



What is the program?

Sound Transit is the regional high capacity transit authority for the Central Puget Sound. Since 1993, the agency has been implementing a package of voter-approved high capacity transit investments to connect urban centers around the region, improve the speed and reliability of transit, and provide supporting capital infrastructure. The Sound Transit district serves the state's most populous area with nearly 3 million people – about 40% of the state's population.

Sound Transit operates long-haul, express bus service; commuter rail; and electric light rail. The agency has made significant capital investments in the State's HOV system, the BNSF freight rail corridor, transit centers, park-and-ride lots, and bike and pedestrian improvements. Sound Transit services and capital investments add significant transit capacity to the region, improve connectivity and reliability of transit and HOV travel, and greatly reduce vehicle miles traveled.

How does the program help reduce vehicle miles traveled (VMT)?

Sound Transit's entire regional high capacity transit system provides alternatives to single-occupant vehicle travel, increases customer access to transit services, promotes and enhances dense, livable communities, and improves speed and reliability of transit and HOV travel. Sound Transit provides 55,000 rides daily, thereby reducing VMTs and GHG by taking approximately 20,000 cars off the region's most congested roads daily. Major program elements include:

Regional express bus: Long-haul express bus service connecting major urban and employment centers. ST service and marketing is coordinated and integrated with other transit services and the State ferry system.

Capital connections: Major investments in the State HOV system, park-and-ride lots, transit centers, and bike and pedestrian transit access improvements. To date, ST has built ten HOV direct access ramps that improve the performance of the HOV system, built more than 10,000 parking stalls, and added 19 park-and-rides and transit centers around the region.

Commuter rail: Sounder commuter rail trains operate during peak periods on the BNSF freight rail corridor between Tacoma and Seattle (6 daily roundtrips) and between Everett and Seattle (3 daily roundtrips). Sounder uses ultra-low sulfur diesel fuel, and Sound Transit is in the process of implementing idle-minimization systems that have the potential to reduce fuel consumption by 34%. ST has invested more than \$1 billion to improve the track and signal capacity in this 82-mile BNSF corridor, which also is shared by Amtrak, and to improve commuter access to the rail service. ST also runs special event service.

Electric light rail: Light rail service in the congested I-5 corridor between the Airport and downtown Seattle is expected to carry 45,000 riders each day by 2020, with service starting in 2009. Construction will start on the extension to Husky Stadium this year, and by 2030, this regional high capacity spine will carry 114,000 riders a day. In Tacoma, daily ridership on Tacoma Link is almost 3,000. Electric light rail has virtually zero emissions, reduces VMT, is unparalleled in contributing to transit-oriented communities, and has the greatest people-carrying capacity of any transit alternative.

What is happening now (current status/activities)?

Sound Transit currently provides 55,000 rides a day on regional bus and rail services. Here is a sampling of additional transit projects and services coming on line this summer and fall:

- I-90 corridor: Issaquah Transit Center will open, adding more bus bays more than 800 parking stalls; served by KCM and ST.
- I-90 bridge: new HOV lane and direct access ramp will open.
- I-5 corridor: South Everett Freeway Station will open this fall.
- Pierce County: Lakewood Station will open this fall. This transit center and parking facility will be served by Pierce Transit and ST, and will provide a future Sounder commuter rail connection.
- Commuter rail: This fall, ST will add two round trip commuter trains between Tacoma and Seattle, and one round trip between Everett and Seattle. The agency just opened a station in Mukilteo, providing an important connection for ferry riders.
- I-5 corridor: Construction of the electric light rail spine from downtown Seattle to the Airport is nearing completion and will be operation in 2009. Construction on the extension to Husky Stadium will start this year.

What can we do with existing resources to enhance the program's ability to reduce VMT?

ST's ridership continues to grow as we add service and facilities with existing resources, so additional VMT reductions will materialize, particularly when light rail comes on line in 2009. As the region prepares for the start of that service, Sound Transit is working with other transit providers and major employers and institutions to build greater awareness of transit options, increase ridership, and make the transit system easy for customers to access.

What could we do with additional resources to reduce VMT?

Sound Transit will have a mass transit expansion plan on the ballot this fall. The Sound Transit 2 plan is a 15-year investment package, with projects and services being implemented incrementally. The plan is financed through a combination of existing taxes and an increase in the sales tax of 5/10 of one percent.

ST2 will extend light rail to Redmond, Redondo/Star Lake near Federal Way, and Lynnwood; increase commuter rail and regional express bus service; and improve access and connections to transit services. The plan balances near-term improvements to regional mobility through more bus and commuter rail service with longer-term investments in light rail. ST2 will:

- Reduces vehicle miles traveled by 268,000,000 annually
- Saves between 8,700,000 gallons of fossil fuel annually
- Reduces 99,550 metric tons of CO2 equivalents per year
- Makes transit system accessible to 70% of the residential population in the region and 85 % of the employment population
- Connects more regional employment centers with exclusive right of way transit

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