SOUNDTRANSIT

Regional Transit Long-Range Plan

Adopted Dec. 18, 2014

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Sound Transit
Regional Transit Long-Range Plan
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The Regional Transit Long-Range Plan

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Adopted by the Sound Transit Board December 18, 2014 through Resolution No. R2014-31.

Introduction

We live in a thriving and picturesque region of towering evergreens, glistening bodies of water and hills where millions of people are drawn to live, work and play. The Central Puget Sound region is considered one of the most livable regions in the country. As fortunate as we are to live in such beautiful surroundings, and to have a healthy and competitive economy, these very attributes also combine to make it challenging to travel easily around the region. With more people living here and more job opportunities to choose from all throughout the region, our roadways have grown ever more congested. And our region's most scenic physical attributes – the water, hills, and mountains – create natural barriers to expanding our transportation system. So one of the toughest challenges we face is keeping our region moving.

In the early 1990's, state and regional leaders acknowledged that the Puget Sound region could not simply pave its way out of traffic jams. They concluded that – if our region was to remain livable – we needed to create more transportation choices for the people who live and work here. As part of an overall regional growth, transportation, and economic development strategy, Sound Transit was created to plan and implement a regional high capacity network to connect our region's urban centers.

In 1996, the citizens of this region voted to begin building that network. Since then, Sound Transit has been implementing a system of express buses, commuter rail, and light rail to provide faster, more dependable ways to connect people with their jobs, homes, shopping hubs, sporting and cultural events, medical facilities, colleges and universities and more. This long-range plan represents Sound Transit's vision of how that regional network will evolve over time and how it will serve generations to come.

The Regional Transit Authority (Sound Transit)

The region has both local and regional transportation needs. Local transit agencies focus on local needs. But until 1993, there was no single agency with the responsibility — or with the authority — to deal with regional public transit needs. It was then that the Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority (Sound Transit) was created to take on the challenge of regional mobility and develop and deliver a high-capacity transportation (HCT) system to the citizens of urban King, Pierce, and Snohomish counties as part of the region's overall long-range transportation plan.

High-capacity transportation simply refers to a transit system, including necessary infrastructure and supporting services, that carries large numbers of people between regional growth centers faster and more frequently than a basic, conventional local transit system. To do this, the type of transit used in the system (express buses, rail or both) usually needs to run in its own right-of-way, separated from general traffic (and general traffic jams).

Purpose and Intent

The Regional Transit Long-Range Plan represents Sound Transit's goals, policies, and strategies to guide the long-term development of the HCT system. It is based on years of intensive planning, environmental analysis, and public outreach. It is intended to guide how the Sound Transit system can best address the region's mobility needs and support growth management objectives. The long-range plan will be implemented in a series of phases and will be updated over time.

This long-range plan updates and modifies earlier adopted plans. In 1996, Sound Transit adopted *The Regional Transit Long-Range Vision* and Sound Move, Sound Transit's initial phase of regional HCT investments. In 2005 the Long-Range Plan was updated and Sound Transit 2 (ST2) was the second phase of regional HCT investments. Where the long-range plan represents a broad regional framework for long-term investments, Sound Move and ST2 represent more detailed sets of projects for which voters approved funding. Most Sound Move and ST2 projects and services are being implemented and are successfully addressing many regional mobility needs.

Sound Transit will use this updated long-range plan as the basis for developing the next phase of investments – Sound Transit's next system plan. As with Sound Move and ST2, the next phase of system planning will encompass a specific set of projects and services designed to build upon the first two phases and to further expand mobility options for the citizens of the central Puget Sound region.

Following Long-Range Planning, which evaluates the entire regional transit system, System Planning will evaluate projects for inclusion in the next phase of regional high capacity transit system implementation.

During the development of ST2, the projects included in the Long-Range Plan narrowed down to a set of facilities and services that met the overall principles, goals and objectives of the Sound Transit Board. With the Board's consent, agency staff developed an evaluation methodology that:

- Provided structure and consistency to the overall evaluation process
- Established the method for evaluating and comparing projects and services
- Provided as a systematic process for organizing information
- Highlighted key differences among alternatives

As a performance-driven agency, Sound Transit will again utilize performance-related measures to assess and select projects and services to be included in any new System Plan to be presented to the region's voters. While the evaluation methodology to be used for a new System Plan is yet to be finalized, considering how the ST Board evaluated alternatives for ST2 sheds light on the upcoming process.

Following the adoption of the Long Range Plan (July 2005), the ST Board initially agreed to a list of 81 candidate projects, out of more than 400 analyzed in the Long-Range Plan EIS, for further study. The criteria which the ST Board used to refine the list of 81 projects down to the list of projects eventually included in the voter-approved ST2 Plan included:

- Capital Cost
- Connectivity (including between centers), Mobility and System Integration
- Customer experience
- Environmental Benefits
- Land use and development
- O&M Cost
- Public Support
- Reliability
- Ridership
- Risk Avoidance
- Travel Time

Long-Range Plan Goals and Objectives

Goals

- Provide a public transportation system that helps ensure long-term mobility, connectivity, and convenience for the citizens of the Puget Sound region for generations to come.
    - Provide reliable, convenient, and safe public transportation services between regional growth centers and create an integrated system of transit services and fares.
    - Create a regional transit system that provides measurable economic, environmental and community benefits.
- Preserve communities and open space
    - Support communities' ability to develop — consistent with state and regional laws and growth management policies — in ways that keep our neighborhoods livable and protect our natural resources and open space.
- Contribute to the region's economic vitality
    - Increase access to jobs, education, and other community resources; enhance the region's ability to move goods and services.
- Preserve our environment
    - Conserve land and energy resources, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions, other air pollutants and vehicle miles traveled.
- Strengthen communities' use of the regional transit network
    - Encourage the development, or redevelopment, of areas around transit stations and centers and park-and-ride lots with a mix of transit-oriented activities at a pedestrian scale and orientation to enhance current and future transit use.

Objectives

- Keep the region moving
    - Increase the percentage of people using public transportation throughout the region for all trips, not just trips to work.
    - Increase the percentage of people using transit for their trips to work and the percentage using transit to reach major regional employment centers.
    - Increase public transportation ridership at a rate faster than the population is growing.
    - Reduce the average time it takes to make a trip by transit.
    - Increase transit speeds and improve the reliability of transit service.

    - Make it easier to use transit to reach jobs, schools, medical facilities, recreation, and shopping throughout the region.
    - Support ridesharing, vanpooling, and other commute trip reduction programs that complement the regional transit system.

- Offer cost-effective and efficient transportation solutions
    - Offer the most efficient and effective services and facilities possible within available resources.

- Create a sustainable regional transit system that provides community, social, economic and environmental benefits
    - Help limit urban sprawl, maintain open space, and protect natural resources.
    - Support creation of communities that are easy to reach and use on foot, by bicycle, on transit and by people with disabilities.
    - Support vibrant, walkable communities and place-making around HCT stations.
    - Increase transportation options that use less energy, and consume less land resources.
    - Reduce greenhouse gas emissions and other pollutants.
    - Plan and implement HCT services consistent with PSRC's long-range growth management, environmental, economic, and transportation strategy.
    - Support a regional transit system that helps contribute to the health of people in the region.

- Develop equitable transportation solutions
    - Offer transit projects and services that benefit subareas consistent with the agency's adopted definition of equity.
    - Support efficient, high-frequency, and accessible transit service to low-income, and minority populations.

- Create a financially feasible system
    - Develop a system that is affordable to build, run, and use.

- Offer regional services that work well with other transportation services
    - Work with local public transportation providers and the state Department of Transportation to coordinate services and continue to provide a single-fare card.

The Regional Transit Plan

State law charges Sound Transit with planning, building, and operating a high-capacity transportation system for the Central Puget Sound region. Sound Transit's plan for the region's HCT system — and an essential tool for the region's healthy growth — is a combined rail and regional express bus system.

That vision is to expand the capacity of our region's major transportation corridors by adding new high-capacity transportation services and facilities that link regional growth centers. In addition to increasing the people-carrying capacity of the region's most heavily used transportation corridors, the system also would support growth management policies, help limit sprawl and provide the connection, convenience, and mobility needed for a vital economy.

The long-range plan includes a mix of transportation improvements: bus rapid transit, regional express bus routes, commuter rail, and light rail. The plan includes community "gateways" connections in urban and suburban areas for communities to connect to the rest of the region. The long-range plan also includes the supporting services and facilities needed to put such a system in place.

Reviewing and Updating the Long-Range Plan

The long-range plan will be implemented in a series of phases. The plan may be updated with each development phase. Each phase will describe:

- projects to be funded
- how projects further the long-range plan and meet system goals and objectives
- a public and local jurisdiction involvement program
- a budget and financing plan, including an equity review
- how the plan is consistent with local and regional transportation and growth management plans
- how the plan is consistent with new or updated board adopted initiatives, policies and plans, including those related to sustainability, access, bicycle access, and transit-oriented development
- significant changes from previous plans.

In preparing and updating the plan, Sound Transit will review the status of growth management and land-use plans; state and regional sustainability goals and policies; air quality goals and conditions; status of the state's commute trip reduction objectives; overall transportation system coordination; and any new conditions or regulations.

Before adopting each phase, Sound Transit will evaluate estimated capital and operating costs, ridership, travel time and reliability, connectivity, system integration, land use and development effects, customer experience, risk, environmental effects, and mobility effects. This information will be made available to the public for use in the decision-making process.

Sound Transit will also publish a summary of the public involvement process, a summary of public comments, and how they shaped the plan being considered.

Each phase of the plan will also contain a financial plan including a description of how tax revenues will be distributed to pay for different transit components. This assessment will also include operating and maintenance costs for the entire system once it is complete.
Sound Transit may enlist the help of an expert review panel, a technical advisory committee, and/or a citizen oversight panel to review successive phases and long-range plan developments. This information will be used by the Sound Transit Board to help make decisions regarding plan changes.

State law requires that "major decisions" of Sound Transit require a favorable vote of two-thirds of the entire Sound Transit Board. Major decisions include:

- adopting or amending the long-range plan
- making system plan phasing decisions
- adopting annual budgets
- authorizing annexations
- changing the composition of the board
- selecting a Chief Executive Officer.

Environmental Analysis for the Regional Transit System

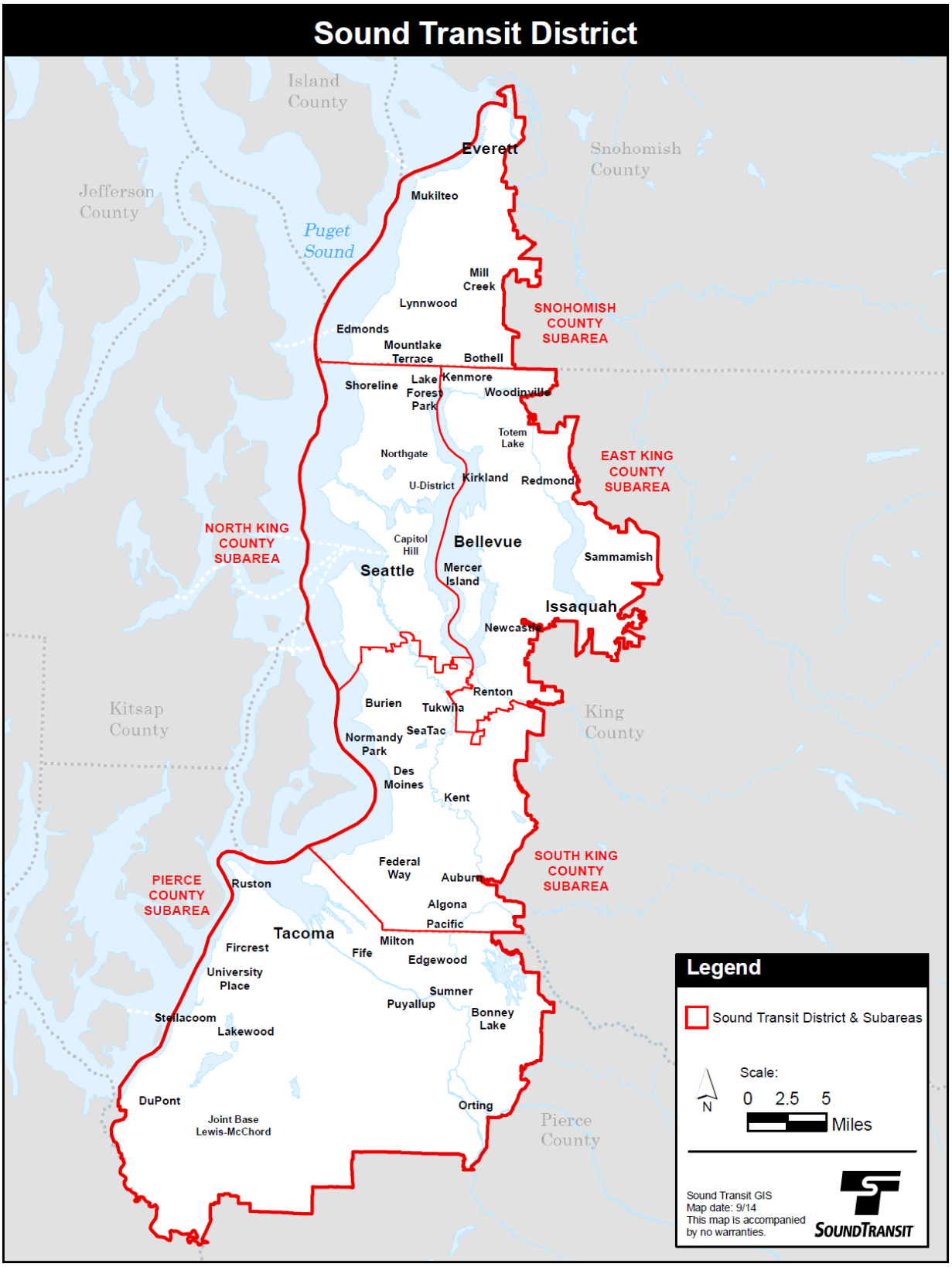
In March 1993, a final environmental impact statement (EIS) for the regional transit system plan was issued. The final EIS defined and evaluated different technologies, route alignments, and areas served in order to determine the benefits and impacts of each. In June 2005, Sound Transit issued a Final Supplemental EIS (FSEIS) that supplemented and built upon the 1993 EIS.

In June 2014, a Draft Supplemental EIS (SEIS) was issued that updated and built upon the 1993 EIS and the 2005 FSEIS, and brought it up to current conditions. On November 26, 2014, Sound Transit issued the Final SEIS. The Sound Transit Board's decision-making is informed by the Final SEIS. The regional transit system described in this long-range plan reflects the program defined in the Final SEIS, including the list of representative projects in Appendix A of the FSEIS. Decisions that fall outside of the scope of the Final SEIS will require additional environmental analysis.

All capital projects included in this long-range plan will be subject to a full environmental review meeting state and federal requirements. Such project-level environmental review, including extensive public involvement, must be completed before project construction and implementation.

Long-range plan development has been guided by legislation in place at the time of adoption. Regional and statewide transportation and growth management plans also played a major role. Sound Transit will continue to use current legislative policies to monitor the development of the transit system.

Sound Transit District Boundaries – September 2014



The Regional Transit District

The Sound Transit District boundary is shown on the Sound Transit District map. It defines the service area as required by state law. The Sound Transit District currently includes the most congested "urban" areas of King, Pierce and Snohomish counties.

The Sound Transit District boundary lines generally follow the urban growth boundaries created by each county in accordance with the state Growth Management Act. The urban growth boundaries guide how and where growth will take place in each county. The Sound Transit District boundary was adjusted in some places in consideration of voter precinct boundaries, city limit lines, and geography.

The Sound Transit boundary:

- shows the area where HCT system investments will be added to our transportation system
- establishes representation on the Sound Transit Board as prescribed by state law
- shows the area in which local taxes authorized by voters to help finance the Regional Transit System are collected
- demonstrates how regional services and facilities can support growth management goals and adopted land-use plans.

For planning and budgeting purposes, Sound Transit has divided the district into five geographic subareas. The system components in the plan address unique needs in each of these areas. The local tax revenues generated in each of these areas will be spent on the investments that benefit those areas.

Annexing New Areas and Extending Sound Transit Services

Annexations

According to state law, after voters within the district boundaries have approved a ballot proposition authorizing local taxes to support implementation phases of the plan, the Sound Transit Board may approve resolutions calling for elections to annex areas outside, but adjacent to, the Sound Transit District. An annexation may require adoption of a revised long-range plan.

The following legal requirements are required to annex areas into the Sound Transit District:

- **Board membership** — If the Sound Transit District changes, a change in the make-up of the Sound Transit Board membership may be required. Board membership must be "representative" of the proportion of the population from each county that falls within the Sound Transit District.
- **Areas that may be annexed** — Areas that would benefit from Sound Transit services may be annexed into the Sound Transit District. Services or projects proposed must be consistent with the Central Puget Sound region's Metropolitan Transportation plan.

- **Adoption by Sound Transit Board and City/County councils** — The Sound Transit Board may call for annexation elections after consulting with any affected transit agencies and with the approval of the legislative authority of the city or town (if the area is incorporated) or with the approval of the area's county council (if it is unincorporated).

- **Tax vote by area citizens** —Citizens in areas to be annexed are permitted to vote on annexation and imposition of taxes at rates already imposed within the Sound Transit District boundaries.

Because Sound Transit encourages areas to annex into the district as early as possible to expand access to regional transit system benefits, the authority will include the following policies in annexation agreements:

- Sound Transit will not attempt to recover the capital costs from annexed areas of facilities put in place before the annexations

- Sound Transit commits that, when annexed, the taxes from areas joining the Sound Transit District will be used only for specific facilities and services for up to 5 years as described in an interagency agreement with that area. After 5 years, the tax revenues from an annexing area would be combined with funds from the appropriate subarea.

Extending Sound Transit Services Beyond District Boundaries

Sound Transit will commit to extending new services beyond its boundaries to make connections to significant regional destinations contingent on agreements with local government agencies. Such service extensions would be implemented at a mutually agreeable cost.

This option would permit areas outside of the Sound Transit District to function as part of the regional system. Extending Sound Transit services outside of its district would require agreements with the affected local transit agency or other appropriate government agencies.

Sound Transit will enter into agreements with agencies beyond the district boundary to integrate fares. This will allow flexible transfers between various transit operators and prevent citizens who live outside the district from being penalized for making regional trips via transit instead of an automobile.

The Regional Transit System

A Network of Services

The goal of the long-range plan is to improve the way we, as a region, move. In turn, the plan aims at maintaining our region's local and global economic strength. It aims to create a comprehensive, regional high-capacity travel network. Whether people travel to work, school, recreation or shopping, the goal is to provide more options — dependable alternatives for moving within our communities and the region.

One of the most important features of the long-range plan is creation of a network of frequent, convenient and dependable services that can be used with a single ticket or pass (see the Regional Transit system long-range plan map). The services within that network are tailored to the unique needs of the diverse subareas within our region.

In developing a comprehensive transportation plan, planners look at the main travel corridors or routes that people use to go from one point in the region to another. For example, Interstate 405 is a major north-south travel corridor in the region. The long-range plan expands on existing travel corridors and creates new high-capacity transportation corridors linking our economic centers and communities. Corridors included in the Long-Range Plan were screened using the following questions: (1) does the corridor meet the statutory definition of HCT or necessary supporting facility or service, (2) to what extent does the corridor provide public transportation services to regional growth centers and help facilitate an integrated system of transit services, (3) to what extent is the corridor consistent with earlier decisions or actions made as part of Sound Move or ST2 and does it avoid duplication of Sound Transit service, and (4) is the corridor within the Sound Transit district or represent a reasonable next step for extending HCT service or connecting to the regional HCT system.

The regional transit system will be the tie that binds the region together, connecting the communities of the Central Puget Sound region in a way that supports regional growth strategies and local land-use plans, joins economic centers, and expands local transit services. By providing direct connections to many destinations, the long-range plan will help reorient local services to meet more community needs. Sound Transit will advance project-level planning and environmental work to advance build-out of the regional system, subject to available funding and Board direction, starting with corridors identified for further study in the ST2 Plan under "Planning for the Future." (Page 13 of Sound Transit 2: A Mass Transit Guide.)

The Regional Transit long-range plan map depicts Sound Transit's envisioned network of services when the regional transit system is complete. The map shows what is already built and operating, as well as what types of future regional services should be provided, and where. The lines on the map representing future service investments are intended to show general corridors that would be served, and do not represent specific routings or alignments. Those choices will be refined during system plan development and determined during project-level planning. Sound Transit can consider adding infill stations that were deferred in Sound Move or ST2 as part of a future system plan.

The long-range plan will be realized in several phases:

- **Phase I** (Sound Move) — do more with what we have; build on existing facilities and begin building new high-capacity travel corridors.

- **ST2** — build upon the facilities and services of Sound Move and extend the regional transit network into more communities.

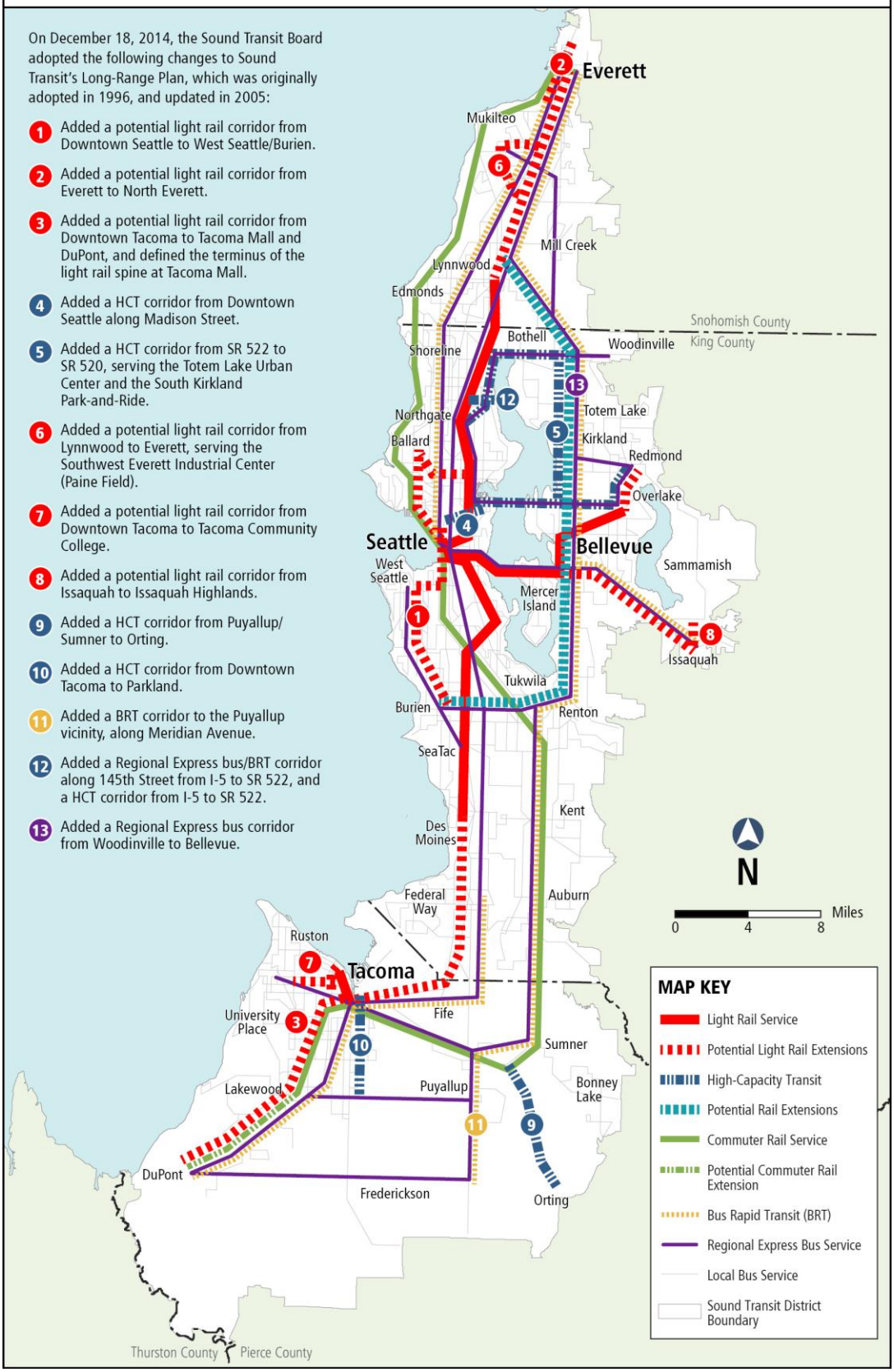
- **Future phases** — expand and complete the high-capacity travel corridors; balance the blend of transportation services offered within the regional transit network, and increase the service and hours of operation.

2014 LONG-RANGE PLAN

SOUNDTRANSIT

On December 18, 2014, the Sound Transit Board adopted the following changes to Sound Transit's Long-Range Plan, which was originally adopted in 1996, and updated in 2005:

1. Added a potential light rail corridor from Downtown Seattle to West Seattle/Burien.
2. Added a potential light rail corridor from Everett to North Everett.
3. Added a potential light rail corridor from Downtown Tacoma to Tacoma Mall and DuPont, and defined the terminus of the light rail spine at Tacoma Mall.
4. Added a HCT corridor from Downtown Seattle along Madison Street.
5. Added a HCT corridor from SR 522 to SR 520, serving the Totem Lake Urban Center and the South Kirkland Park-and-Ride.
6. Added a potential light rail corridor from Lynnwood to Everett, serving the Southwest Everett Industrial Center (Paine Field).
7. Added a potential light rail corridor from Downtown Tacoma to Tacoma Community College.
8. Added a potential light rail corridor from Issaquah to Issaquah Highlands.
9. Added a HCT corridor from Puyallup/Sumner to Orting.
10. Added a HCT corridor from Downtown Tacoma to Parkland.
11. Added a BRT corridor to the Puyallup vicinity, along Meridian Avenue.
12. Added a Regional Express bus/BRT corridor along 145th Street from I-5 to SR 522, and a HCT corridor from I-5 to SR 522.
13. Added a Regional Express bus corridor from Woodinville to Bellevue.



Building Blocks of the Long-Range Plan

Sound Transit's long-range plan includes services and facilities to connect the region's centers with frequent, all-day high capacity transit. The regional transit system includes services such as light rail, commuter rail, streetcars that comply with RCW 81.104.015, bus rapid transit, and regional express buses. These services will be integrated with local service to provide a seamless transit experience to customers. Sound Transit will also develop gateways to local communities, at which pedestrian, bicycle and local bus access to the regional system is provided. Community connections include bus stops, park-and-ride lots, transit centers, and rail stations.

High capacity transit may be provided using different transit modes in different locations to fit the unique needs of each corridor. Final decisions about the best mix of technologies in future phases will be made based on performance of Sound Move and ST2 investments, projected land use and transportation conditions, changing development trends, evolving technologies, functional requirements, sustainability goals, environmental analysis, population and employment growth, and public input on future transportation priorities of the Sound Transit District's subareas.

The long-range plan will be implemented in several phases. In each phase, services and facilities may be provided that may be replaced or augmented in the future with a higher capacity mode. When extensions are considered to existing high capacity transit investments, a compatible technology will be considered to minimize unnecessary passenger transfers and maximize operating efficiency.

Link Light Rail

Light rail transit is included in the plan to connect Everett, Seattle, Tacoma, and Bellevue/Redmond. Light rail is the highest capacity mode included in the plan, and is a cost-effective way to serve the core of the regional system where transit ridership is the highest.

Light rail is provided primarily in separated rights-of-way with traffic signal preemption, enabling fast and reliable service. It includes a number of supporting technologies and enhancements, such as off-vehicle fare collection and real-time arrival information to increase customer convenience and satisfaction. It also includes supporting access facilities for pedestrians, bicycles, local buses as well as, in some cases, park-and-ride lots.

Throughout the phased implementation of the all-day, frequent, and fast high capacity transit system, Sound Transit will prioritize its light rail investment funds for the completion of the Everett-Seattle-Tacoma Link light rail system and the light rail system directly connecting Bellevue and Downtown Redmond with that north-south rail spine; and corridors that offer the highest ridership potential. Designated Regional Growth Centers not served on this prioritized system should be supported with transit facilities that will increase the centers' readiness for future Sound Transit service and system connectivity.

Economic impacts upon the development of PSRC designated Regional Growth Centers, future community and employment centers, and local activity centers shall be added to the criteria for determining the routing for future light rail. To best serve these centers in South Snohomish County, light rail should run along Interstate 5 between the Snohomish-King County line and Ash Way.

Sounder Commuter Rail

The long-range plan includes two-way commuter rail service on existing tracks. Commuter rail offers a fast, dependable, and easy-to-use commute option, linking major destinations in Snohomish, Pierce, and King Counties.

Commuter rail builds on a railroad network already in place, increasing the transportation system's people-moving capacity. By making track and signal improvements necessary for commuter rail, Sound Transit improves the capacity of those lines for other passenger and freight trains as well. Commuter rail shares several stations with Amtrak and the state's expanded intercity rail service between Portland and Vancouver, B.C., creating opportunities for interstate as well as local connections.

Sound Transit has developed a partnership with the Union Pacific and Burlington Northern Santa Fe railroads; the ports of Seattle, Tacoma, and Everett, the City of Tacoma (Tacoma Rail); and the state Department of Transportation to implement the commuter rail system. Track and signal improvements, grade separation at major crossings, and improvements required to operate commuter rail and the state's intercity rail program will also benefit freight train traffic and support our region's economic growth.

Bus Rapid Transit

The long-range plan includes a regional bus network comprised of a spectrum of service types intended to provide commuting options not already available in the designated corridors. The spectrum includes several types of bus rapid transit (BRT) with varying levels of priority over other traffic, including some HCT BRT options that operate principally on exclusive rights-of-way, as well as interim regional express bus routes operating with limited or no priority.

Bus services have been provided by the local transit agencies within the Sound Transit District, through interagency agreements. In the future, Sound Transit may continue to have those services provided by the local transit agencies or may consider operating its own services, either through direct operation or through competitive contract. Sound Transit may develop partnerships with local transit agencies to fund capital costs of BRT routes that may be run as local transit agency services with local transit agency operating funding.

Sound Transit's BRT services differ by their operating environment and level of priority over other traffic. Arterial BRT (e.g., Business Access Transit or BAT lanes) operates predominantly along arterials with priority provided by semi-exclusive lanes and/or signal priority. Freeway HOV/Managed Lanes operate predominately along limited access freeways on semi-exclusive high-occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes and access facilities, or on managed lanes. Bus only lanes allow buses to operate in their own lane with minimal conflicts from other, non-transit vehicles. Grade separated busways operate on transitway facilities that are fully separated from other traffic, and operate more like rail systems than other BRT services.

All BRT services that Sound Transit provides share these attributes:

1. Provide limited-stop service
2. Connect to at least one designated urban center in the Puget Sound Regional Council's adopted regional growth management and transportation strategy
3. Operate with priority over general purpose traffic over much of the route length
4. Operate frequently throughout the day
5. Operate in both directions throughout the day
6. Provide for regional, long-distance trips

In addition, supporting technologies and enhancements to increase customer convenience and accessibility, such as rapid or off-vehicle fare collection, low-floor buses, raised curbs and level platforms, and real-time schedule and arrival information, may be offered.

BRT routes will serve and connect major regional centers and destinations and be integrated with other local and regional transit services. The BRT system creates new links between suburban centers serving our region's fastest growing areas with fast, efficient transportation options.

BRT can be operated in a variety of rights-of-way to provide fast and reliable service at the lowest cost, appropriate to transit demand and corridor conditions, including:

- **Grade-Separated Busways**. Grade-separated busways are dedicated roadways for transit only, providing complete separation from traffic. Grade-separated busway BRT routes will offer high-speed, frequent two-way service throughout the day in the region's most congested corridors, operating in rights-of-way that are protected from general-purpose traffic congestion. These services will be characterized by infrequent stops and stations that have customer amenities similar to rail systems. Where practical, busways could be built to accommodate future conversion to light rail transit.

- **Bus-Only Lanes**. Bus-only lanes are similar to freeway HOV lanes, but are open exclusively to buses. Because bus-only lanes do not share lanes with carpools, vanpools, and motorcycles, they are less susceptible to congestion and therefore more reliable for buses.

- **Freeway HOV BRT/Managed Lanes**. Sound Transit may operate BRT in managed lanes or HOV lanes managed to maintain fast and reliable travel times needed for bus rapid transit. The HOV BRT system will be developed through a partnership between Sound Transit and WSDOT to complete the State's Core HOV network and adapt it to meet the needs of high capacity transit service. Direct access ramps, in-line stations and access facilities will allow buses to use HOV lanes and make intermediate stops without crossing traffic lanes, benefiting both transit and general purpose traffic. Freeway HOV BRT services can also include customer convenience features and amenities as well as transit priority measures. The reliability of Freeway HOV BRT and managed lane services will depend in large part on the development of a continuous HOV or managed lane network and on effective management of the HOV or managed lane system by WSDOT to meet adopted HOV and managed lane speed and reliability policies. Sound Transit supports efforts that will maintain speed and reliability for buses using freeway HOV or managed lanes.

- **Arterial/BAT Lanes BRT**. Arterial/BAT Lanes BRT can operate effectively in an arterial environment using bus lanes and/or a variety of localized transit priority treatments such as signal synchronization, queue jumps, and business access/transit lanes. The level of customer amenities and transit priority is less than with the other BRT types, as is the corresponding investment in right of way and construction costs. The reliability and speed of the service also is not as high as with the other types. Most arterial BRT services in the region will be operated as local transit agency services.

ST Express Buses

ST Express bus service is provided to connect centers where demand is not yet sufficient to justify permanent HCT service, or where needed as supporting services to HCT investments. ST Express buses will serve major regional centers and destinations and provide connection to other transportation components of the regional transit system. ST Express bus routes are an investment in corridors where HCT investment may be warranted in the future. These routes may be operated with lower frequency and shorter span of service than HCT service, with a more modest investment in facilities. ST Express bus routes may change based on the Sound Transit Board's approval of annual Service Implementation Plans.

As Sound Transit implements future phases of the Long-Range Plan, potential future ST Express bus service shall be considered for serving new commuter markets that represent potential untapped ridership, that have the potential for future HCT service and that can be logically integrated into Sound Transit's network of facilities and services connecting regional urban and activity centers. Sound Transit will explore the potential of partnering with other transit providers in implementing these new commuter services.

Future HCT Corridors

HCT corridors may be candidates for future light rail transit, commuter rail, or BRT service. The final selection of a transit technology will be made based on a detailed corridor study that will examine a full range of technology options. Factors that will determine what additional HCT investments will be made in future phases, including future rail extensions, include an assessment of evolving technologies, environmental analysis, actual population growth and employment, changing development trends and future transportation priorities of the Sound Transit District's subareas. To the extent possible, initial investments in HCT corridors should preserve the option of implementing a range of HCT options in the future.

Appropriate environmental reviews must be completed and voters must approve funding for any additional capital investments beyond the current phase.

HOV System

The HOV system expands and improves upon an existing regional network, leading toward a permanent regional transit system. This includes the state's program to fill the gaps and extend the existing HOV-lane system to create a continuous inside-lane HOV network, and freeway-to-freeway HOV connections. Sound Transit will fund special access ramps to make it easier for transit and carpools to reach and use HOV lanes. Traffic flow will also improve in general purpose lanes, since buses and carpools will no longer have to weave through several lanes of traffic to reach the HOV lanes.

The Sound Transit Board views completion of the state's freeway HOV lane "core system" and freeway-to-freeway HOV connections in the Puget Sound region as an important priority. However, Sound Transit assumes the state will complete construction of the core HOV lane system and freeway-to-freeway HOV connections in accordance with its freeway HOV policy. If the state does not fulfill its funding obligation, the Sound Transit Board may conduct an open and public process to determine whether Sound Transit funding is available and should be used to help complete the core HOV lane system.

Gateways to the Region — Community Connections

Combined, new regional high-capacity transportation corridors and services will link our economic centers and provide new connections for local communities. The long-range plan includes creating many new "gateways" from communities to the region and from the region to communities. Those gateways include, for example, transit stations, park-and-ride lots, transit centers, and rail stations that create community connections where people can reach their destination on foot, by bicycle, or by accessing other transportation services. For gateways that include parking, as indicated in Sound Transit's System Access Policy (adopted 2013) Sound Transit will work cooperatively and in partnership with local jurisdictions to manage parking demand at and near transit facilities and to encourage pedestrian, bicycle and transit access to facilities, maximizing efficient use of available transit parking resources.

The community connections will, of course, also be readily accessible by all types of public transit. Sound Transit will work with local public transit agencies and local jurisdictions to make it easier for transit to reach and use the community gateways with improvements such as integrated signal systems and automated vehicle identification systems.

Sound Transit is also committed to supporting other, non-motorized means of transportation such as bicycles. The long-range plan provides space for bicycles on buses and trains as well as safe bicycle storage at transit stations. The plan also includes, where practical, improvements for safe bicycle travel as part of HOV improvements and within rail corridors.

Sound Transit's System Access Policy establishes a framework for Sound Transit's support and management of, and investment in, infrastructure and facilities to provide customer access to its transit services. Sound Transit will seek to provide or facilitate improvements in access to transit services in cooperation with public and private entities as allowed by applicable laws, regulations, plans and policies. The goals of the System Access Policy are to increase transit ridership and encourage convenient and safe connections to Sound Transit services through all access modes, including transit, pedestrian and bicycle access, and vehicles requiring parking. Sound Transit will use the criteria indicated in Sound Transit's System Access Policy to assess and prioritize potential access improvement projects.

Working Together — a Coordinated System of Services

By coordinating with local transit and other transportation services, the long-range plan will make it convenient and easy to move around the region. Crucial to the plan and the entire regional transportation system are the mechanisms that make different transportation components work together to create an efficient network connecting the entire region. These mechanisms include:

- coordinating local and regional transit services, tying services together and creating important region-wide connections for Sound Transit services
- building transit centers, park-and-ride lots and stations where different types of transportation come together to make connections simple and efficient
- evaluating the potential for transit-oriented development, consistent with the adopted Transit-Oriented Development policy and Real Property Excess, Surplus, and Disposition policy

- updating and maintaining uniform fare media that can be used on Sound Transit and regional partner services, making transfers convenient
- planning jointly for bus-related facilities that will be used by multiple agencies.

Facilities that Fit with the Communities They Serve

The long-range plan will create a regional transit system that is easy to reach and use by everyone including pedestrians, bicyclists, people with disabilities and other public transportation customers. As indicated in Sound Transit's System Access Policy, when designing transit facilities and services, Sound Transit will maximize pedestrian, bike and transit access to our stations, provide parking capacity within available resources, and will work with partner agencies, jurisdictions and third parties to accomplish this. In addition, facility siting decisions will support the environmental health of transit users and residents of transit-oriented developments.

Capital projects and services will be designed and developed consistent with Sound Transit design criteria, as well as access, TOD, bicycle, and sustainability policies and plans. Project cost estimates developed during system planning should include funding for access, TOD planning, and sustainability-related elements.

Sound Transit works with local public transportation agencies, communities, and local governments to place and design transit facilities that easily fit with and improve local community plans, help enable communities to achieve their land use visions, and include context sensitive solutions. This will include making improvements within one-quarter mile radius of each station for safe and easy transit, pedestrian, and bicycle access. Sound Transit will build such facilities after consulting with the local jurisdiction(s). In addition, Sound Transit may partner with local jurisdictions for bicycle improvements beyond one-quarter mile, consistent with our Bicycle Policy.

Transit facility designs will be flexible, allowing each station to reflect and fit into the community it serves while providing standard features to ensure smooth and accessible transfers for transit customers from one type of public transportation to another. Standard features may include green infrastructure and design, as well as improvements to access by bus, bicycles and walking, intermodal transfer facilities and bus layover space.

Standard design features include:

- security and safety design standards
- consistent route and schedule information
- easy-to-read and consistent signs
- pedestrian-friendly design and full access for people with disabilities
- bicycle access and secure storage
- transit-friendly access to allow smooth transfers from one type of public transportation to another (i.e. bus to rail, or bus to bus)
- convenient taxi access

Recognizing the mutual benefits of Sound Transit's transportation investments, local public transportation agencies, communities, and local governments (Sound Transit's partners) may identify improvements that exceed standard facility designs. In such instances, partners will work with Sound Transit and contribute toward the costs of improvements, in accordance with Sound Transit's adopted Scope Control Policy.

Encouraging Policies that Support Transit

Sound Transit's long-range plan includes encouraging local jurisdictions, agencies, and private developers to develop policies and services that encourage and support transit and transit facilities. This could include:

- Encouraging pedestrian-oriented communities, especially along major arterials in areas with mixed residential and commercial developments easily served by transit.
- Launching joint efforts among Sound Transit, local transit agencies, jurisdictions and communities to combine frequent, reliable transit service with improvements for pedestrians.
- Looking for opportunities between private developers and local jurisdictions to jointly develop and run peoplemover, shuttle, or circulator systems that would expand the scope of transit station service areas.
- Promote community design that provides convenient access to transit systems. Sound Transit will work with public and private sector partners on system access improvements that support the goals of Sound Transit's system access efforts (as indicated in the System Access Policy):
    - Increase transit ridership.
    - Encourage convenient and safe connections to Sound Transit services through all access modes including:
        - Connecting transit and ferry services
        - Paratransit pick-up and drop-off
        - Pedestrian access
        - Bicycle access
        - Private vehicle pick-up and drop-off
        - Vehicles requiring parking
- Siting regional transit facilities in ways that promote transit-oriented development consistent with Sound Transit's Transit-Oriented Development Policy. Sound Transit will:
    - Work cooperatively to evaluate and facilitate TOD strategies on its own property and in areas around its transit facilities.
    - Assess TOD early in system planning, throughout all phases of its transit projects and during transit system operations.
    - Increase the value and effectiveness of transit by increasing transit ridership.
    - Support implementation of state, regional and local growth plans, policies and strategies.
    - Foster relationships with local jurisdictions, regional agencies, private developers, local residents, businesses, community groups and other stakeholders to facilitate TOD.

- Encourage convenient, safe multi-modal access to the transit system, with an emphasis on non-motorized access.
- Support economic development efforts.
- Encourage creation of housing options including market-rate and affordable units.
- Support implementation of other related Sound Transit plans and policies, with an emphasis on the agency's Sustainability Plan.
- Protect and enhance Sound Transit's assets and investments.

- Favor cities and counties with supportive land use plans in Sound Transit's implementation program for HCT systems, consistent with RCW 81.104.080.

Coordinated Routes and Schedules

Simple and coordinated connections are necessary between all parts of the regional transportation network — buses, rail, ferries, carpools, vanpools, shuttles, circulators, intercity rail lines, taxis, airports, bicycles and pedestrians. These simple and coordinated connections can be achieved by sharing stations, simplifying transfer policies and using common fare media.

By further integrating the planning and operations of local and regional transit agencies, we can create efficiencies as new lines open and provide innovative services that better serve the needs of a growing region. Implementing a higher degree of transit system integration in the near and longer term will help to maximize the performance of all transit modes for the public; achieve a higher level of efficiency in the delivery of transit service and infrastructure; and provide a higher quality, more seamless experience for transit customers.

There were several corridors included in the SEPA environmental review process for updating the 2014 Long-Range Plan that should be considered for additional study during a future phase of regional HCT system expansion. Studies of corridors identified in this section can consider potential upgrades in existing service and/or improved connections. Studies should be completed in coordination with local transit partners to examine a variety of options for service provision, and to maximize opportunities for regional integration. The studies should include examination of all of Sound Transit's HCT modal options, as well as potential connections to HCT options already included in the Long-Range Plan. The studies will help narrow the range of alternatives, evaluate potential routes, inform local comprehensive planning, and position the Sound Transit Board to evaluate options for future incremental phases toward completion of the larger regional high-capacity transit system. The analysis should include conceptual–level review of key environmental considerations, ridership forecasting, and engineering, as well as preliminary cost estimates.

- Issaquah Highlands to Overlake via Sammamish, Redmond: This should include examining HCT modal options to connect Issaquah Highlands to Overlake via Sammamish, Redmond. This should also examine supporting services, including parking and access options within Sammamish, Issaquah, and Redmond. This corridor will be identified for analysis as an HCT corridor study, subject to available funding and Board direction. Sound Transit will coordinate examination of service provision in this corridor with local partners as part of regional integration efforts.

- Northern Lake Washington HCT Crossing: This study would examine cross-lake HCT transit options that would be needed when ridership demand exceeds capacity for existing cross-lake transit options or those planned in East Link. This study would

examine alternatives including and parallel to State Route 522 and State Route 520, including connections from Sandpoint to Kirkland and Redmond/and or Bellevue.

- Access and connection on NE 145th from State Route 522 to Link Light Rail: This study should look at HCT options to provide connections for communities and jurisdictions along State Route 522 to Link Light Rail at the planned station at 145th and Interstate 5 identified in the Lynnwood Link Preferred Alternative.

An important part of integrating these services is providing stations or transit centers where many transportation services come together, making transfers and connections convenient and expanding the scope of the entire transportation system.

In some areas, access to the regional HCT system may be constrained by lack of park-and-ride capacity and/or limited connecting bus service. In such cases, Sound Transit will work with community and partner transit agencies to evaluate ways to increase system access, drawing upon a large menu of potential options including leased or joint-use parking, managed parking, dedicated feeder buses, enhanced local bus service, VanShare services, and employer shuttles. A system access fund may be established for each subarea to support these services where they are needed.

One Regional Card for All (ORCA)

Since high-capacity transit is just one part of the overall regional transportation system, it is important that it work well with services already being provided or planned at the local and statewide level. One way to make sure HCT provides a smooth connection with other services in the region is to continue to provide a uniform, single-ticket fare system among local and regional transit providers through continued development and use of the ORCA card. The ORCA card allows customers to use a single pass to travel on any and all of the types of transportation within the region. Sound Transit will continue to work with public transportation providers in the region to maintain an integrated fare payment system for the entire public transit service network.

Transportation Demand Management (TDM)

Achieving the full benefits of the long-range plan will require extensive efforts by local, regional, and statewide agencies and the private sector to promote using public transportation and other options that reduce the number of miles traveled in single-occupant vehicles.

Sound Transit will participate as a funding partner for market development programs, and cooperate with other public transportation agencies working with employers and local jurisdictions to match high quality transit services with economic incentives to use transit and promote ridesharing and other options to reduce drive-alone commute trips.

Innovation Fund

Since we live in an age of continual change, the long-range plan provides flexibility to consider new ideas, services, and technology innovations.

Sound Transit will evaluate and fund innovative ways to analyze and understand markets for regional mobility, to assess current services and identify future changes to better fit the needs of those markets, to coordinate Sound Transit services with connecting services and first- and last-

mile access choices, and to improve public transportation's convenience and cost-effectiveness. In addition, Sound Transit will provide transit service, reduce dependency on single-occupancy vehicles, improve public transportation's cost-effectiveness, and better respond to customer needs. This may include evaluating technological innovations that focus on transit speed, efficiency and reliability, customer service and customer security improvements.

Bringing the Plan into Focus

Regional Relationships

The long-range plan will be implemented in phases. In addition to Sound Transit, many different local jurisdictions and agencies will be responsible for putting portions of the regional transportation system in place. The next planning and development stages will require integration of the system and land-use development at the regional, local and community levels. The public and private sectors played an important role in developing the long-range vision and will continue to be important during each phase of system implementation.

The long-range plan recommends the following general responsibilities for putting the regional transit system in place:

- **Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) and County Growth Management Act (GMA) Plans** — The PSRC's Metropolitan Transportation Plan and the GMA plans of counties within the Sound Transit District should be amended to reflect the adopted regional transit system long-range plan. The PSRC and each participating County GMA program should assure that programming to fund major transportation service and facility decisions is consistent with regional and local transportation, growth management and land-use plans.

- **Local jurisdictions** — Local jurisdictions should develop land-use and transportation plans and regulations that support transit-oriented development, regional and county plans and the long-range plan. Examples of supportive actions include building sidewalks to transit facilities, and changing zoning to encourage development of urban centers. Jurisdictions should also develop processes for timely approval of transit facilities and Transportation Systems Management (TSM) capital projects to support interim bus service expansion and long-term HCT service within the respective jurisdictions.

- **Public transit agencies** — Local transit agencies will provide community and local bus services integrated with the regional transit system. These agencies should plan, design, build, own, and operate local bus facilities.

- **Washington State Department of Transportation** — The Washington State Department of Transportation is the steward of a multimodal transportation system and responsible for ensuring that people and goods move safely and efficiently. In addition to building, maintaining, and operating the state highway system, WSDOT is responsible for the state ferry system, and works in partnership with others to maintain and improve local roads, railroads and airports, as well as to support alternatives to driving, such as public transportation, bicycles and pedestrian programs. The agency's roadmap for Washington's transportation future, Results WSDOT, focuses on six goals: strategic investments, modal integration, environmental stewardship, organizational strength, community engagement and smart technology. Through a culture of continuous improvement, WSDOT is building a more efficient, effective and accountable government for those it serves.

- **Sound Transit** — Sound Transit will obtain funding to put in place the long-range plan and coordinate its development with other transportation investments to improve mobility in the region (including intercity rail and freight movement improvements). Funding will include local tax proposals for voter approval as necessary to fund improvements within the Sound Transit District. Sound Transit will impose and collect voter approved local-option taxes and allocate funds for elements of the plan. Sound Transit will also be responsible for implementing the regional rail system component and financing the regional express bus system and portions of the HOV/BRT system. Implementing Sound Transit's capital and service programs will support growth management strategies and plans that complement the regional transit system.

Right-of-Way Preservation

To protect against permanent loss of valuable and irreplaceable transportation rights of way, corridors, and facilities sites, Sound Transit will develop a right-of-way preservation program to identify and consider purchase of such properties as they become available or are placed at risk of development for non-transportation uses. The objective of the right-of-way preservation program will be to set aside at-risk properties for potential rail or regional express bus stations, route alignments, operating facilities and other facilities needed for the full implementation of the Long-Range Plan, and to do so early and at reasonable cost. Under the program, properties may be acquired to be preserved as needed, subject to the availability of funds and applicable law.

Sound Transit will work with the state Department of Transportation and other responsible agencies while developing projects to pinpoint areas where right-of-way is limited and many different transportation improvements are proposed. Regional transit proposals in these corridors will require careful design and coordination to accommodate Sound Transit's plans along with other proposed transportation improvements.

In some cases, Sound Transit will work with local transit operators to acquire property that will be used for interim bus services and facilities that may be converted to permanent HCT. When appropriate, Sound Transit will jointly fund interim facilities with local transit operators, the state, local jurisdictions, and local businesses.

Sound Transit will work with local transit operators to evaluate bus service that mirrors HCT service patterns to sites purchased in advance that eventually may be served by HCT. Sound Transit will help local transit agencies design transit facilities and infrastructure to allow for future expanded bus service or conversion to HCT service.

Sound Transit Taxing Authority

State law allows Sound Transit to ask voters in the Central Puget Sound region to increase their local taxes to pay for a regional transit system. The current law allows Sound Transit to ask voters within the Sound Transit District for up to a 9/10 of one percent sales tax, and an employer tax of $2 per employee. The law also allows Sound Transit to issue outstanding municipal bonds equal to up to 1.5 percent of the assessed property value within the Sound Transit District.

The financial policies adopted for Sound Move require that any future phase capital program that continues local taxes for financing will require voter approval within the Sound Transit District. If voters decide not to extend the system, Sound Transit will roll back the tax rate to a level sufficient to pay off the outstanding bonds and operate and maintain the investments made as part of Sound Move and ST2.

Future Financial Capacity

In planning for future transit system phases, Sound Transit will revisit the funding sources and assumptions developed for this plan to determine whether they are applicable to future phases.

A cash flow model, consistent with the financial capacity analysis for Sound Transit, will be used to determine the financial feasibility for each subsequent phase. This analysis will examine possible financing methods and identify appropriate funding levels from available revenue sources.

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