

**SOUND TRANSIT**

**RESOLUTION NO. R99-15**

**Adoption of 1999 Regional Express Bus Service Plan  
BACKGROUND AND COMMENTS**

<b>Meeting:</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>Type of Action:</b>	<b>Staff Contact:</b>	<b>Phone:</b>
Finance	6/3/99	Recommend Board Approval	Veronica Parker, Program Manager, Regional Express	398-5042
Executive	6/4/99	Recommend Board Approval	Agnes Govern, Director, Regional Express	398-5037
Board	7/8/99	Approval		

**ACTION:**

Resolution No. R99-15 would adopt the 1999 Regional Express Bus Service Implementation Plan (SIP).

**BACKGROUND:**

The *Sound Move* Plan for ST Express bus service, adopted in 1996, established:

- Conceptual network of 20 ST Express bus routes, including the corridors and major centers to be served.
- A time line that called for service beginning in the year 2000 and phasing in of additional service. Sound Transit was given the ability to modify the system and adapt to changing conditions as the system comes on line.
- General service characteristics – high speed, frequent, two-way, all-day, with connections to other services.
- Flexibility for Sound Transit to make beneficial changes as conditions and technologies change. From *Sound Move*: “As the RTA proceeds to more detailed planning and engineering levels, it will continue to identify and evaluate alternatives that might meet the same system goals and benefits more cost-effectively.”

The Regional Express Bus Service Plan, adopted in November 1998, established:

- More detailed service characteristics including route locations, approximate number of stops, frequency of buses, and hours of operation.
- Phased in implementation of service that is consistent with *Sound Move*'s policy of incrementally adding service to meet rider demand. This strategy enables the system plan to accommodate the full cost of implementing ST Express bus service, including five percent of the program to fund Sound Transit administrative costs and ten percent to maintain a reserve for O&M costs expected to be incurred by Sound Transit.
- A financial plan, including the number of vehicles needed.

- Flexibility consistent with *Sound Move*'s commitment to "monitor system performance and recommend changes to sub-area service plans that are consistent with the RTA's adopted financial policies." The service plan creates an ongoing process that allows changes to be made to the adopted service plan prior to implementation of service in September of 1999. It also allows modifications to the system as conditions warrant.

When the Board approved the 1998 Regional Bus Service Plan in November, we promised to return in 1999 with detailed information on routes beginning in September 1999. The Board also directed us to work with elected officials on North King County service (Route E) and Redmond service. The 1999 Service Implementation Plan is the result of this additional planning work.

#### **RELEVANT BOARD POLICIES AND ACTIONS TAKEN:**

- ◆ Adoption of *Sound Move*, the ten-year Regional Transit System Plan calling for ST Express bus service to begin by the end of 2000 (May 31, 1996).
- ◆ Adoption of Resolution R98-46, the 1998 Regional Express Bus Service Implementation Plan (November 12, 1998).

#### **KEY FEATURES:**

- **The 1999 Service Implementation Plan:**
  - ◆ Refines and expands the 1998 Service Implementation Plan adopted by the Board.
  - ◆ Incorporates detailed route descriptions for routes beginning in September 1999 (See Exhibit I).
  - ◆ Incorporates costs negotiated with the transit agencies for the operations and maintenance of Sound Transit Express service.
  - ◆ Reflects service improvements made by partner agencies.
  - ◆ The Regional Express System will be phased in. Nine of the routes will begin operation in September 1999. Six more routes begin operation in 2000, as the remainder begin in 2001 and 2002. Due to the reduction of the service budget for the absorption of the 15% for reserves and administrative costs, it will take a couple of years for most routes to ramp up to full service levels.
  - ◆ Includes an allocation of annual service hours for Route E consistent with *Sound Move*. (Sound Transit, King County Metro, and local governments are studying alternatives for providing service in this corridor in 2002.)
  - ◆ Sound Transit and King County Metro staffs are looking at options for a pilot program that provides express service between Bellevue and Redmond. Funding for this service is yet to be identified. Possible sources may include the use of redeployed resources by King County Metro, delaying the implementation of a particular service for Routes 540 or 545 (for example, weekend service), or using the unanticipated revenues generated in East King County.

- **Partnerships and public input have been key to developing the service:**  
The system design process has included extensive public involvement, with partner agencies sharing responsibilities and feedback. Staff developed a six-minute video that aired on local cable channels and promoted upcoming public meetings. At the public meetings, staff introduced the ST Express route proposals and encouraged feedback by using either the comment card from the distributed handbook or the Internet. In addition, staff distributed newsletters, flyers, and other route materials in one-on-one visits at park-and-ride lots, shopping malls, and transit centers.

**Summary of 1999 ST Express Events**

<b>Park-and-Rides</b>	<b>Malls</b>	<b>Open Houses</b>
Lakewood	Alderwood	Everett
Bellevue	Everett	Lynnwood
Lynnwood	Tacoma	Downtown Seattle
Bothell		SeaTac
South Bellevue		Bellevue
Tacoma Dome		West Seattle
Swamp Creek		Federal Way
Canyon Park		Kent
		Bothell

The community comments were used in determining the selection of the bus stops and final route design. Some of the comments often made include:

- ◆ Speed and reliability is important.
  - ◆ Joint meetings sponsored by Sound Transit and the transit agencies are an efficient way of presenting service changes
  - ◆ Frequencies should be no greater than 15 minutes during peak hours.
- **Planning for implementation**  
Sound Transit staff has cooperated with King County Metro, Pierce Transit, Everett Transit, and Community Transit in planning for the implementation of bus service. Staff has performed the following tasks to develop the 1999 SIP:
    - Defined service and performance standards.
    - Analyzed existing service.
    - Analyzed connectivity of transit services.
    - Estimated demand for regional service.
    - Validated service assumptions.
    - Described and evaluated numerous route alternatives.
    - Developed a cost model for evaluating financial feasibility.
    - Developed guidelines for re-allocating current bus services as needed.
    - Solicited and received public input.
  - **Management of Route Changes – Level of Authority**  
All major changes, including those associated with the annual implementation of the plan, will be formally presented to the Board for approval. Some changes will be

approved at the administrative level; such as changes affecting schedule or weekly service hours by 25% or less, changes in route location that do not move stop location by more than a half mile, and emergency changes. Other routes, such as tripper service, limited, special, and other types of transit routes may be established by the Director, consistent with annual appropriations and the Regional Express Service Plan.

- **Route Changes**

Two of the routes in *Sound Move* (Puyallup to Bellevue and Lakewood to Tacoma) will be served by extending others ST Express routes. One of the routes from *Sound Move* (South Hill to Dupont) is deferred until road construction (cross-base highway) is completed.

- **New Connections**

King County

Residents of the Eastside will have several new connections beginning this September, and they will continue to enjoy the popular Bellevue to Seattle service. Eastside residents will be able to commute to employment sites in Lynnwood and South Everett near the Everett Mall. In addition, a two-way connection will be provided to Federal Way.

There also will be improved bus service from the airport to West Seattle and Downtown Seattle, with regional connections to other ST Express routes, Sounder commuter rail, and Link light rail.

Snohomish County

Snohomish County residents will have all-day connections between Snohomish County and the Eastside. Also, new all-day service will be provided between Everett and Seattle. Puget Sound citizens will have more access to Snohomish County employment sites. All-day service will link residential areas in King County with employment centers in Lynnwood, South Everett, and downtown Everett.

Pierce County

The region will continue to enjoy the popular Seattle Express, linking Seattle to Tacoma. Pierce County residents also will be able to travel to and from SeaTac Airport.

## **DISCUSSION TOPICS:**

**Route 226 Route Change** – This route was slightly modified to strengthen its regional commuter express characteristics consistent with public input. The ST Express route for Bellevue-Seattle service includes the consolidation of several bus stops. All of the current stops in the Downtown Bellevue area will remain in effect. There will be three stops between Bellevue Way and Main Street (SE 3rd, SE 10th, SE 16th).

**Bus Stops in North King Subarea** – For September 1999 service, three ST Express routes have stops planned in the North King County Subarea. Routes affected include Route 570 Westside Express, Route 550 Bellevue –Seattle, and Routes 510-511-512 Everett-Lynnwood to Seattle. These stops provide better connections to major employment generators in other subareas and provide regional continuity for the system.

**Redeployment Opportunities** – There will be some redeployment opportunities for each transit agency as a result of the September ST Express service. Community Transit has plans to deploy at least a portion of those hours in September 1999. A portion of the redeployable hours for Snohomish County will create a cost savings for Everett Transit as it relates to their contribution to one of the Community Transit redeployable routes. Pierce Transit will be using the 1999 redeployable hours to fund facility capital costs. Pierce Transit plans to use subsequent redeployable hours for service enhancements. King County Metro is planning to use redeployable hours in service changes scheduled for 2000.

### **FUNDING:**

The Sound Transit Regional Express Financial Plan Model estimates and allocates sub-area costs and operating data for the Regional Express Service Implementation Plan (SIP). The cost estimates and allocations were used to develop a financial plan for ST Express bus service and to assist in developing the phasing plan for each proposed express bus route and related sub-area. The financial model was used to allocate costs of the bus system alternatives to transit operators, routes, and sub-areas, ensuring that the system recommended to the Board for adoption is feasible and within available resources.

The financial model allows Sound Transit staff to quickly evaluate Regional Express implementation alternatives. Sound Transit staff can evaluate various vehicle fleet mixes, phase-in options, and other assumptions to develop the most effective and efficient service plan, while maintaining the operating and financial criteria set forth in *Sound Move*.

Overall, the Service Implementation Plan has an \$8.2 million deficit. The primary cause of the deficit is related to the increased vehicle requirements and higher operating costs of one of the operating agencies. The largest impact appears in East King County where the use of unanticipated revenues is a possible solution. The smaller deficits in South King and Snohomish counties can be managed by carefully monitoring cost and revenue assumptions as we implement the plan.

Results from the financial model for the proposed 1999 Regional Express Bus System Plan are presented in Exhibit 2.

### **CONSEQUENCES OF DELAY:**

We have been working closely with the region's transit agencies on planning and start-up activities. A significant delay in adopting the 1999 SIP would negatively affect the implementation of service in September 1999.

**LEGAL REVIEW:**

The Legal Department has reviewed and approved the Background and Comments and the Resolution.

## SOUND TRANSIT

### RESOLUTION NO. R99-15

A RESOLUTION of the Board of the Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority adopting the 1999 Service Implementation Plan (SIP).

WHEREAS, a Regional Transit Authority (“Sound Transit”) has been created for the Pierce, King, and Snohomish County region by action of their respective county councils pursuant to RCW 81.11.030; and

WHEREAS, on November 5, 1996, Central Puget Sound area voters approved local funding for *Sound Move*, the ten-year plan for regional high-capacity transit in the Central Puget Sound Region; and

WHEREAS, *Sound Move* called for new high-speed regional express bus routes to offer frequent two-way service throughout the day, serving major regional centers and destinations and providing connections to other transportation components of *Sound Move*; and

WHEREAS, *Sound Move* included \$361 million (in 95\$) to fund regional express bus service and associated capital investments; and

WHEREAS, *Sound Move* represented Sound Transit’s preferred system based on extensive system-level planning and public involvement conducted to date; and

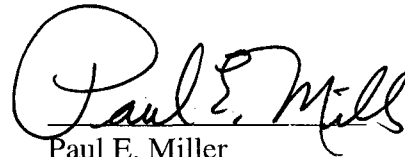
WHEREAS, on November 12, 1998, the Sound Transit Board of Directors adopted the 1998 Service Implementation Plan; and

WHEREAS, Regional Express routes will be implemented in a phased manner, and provide a program for route implementation and service increases over time which meets the commitment in *Sound Move* in a cost-effective manner; and

WHEREAS, the Sound Transit Board has further determined it is in the best interest of the citizens of the region to adopt the 1999 Regional Express Service Implementation Plan.

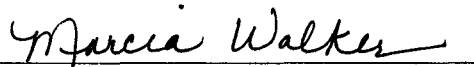
NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of the Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority hereby adopts and authorizes the Executive Director of Sound Transit to implement the 1999 Regional Express Service Implementation Plan (SIP).

ADOPTED by the Board of the Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority at a regular meeting thereof held on the 8th day of July 1999.



Paul E. Miller  
Board Chair

ATTEST:



Marcia Walker  
Board Administrator



Exhibit 2  
**Adoption of 1999 Regional Express Bus System Plan  
 Service Implementation Plan Comparison**

**SIP Service Hours**

	<b>1998 SIP</b>	<b>1999 SIP</b>	<b>Difference</b>
Pierce	164,025	171,285	7,260
Snohomish	92,390	102,483	10,093
East King	221,062	204,322	(16,740)
South King	<u>75,447</u>	<u>73,562</u>	<u>(1,885)</u>
TOTAL	552,924	551,652	(1,272)

**SIP Vehicle Requirements (including spares)**

	<b>1998</b>	<b>1999 SIP</b>	<b>Difference</b>
Pierce	71	75	4
Snohomish	22	25	3
East King	63	72	9
South King	<u>19</u>	<u>18</u>	<u>(1)</u>
TOTAL	175	190	15

**SIP Budget (millions in 1995 \$millions)\***

	<b>1998</b>	<b>1999 SIP</b>	<b>Difference</b>
Pierce	\$108.6	\$110.9	\$2.3
Snohomish	\$53.5	\$52.6	(\$0.9)
East King	\$131.9	\$137.2	\$5.3
South King	<u>\$40.7</u>	<u>\$38.3</u>	<u>(\$2.4)</u>
TOTAL	\$334.7	\$339.0	\$4.3

\* These figures do not include subarea maintenance facility budgets or capital reserves (difference between *Sound Move* subarea budgets and capital needs specifically identifies in SIP).