ballot measure?**
Ultimately, Sound Move's total costs were about twice what was assumed.. The new administration that was installed in 2001 established new cost estimates and schedules for Sound Transit's major light rail projects that have held firm.

3. **Was University Link really ahead of schedule and under budget? Wasn't it supposed to have opened in 2006?**

As numerous headlines emphasized as Sound Transit almost collapsed in 2001, the cost and schedule estimates from the mid-1990s that were assumed in the 1996 Sound Move ballot measure were significantly off. The stated feasibility of completing the ballot measure by 2006 was completely unrealistic. At the Board's direction, the new administration that was installed in 2001 took the light rail project back to the drawing boards. The initial segment was shifted from the north to the south while extensive focus was placed on solving the greatest engineering and cost challenges, which were related to tunneling from downtown Seattle to Capitol Hill and beneath the ship canal to the University of Washington. In 2008 as staff completed the final designs, Sound Transit announced the cost and schedule that would be realistic and that the agency would hold itself accountable to. University Link was completed ahead of that schedule and \$200 million under that budget.

4. **What is Sound Transit's track record on delivering projects included in ST2?**

The Sound Transit leadership team that was brought in during 2001 has an outstanding track record of delivering major projects on schedule and within budget. Sound Transit is on track to complete more than 30 miles in additional light rail expansions under Sound Transit 2, despite the 29 percent reduction in total ST2 funding caused by the national recession – that's more than 90 percent of Sound Transit 2's capital projects. Northgate Link is on schedule to open in 2021, and the rest of ST2 projects are on track to open in 2023.

5. **What independent oversight and accountability measures are in place to assure that Sound Transit delivers projects?**

At Sound Transit accountability comes in many layers, starting with voter approval of all its taxes and projects. The ST3 plan before voters, along with earlier voter-approved ballot measures, follow strict guidelines for how tax dollars can be spent. In addition, the agency's subarea equity policy ensures that taxes raised in each of the Sound Transit District's five subareas are used on projects that benefit that area.

The assumed costs, schedules, revenues and other elements of the Sound Transit 3 ballot measure have been thoroughly and independently evaluated by an Expert Review Panel appointed by the State of Washington. The reports are available at <http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/partners/erp/>

Other accountability measures include:

- **Public oversight**
 - All Sound Transit Board and committee meetings are open to the public.

- A 15-member volunteer Citizen Oversight Panel oversees and monitors the implementation of Sound Transit's regional transit plan and provides ongoing review and oversight. The COP reports are available at Soundtransit.org
- An independent 15-member Diversity Oversight Committee was established by the Sound Transit Board in 2006 to ensure that the agency complies with its guiding principles for employment and contracting.
- **State and local oversight**
 - Sound Transit has a strong record of clean audits from independent auditors. These audits cover financial reporting, federal grant compliance and reporting to the National Transit Database.
 - The State Auditor's Office performs an annual accountability audit on Sound Transit's compliance with state laws and regulations and its own policies and procedures.
 - To receive the necessary permits to build and operate its bus and train services, Sound Transit goes through a rigorous permitting process from cities, counties and other agencies.
- **Federal oversight**
 - Sound Transit recently received its 22nd clean annual audit, conducted by an independent outside auditor, of how the agency manages and spends federal funds. No material weaknesses were found since these audits began in 1994.
 - The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) conducts quarterly reviews of the agency.
 - Every three years the FTA conducts an intense review of Sound Transit's compliance with 17 subject areas, including financial management and capacity, technical capacity, maintenance and procurement. This "Triennial Review" includes the study of hundreds of documents, plans, policies and procedures followed by an onsite visit that includes tours and inspections.
 - For major Sound Transit construction projects, the FTA contracts with independent experts to monitor engineering, design, cost estimates and construction/procurement practices. These reviews have found that Sound Transit has the technical capacity, capability and project controls necessary to build and operate its light rail, commuter rail and express buses.
- **State of good repair**
 - Sound Transit's financial plan assumes that all of its project assets, such as buses, trains and equipment, will be replaced at the end of their useful life. Sound Transit maintains a minimum \$300 million reserve for unanticipated expenditures necessary to keep the system in good working condition. In addition, the agency maintains a forecast of the funds necessary to repair and replace existing assets to keep the Sound Transit system in good repair.
- **Measures of success**
 - Sound Transit's Bond rating ranges from A- to AAA by S&P; Aa1 & Aa2 by Moody's and A+ by Fitch.
 - In annual customer satisfaction surveys from 2010 to 2015, riders consistently rated Sound Transit Services at a B+ level or above.
 - In 2015, the American Public Transportation Association gave Sound Transit platinum-level recognition to its sustainability program—only the second transit agency in the nation to receive such an honor.

6. What is Sound Transit's project delivery track record?

Sound Transit continues to build a track record of delivering major capital projects on schedule and under budget. Here is a by-the-numbers look at agency successes delivering megaprojects.

- **University Link:** This extension, which includes 3.1 miles of twin tunnels between downtown Seattle and the University of Washington with a station at Capitol Hill, opened in March 2016, ahead of schedule and about \$200 million under budget. In their first weeks of operation, these two new stations increased Link daily ridership by almost 60 percent.
- **Sound Transit 2:** Sound Transit remains on track to deliver more than 30 miles of light rail expansions by 2023, despite a 29 percent reduction in revenues due to the national recession. The agency is delivering these projects within dramatically tighter budgets. The South 200th Link extension, scheduled to open in 2016, features a major new parking garage and service south of Sea-Tac Airport.
- **Link initial segment:** In 2009, Sound Transit opened the first 15.6 miles of light rail service in central Puget Sound on schedule and about \$105 million below the \$2.7 billion budget adopted by the Sound Transit Board in 2001. Ridership on Link light rail has steadily increased since then, with an estimated 34.9 million total boardings last year, an 8 percent increase over 2014.