

Agency Activities and Monitored Issues

\$813 million federal grant awarded to University Link light rail

The Federal Transit Administration in January officially awarded Sound Transit a \$813 million federal grant to pay about 41 percent of the \$1.9 billion cost of building the 3.15-mile University Link underground light rail extension between downtown Seattle and the University of Washington.

Sherry Little, Acting FTA administrator, joined Sound Transit Board Chair Greg Nickels and many other Boardmembers in Union Station to formally award the grant. University Link is scheduled to open in 2016 and add more than 70,000 daily riders to the system.

U-Link breaks ground

In early March, Senator Patty Murray and several other dignitaries officially broke ground on the University Link light rail extension from downtown Seattle to the University of Washington. The U-Link project is estimated to generate about 2,900 direct construction jobs.

University Link bid about \$86 million under estimate

The apparent low bidder to dig the project's twin tunnels from the University of Washington to Capitol Hill was about \$86 million under the engineer's estimate for the job. The bid, from Traylor Frontier – Kemper Joint Venture, was about \$309 million. This is the single largest contract for the U-Link tunnel and includes excavating a portion of the UW Station and digging 11,400 feet of tunnels from the university to Capitol Hill.

First major U-Link light rail contract awarded

The Sound Transit Board approved University Link light rail's first major contract. That contract, with Condon Johnson and Associates Inc., is for construction work to prepare the area where a tunnel boring machine will pass beneath Interstate 5 in downtown Seattle. The \$22.6 million contract, which includes about a 15 percent contingency, is 34 percent below the agency's engineers' cost estimates for the work.

Recycling success on Capitol Hill

Recycling efforts are moving along at the future site of U-Link's Capitol Hill light rail station. As buildings are being removed to make way for the station, the agency is working very hard to keep material out of the landfill. So, for example, before demolition salvage teams removed potential re-salable items, such as doors, light fixtures and railings. About 75 percent of the remaining building material such as bricks and wood will be recycled.

Sound Transit also hosted a plant salvage event for neighbors to adopt some of the smaller trees or shrubs and give them a new home in their yard. The contractor is working with a specialist to determine if any of the larger trees can be moved and used in other projects. And even the tree stumps are being put to good use. The root-balls and stumps from the trees that are too large



to be transplanted are being donated for use in salmon habitat restoration projects in the Puget Sound region.

Joe Marine joins Sound Transit Board

Joe Marine, the Mayor of Mukilteo and member of the Community Transit Board, has joined Sound Transit's Board. Mr. Marine takes the place of Deanna Dawson who left the Board late last year.

Mr. Marine was elected Mukilteo Mayor in 2005. Before that he was a Mukilteo Councilmember and also served in the state House of Representatives. He is a boardmember of the Puget Sound Regional Council's Executive and Operations Committee, the National League of Cities' Public Safety and Crime Prevention Committee, Snohomish County Cities' Legislative Committee and Executive Board as well as the Association of Washington Cities.

Former Sound Transit Boardmember dies

Jack Crawford, a former Sound Transit Boardmember and the first Mayor of Kenmore, died in late December. Mr. Crawford was a member of the Sound Transit Board from

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January 2000 through 2005. He was also on the Board Finance Committee for his entire term, including vice-chair from 2002-2005 and chair in 2005. He left the Sound Transit Board when he chose not to run for re-election.

Mr. Crawford was remembered for his energy, his unwavering support of Sound Transit and his outstanding service to the region.

Ron Klein joins Sound Transit as Communications Director

Ron Klein, Communications Director for Pierce County for eight years, became Sound Transit's new Communications Director in January.

Before his work in Pierce County, Mr. Klein had an extensive background in advertising and marketing including Executive Creative Director and Senior Vice President of Cole & Weber, Inc. the advertising and public relations agency with offices in Seattle and Portland.

Link light rail fares set

The Sound Transit Board took a huge step towards opening light rail passenger service when it approved a fare structure for Link riders.

The Board decided that fares will be distance-based with a \$1.75 base fare plus \$.05 per mile, rounded up or down to the nearest quarter. The maximum adult fare on the line from Westlake Station in downtown Seattle to Sea-Tac Airport is \$2.50, the same as a bus ride. Youth fares start at \$1.25 and have a maximum fare of \$2. Senior/disabled fares start at \$.75 and have a maximum fare of \$1.25. Fares will apply in the Downtown Seattle Transit Tunnel.

Ridership continues climbing this year

Sound Transit bus and train ridership keeps on growing. The agency's overall ridership, including ST Express buses, Sounder trains and Tacoma Link light rail, was up 9 percent in January, compared to the same month a year earlier. And, overall ridership was up 6 percent in February over the same month in 2008.

Sound Transit's average weekday passenger boardings totaled 56,231 in January and 56,109 in February, which are both significant increases over the same time a year earlier.

South Tacoma Station opens

In February, riders in Pierce County began using ST Express route 593 from the new South Tacoma Station, located just off South Tacoma Way. The facility includes a bus platform and parking for about 220 vehicles. ST Express route 593 runs from South Tacoma to Tacoma Dome Station and downtown Seattle.

The station will eventually also be served by Sounder when trains are running from South Tacoma and Lakewood to Tacoma and Seattle in 2012.

New service begins

Starting in February, transit riders saw service improvements throughout the Sound Transit district. The changes included the start of new ST Express bus route 593 that serves the new South Tacoma Station. Changes also include new routing and stops for ST Express bus routes in Everett, and minor schedule adjustments for both ST Express routes and Sounder commuter trains that serve the Seattle-Tacoma corridor.

Sound Transit's 2009 Milestones unveiled

Sound Transit's 2009 major milestones were released to the Sound Transit Board in January. The 36 milestones for 2009 showcase a historic year for the agency.

For example, the milestones show that in July, light rail trains will begin carrying passengers for the first time with the extension to Sea-Tac Airport at the end of the year. Another milestone is the launch of the innovative ORCA smart card.

Voter approval of Sound Transit 2 last November led to the 2009 milestone of purchasing up to 60 new express buses and starting new ST Express service. The milestones show Sound Transit finalizing an agreement with the City of Seattle for the First Hill Streetcar and continuing the East Link light rail environmental impact statement.

The milestones also show the agency carrying a combined 75,000 passengers every weekday on Sound Transit trains and buses. In 2009, the ninth round-trip Sounder train will begin running on the south line between Tacoma and Seattle. The Sounder South Tacoma Station will open and ground will be broken on the Mountlake Terrace Freeway Station and the Kirkland Transit Center.

Link testing steps up

Link light rail testing began ramping up in March as the agency moved closer to the start of passenger service in July. Testing is now underway on Martin Luther King Jr. Way South every weekday. Increased testing brings a reminder to motorists and pedestrians to be alert along MLK Jr. Way South. Sound Transit police are working with local law enforcement agencies to increase enforcement of all traffic and pedestrian laws along the alignment.

Mandarin and Spanish added to ticket vending machines

Professional recording artists speaking in their native Spanish and Mandarin recently made studio recordings that will be included in Sound Transit's ticket vending machines. Those languages, including English, will be in ticket vending machines used by Sounder commuter rail and Link light rail passengers. Spanish and Mandarin/Traditional Chinese are the two prevalent non-English languages in the region.