

STAFF REPORT

SOUND TRANSIT MOTION NO. M2000-128

Route 574 Service Modification

Meeting:	Date:	Type of Action:	Staff Contact:	Phone:
Finance Committee	12/07/00	Discussion/Possible Action to Recommend	Agnes Govern, Director, Regional Express	(206)398-5037
Board	12/14/00	Board Approval Action	Gloria Overgaard, Deputy Director, Regional Express Mike Bergman, Project Manager, Regional Express	(206)689-4909 (206)398-5358

PROPOSED ACTION

A motion of the Board of the Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority authorizing the Executive Director to implement additional service on Route 574 effective February 2001 and to implement a modification to the service phasing schedule for Route 574 in the 2000 Service Implementation Plan (SIP). If this motion is approved, the 2001 Service Implementation Plan will incorporate the change.

KEY FEATURES

Highlights of Proposed Action:

- ◆ The additional trips constitute a modification that is within the staff's approval level. The issue is before the Finance Committee and the Board due to the unavailability of funding in the South King County subarea and phasing changes.
- ◆ Proposes funding additional service to respond quickly to changing market demand by deferring 30-minute mid-day service schedule phasing for Route 574 until 2003.

Discussion of Proposed Action:

In September 1999, Sound Transit introduced Route 574 express service between Lakewood and SeaTac Airport providing 30-minute peak hour service with 60-minute service the rest of the day. Due to the growth potential of the service, the Board approved early implementation of 60-minute weekend and evening service in May 2000. The cost of the early implementation was funded by the deferral of the Lakewood/Auburn Express Route 585 until February 2001 when the South Hill Park-and-Ride Lot would be available. The phasing schedule of the service as approved in the 2000 Service Implementation Plan is as follows:

Implementation Date	Type of Service
September 2001	Add 30-minute weekday midday service
September 2003	Add 30-minute weekend and evening service

It was the discussions with SeaTac area employers in 1999 that convinced Sound Transit to include earlier than usual morning service for Route 574 in an effort to attract a niche market that had very early start times. In October 2000, the first northbound trip that leaves Lakewood at 3:43 a.m. and arrives at SeaTac at 4:41 a.m. increased in ridership from about 26 boardings to between 60 and 70 people per day. Sound Transit had Pierce Transit run a second bus on this trip. The increase in ridership was driven by two key components: (1) the airport construction reduced employee parking, and (2) the participation of more employers in the Flexpass Program. An additional 200 Flexpasses were distributed to employees in October 2000 with 1,200 more to be distributed in January 2001. King County Metro surveys show that 63% of the 25,000 airport employees live south of the airport with 56% of these within the market area of Route 574. In addition, King County Metro is projecting a growth rate of 500 to 1,000 employees per year on the upcoming airport projects.

Proposal:

The additional proposed trips are within the administrative approval level of staff since the changes affect less than 25% of the route hours as defined in the Board approved service standards and performance measures. However, while there is available funding in the schedule maintenance hours for the Pierce County subarea, there is none in the South King County subarea. Thus, the staff is proposing this recommendation for consideration by the Board.

The revision to Route 574 service phasing is proposed to become effective with the February 3, 2001, service change. The proposal is as follows and does not add any additional coaches to the route:

- ◆ Add three trips daily to better serve the commuters going to the airport.
- ◆ Fund the additional trips by deferring the move from 60 to 30-minute service for weekday mid-day service from 2001 to 2003.

This proposal would reduce the current south King County subarea budget by approximately \$30,000 (1995 dollars). The revision from the Pierce County subarea would add to the current schedule maintenance hours.

BUDGET

If the Board adopts the proposed revision in the phasing service schedule for Route 574, it will result in a reduction of approximately \$30,000 (1995 \$) over the life of the project from the approved 2000 Service Implementation Plan for the South King County subarea.

Proposed 2001 Budget (ten-year Plan):

Subarea	Budget for Subarea	Budget for Route 574 ⁽¹⁾ (A)	Proposed Plan (B)	Impact on Budget (A-B)
Pierce County	\$122,251	\$4,866	\$4,840	(\$26)
South King County	\$41,058	\$5,768	\$5,738	(\$30)

All figures shown are in 1995 dollars in thousands.

(1) Based on 2000 Service Implementation Plan.

ALTERNATIVES

- **Option 1:** Proceed with the phasing of the Route 574 as described in the 2000 Service Implementation Plan and not respond to market demand. No impact to currently approved budget.
- **Option 2:** Implement the proposed additional service to meet demand and continue to implement the 30-minute service in 2001 and 2003 as described in the 2000 Service Implementation Plan. This would result in an additional \$1 million to the budget for the South King County subarea. The Pierce County subarea schedule maintenance hours would be reduced by 10,764 leaving 146,326 for the life of the program.
- **Option 3:** Implement the proposal of modifying the 2000 Service Implementation Plan phasing schedule for Route 574 to respond to market demand by adding 11 daily trips in February 2001 and deferring the move from 60 to 30-minute mid-day weekday, weekend, and evening service to 2006. This would result in a \$400,000 reduction in the South King County subarea budget and add additional schedule maintenance hours to the Pierce County subarea.
- **Option 4:** Implement proposal of modifying the 2000 Service Implementation Plan (SIP) phasing schedule for Route 574 to respond to immediate market demand by adding three morning trips daily for February 2001. Determine the appropriate funding approach for this service change and bring it to the Board in the 2002 SIP, which is normally done in the spring of the prior year. This funding approach should include, but not be limited to, alternatives presented at the December 7, 2000, Finance Committee meeting, as well as creation of a funding partnership with the customers requesting this service. The service is out of Sound Transit's usual service hours, as contemplated in the voter approved measure, yet it is well within the partnership assumptions which also are called out in the same voter approved measure.
~~and deferring the move from 60 to 30-minute mid-day service to 2003. This would result in a \$30,000 reduction in the south King County subarea budget and add additional schedule maintenance hours to the Pierce County subarea.~~

CONSEQUENCES OF DELAY

The success of regional bus service outside of the Seattle and Bellevue central business districts will be determined by how well it can be tailored to the demands of specific markets where transit is competitive. The greatest advantage of Regional Express is its flexibility. More than any other Sound Transit service, Regional Express can respond quickly to opportunities with targeted investments tailored to the specific needs of the market. The SeaTac Airport commute market is a market that demands very specific and somewhat unconventional service. If Regional Express can respond quickly to meet these needs, this route has the potential to be even more successful.

REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP AND COOPERATION

In partnership with Pierce Transit and King County Metro, Sound Transit has worked with airport employers in determining the need for additional services that directly supports employment at the airport and provides employees with bus passes. Pierce Transit fully supports this additional service and is willing and able to provide the service. King County Metro Commute

Trip Reduction staff will continue to work with employers to provide more bus passes as part of their employee benefits. Both Pierce Transit and King County Metro will continue to work with Sound Transit to build Route 574.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

Sound Transit, Pierce Transit, and King County Metro met with the SeaTac Commute Trip Reduction Group who explained to the transit agencies the special circumstances of providing commuter service to the airport.

LEGAL REVIEW

MBL 12-04-00

SOUND TRANSIT

MOTION NO. M2000-128

A motion of the Board of the Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority authorizing the Executive Director to implement additional service on Route 574 effective February 2001 and to implement a modification to the service phasing schedule for Route 574 in the 2000 Service Implementation Plan.

Background:

In September 1999, Sound Transit introduced Route 574 between Lakewood and SeaTac Airport. Due to the growth potential of the service, the Board approved implementation of 60-minute weekend and evening service in May 2000. The proposed revision in the phasing of service improvements for Route 574 will respond to the immediate market demand by adding three morning trips daily for February 2001. The appropriate funding approach for this service change will be determined and brought to the Board in the 2002 Service Implementation Plan which is normally done in the spring of the prior year. This funding approach should include, but not be limited to, alternatives presented at the December 7, 2000, Finance Committee meeting, as well as creation of a funding partnership with the customers requesting this service. The service is out of Sound Transit's usual service hours, as contemplated in the voter approved measure, yet it is well within the partnership assumptions which also are called out in the same voter approved measure. To make this change, the planned service improvements scheduled for September 2001 will be deferred to September 2003. The 2000 Service Implementation Plan phasing schedule for future service improvements is as follows:

Implementation Date	Type of Service
September 2001	Add 30-minute weekday mid-day service
September 2003	Add 30-minute weekend and evening service

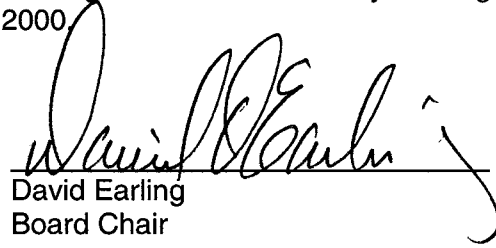
Conversations with SeaTac area employers in 1999 convinced Sound Transit to include earlier than usual morning service for Route 574 in an effort to attract a niche market who had very early start times. The first northbound trip has increased in ridership as a result of airport construction, reducing employee parking and participation of more employers in the Flexpass Program. An additional 1,200 Flexpasses are to be distributed in January 2001.

The change in service will be reflected in the 2001 Service Implementation Plan.


Motion:

It is hereby moved by the Board of the Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority that the Executive Director is authorized to implement additional service on Route 574 effective February 2001 and to implement a modification to the service phasing schedule for Route 574 in the 2000 Service Implementation Plan.

APPROVED by the Board of the Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority at a regular meeting thereof held on the 14th day of December 2000.


David Earling
Board Chair

ATTEST:


Marcia Walker
Board Administrator