

**SOUND TRANSIT
STAFF REPORT**

RESOLUTION NO. R2003-18

2003 Regional Express Bus Service Implementation Plan

Meeting:	Date:	Type of Action:	Staff Contact:	Phone:
Executive Committee	10/02/03	Discussion/Possible Action to Recommend Board Approval	Agnes Govern, Director Regional Express	(206) 398-5037
Finance Committee	10/02/03	Discussion/Possible Action to Recommend Board Approval	Gloria Overgaard, Deputy Director, Regional Express	(206) 689-4909
Board	10/09/03	Deferred	Mike Bergman, Program Manager, Regional Express Bus	(206) 398-5358
Board	11/13/03	Deferred		
Board	12/11/03	Action		

OBJECTIVE OF ACTION

Approval of the 2003 Regional Express Bus Service Implementation Plan (SIP) and procurement process for new buses to support the service expansion.

ACTION

Approves the proposed 2003 SIP authorizing staff to implement one new ST Express route and increase service on nine existing ST Express bus routes between 2004 and 2006, and begin the procurement process for new buses to support the proposed service expansion.

KEY FEATURES

- Maintains the overall bus service program budget at \$506 million, unchanged from the 2002 SIP. Reduces the overall ten-year bus program budget to \$503.9 million, a \$1.7 million decrease compared with the 2002 SIP. The reduction occurs entirely within the South King subarea in order to increase South King's long-range financial capacity.
- Programs ~~\$21.2 million~~ \$20.2 million from the Regional Mobility Fund and Program Cost Fund into expanded service between 2004 and 2005 and the purchase of additional buses to support the service.
- Creates one new ST Express route between Seattle and Federal Way and adds service on nine existing ST Express routes, consistent with ridership projections, subarea equity and in coordination with the schedule for regional express capital projects.
- Increases total service by ~~31,799~~ 10,816 bus platform hours compared with the 2002 SIP, from 3,591,418 platform hours (2002 SIP) to ~~3,623,217~~ 3,602,234 platform hours.
- Begins the procurement process for 35 additional buses to support the proposed service expansion.

BUDGET IMPACT SUMMARY

There is no action outside of the Board-adopted budget; there are no contingency funds required, no subarea impacts, or funding required from other parties other than what is already assumed in the financial plan.

BUDGET DISCUSSION

The total operating and bus capital cost over the ten-year program is estimated to be ~~\$506 million~~ \$503.9 million (YOES). This is ~~unchanged from~~ \$1.7 million less than last year's SIP and is affordable within ~~matches~~ the Adopted 2003 Budget for the program.

REVENUE, SUBAREA, AND FINANCIAL PLAN IMPACTS

The proposed action is consistent with the Adopted 2003 Budget and is affordable within Sound Transit's current long-term plan and subarea financial capacity.

The following table represents the available budget as it relates to expenditures and the impact of this action.

BUDGET TABLE

The overall ten-year costs in the proposed 2003 SIP total is ~~\$506~~ is \$503.9 million, which is ~~unchanged from~~ \$1.7 million less than the Adopted 2003 Budget. The table below provides a comparison between the Adopted 2003 Budget and the proposed 2003 SIP.

Subarea	Adopted 2003 Budget¹ (A)	Proposed 2003 SIP² (B)	Surplus (Shortfall) (A-B)
Snohomish	\$70 <u>\$70.1</u>	\$70 <u>\$70.1</u>	\$0
East King	\$226 <u>\$225.6</u>	\$226 <u>\$225.6</u>	\$0
South King	\$53 <u>\$53.1</u>	\$53 <u>\$51.4</u>	\$0 <u>\$1.7</u>
Pierce	\$157 <u>\$156.8</u>	\$157 <u>\$156.8</u>	\$0
Total	\$506 <u>\$505.6</u>	\$506 <u>\$503.9</u>	\$0 <u>\$1.7</u>

(0) See page 135 of the Adopted 2003 Budget book

(0) The SIP Financial Plan assumes that the hourly rate increases by an estimated CPI of 3% annually.

Snohomish

The 2003 rate negotiations with Community Transit have been completed. Therefore, the proposed SIP reflects the finalized hourly rate for 2003 bus operations. The Snohomish subarea's overall program costs are consistent with the Adopted 2003 Budget of \$70 million. The total 1999-2006 platform hours increased from 558,881 in the 2002 SIP to ~~585,954~~ 590,090 in the 2003 SIP. The program total includes ~~33,344~~ 35,117 platform hours designated for schedule maintenance. Scheduled maintenance hours are important to help routes stay on schedule or provide adequate capacity when passenger demand exceeds capacity.

East King

The 2003 rate negotiations with King County Metro have not been completed. Therefore, the service costs shown are preliminary. East King's overall program costs are consistent with the Adopted 2003 Budget of \$226 million. The total 1999-2006 platform hours increased from 1,473,959 in the 2002 SIP to ~~1,535,305~~ 1,536,258 in the 2003 SIP. The program total includes ~~48,710~~ 41,499 platform hours designated for schedule maintenance. Scheduled maintenance hours are important to help routes stay on schedule or provide adequate capacity when passenger demand exceeds capacity.

South King

The 2003 rate negotiations with King County Metro have not been completed. Therefore, the service costs shown are preliminary. South King's overall program costs are ~~consistent with \$1.7 million less than~~ the Adopted 2003 Budget of \$53 million. Long range projections indicate the need to increase the subarea's financial capacity. As a result, South King operating costs in the amount of \$1.7 million will be removed from the Regional Express program. The total 1999-2006 platform hours decreased from 431,945 in the 2002 SIP to ~~412,004~~ 398,130 in the 2003 SIP. The program total includes ~~40,266~~ 11,497 platform hours designated for schedule maintenance. Scheduled maintenance hours are important to help routes stay on schedule or provide adequate capacity when passenger demand exceeds capacity.

Pierce

The 2003 rate negotiations with Pierce Transit have been completed. Therefore, the proposed SIP reflects the finalized hourly rate for 2003 bus operations. The Pierce subarea's overall costs are consistent with the Adopted 2003 Budget of \$157 million. The total 1999-2006 platform hours decreased from 1,126,633 in the 2002 SIP to ~~1,089,957~~ 1,077,756 in the 2003 SIP. The program total includes ~~2,950~~ 19,789 platform hours designated for schedule maintenance. Schedule maintenance hours are important to help routes stay on schedule or provide adequate capacity when passenger demand exceeds capacity.

M/W/DBE – SMALL BUSINESS PARTICIPATION

Not applicable for this action.

HISTORY OF PROJECT

Prior Board or Committee Actions and Relevant Board Policies

Motion or Resolution Number	Summary of Action	Date of Action
M2003-01	Began the 2003 Service Implementation Plan (SIP) process assuming that \$21.2M (YOES) is programmed from the Regional Mobility Fund and Program Cost Fund into expanded service and the purchase of additional buses.	01/09/03
R2002-07	Adoption of the 2002 SIP, including the programming of \$4.5M (YOES) from the East King portion of the Regional Mobility Fund for the extension of Route 554 to Issaquah Highlands and East King schedule maintenance.	05/02/02
R2001-04	Adoption of the 2001 SIP, including the programming of \$3.5M (YOES) from the South King portion of the Regional Mobility Fund to address a shortfall in the service budget for that subarea.	05/10/01

In January 2003, the Executive Committee authorized staff to proceed with planning work on the 2003 SIP based on programming \$21.2 million in funds already in the bus program budget for expanded service and the purchase of additional buses. The funds would come from the Regional Mobility Fund and the Program Cost Fund.

Regional Mobility Fund

The Regional Mobility Fund was originally created within the bus program budget in case Sound Transit was required to provide paratransit coverage in areas served by ST Express routes. In 1999, it was determined that Sound Transit did not have this obligation due to the limited access characteristics of ST Express routes. In the 2001 SIP, the Board approved using \$8 million from the Regional Mobility Fund to create the Mobility Initiative Program to improve regional transportation for persons with disabilities. The balance of the Regional Mobility Fund was set aside for future ST Express bus service needs.

With the draft 2003 SIP, staff recommends that 80 percent or \$12.4 million of the remaining Regional Mobility funds in the Snohomish and East King subareas be programmed for service and bus fleet expansion. The South King subarea has no remaining Regional Mobility funds, since the balance was used to address a budget shortfall in that subarea in 2002. The Pierce subarea has \$10.3 million remaining in the Regional Mobility Fund; however, staff proposes to leave this fund intact through 2006 in the event it is needed for other subarea projects or service needs.

Program Cost Fund

The Program Cost Fund (formerly called the 10 Percent Reserve Fund) provides resources for facilities maintenance, customer information/marketing and administrative expenses necessary to run the system. The Snohomish, East King, South King and Pierce subareas each carry a Program Cost Fund balance. Based on three years of actual operating experience, staff now projects a \$11.1 million surplus in this fund through 2006. ~~and Staff~~ Staff recommends that 80 percent or ~~\$8.8~~ \$7.8 million of ~~this amount~~ the surplus in Snohomish, East King and Pierce be programmed toward added service and fleet expansion in these subareas. The surplus in the

South King subarea would be removed from the bus program budget and used to increase the subarea's overall financial capacity.

New Routes and Revisions to Existing Routes, 2004-2006

Over the past year, staff has worked closely with our transit partners, local jurisdictions, and other stakeholders to develop a 2006 "build out" service plan based on the availability of funds within the bus program. The recommended expansion, which would be phased in between 2004 and 2006, would bring the ST Express system closer to the service and ridership levels described in Sound Move and increase the utilization and benefits of Regional Express capital projects planned or under construction. The draft SIP plan includes:

- A new ~~full-time~~ peak period express route operating directly between the planned new Federal Way Transit Center and downtown Seattle (proposed Route 577). This route is important to achieve the full benefits of the transit center and its adjacent to I-5 HOV direct access ramps.
- Route revisions that maximize the benefits of other new Regional Express capital projects, such as the South Everett Park-and-Ride Lot and the HOV direct access projects at South Everett, Lynnwood, Ash Way, Bellevue, and Eastgate.
- Route extensions from downtown Bellevue to the Eastgate Park –and-Ride Lot and from downtown Bellevue to the Overlake Transit Center at NE 40th.
- Additional peak period service on selected routes throughout the system to address overloads and steadily increasing ridership.
- Added midday, night, and weekend service on many routes, bringing the system closer to the "all day, every day" service levels described in Sound Move.

Details of the recommended service package are shown in Attachment A.

Bus Fleet Expansion

To support the proposed service expansion, 35 new buses would be purchased, bringing the total ST Express fleet to 232 vehicles. The draft 2003 SIP includes \$15.5 million for new buses. Board approval of the draft 2003 SIP would authorize staff to begin the vehicle procurement process. The Board would review and take action on the purchase contract during 2004, and the buses would be delivered starting in mid-2005.

Staff is studying the purchase of fifteen, 45-foot "highway buses" as part of the proposed fleet expansion. These buses have 57 seats, compared to 42 seats on standard 40-foot buses, and 60 seats on low floor articulated buses. Estimated cost per seat is lower than on the articulated buses. They are smooth riding, quiet, and have ample legroom compared to conventional transit buses. The major disadvantages of the 45-foot bus are slower passenger loading and unloading due to single door operation, together with longer wheelchair lift cycle times. Sound Transit is conducting an evaluation of the 45-foot "highway bus" together with partner agencies.

The current ST Express bus fleet is fully utilized during peak periods and there is little capacity for ridership growth apart from the midday and weekends. The proposed fleet expansion will allow the proposed service improvements to be implemented while still providing enough buses to respond to unanticipated ridership surges and passenger overloads.

CONSEQUENCES OF DELAY

Since the Proposed 2004 budget is scheduled for action in early December, a delay in approving the 2003 SIP would mean that the 2004 ST Express bus program budget would be based on the 2002 SIP. Service improvements and bus procurement activities proposed in the 2003 SIP would thus be delayed by a minimum of 9 to 12 months.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

The 2004-2006 service change proposals were described in April 2003 and August 2003 editions of *Regional Transit News*, which were distributed via direct mail in communities served by ST Express. Public open houses were conducted during March in Everett, Lynnwood, Northgate, Renton, West Seattle, Auburn, and Bellevue. Additional outreach was conducted through the SeaShore Transportation Forum, Eastside Transportation Partnership, and the South County Area Transportation Board and with individual jurisdictions.

LEGAL REVIEW

MB 9-10-03

SOUND TRANSIT

RESOLUTION NO. R2003-18

A RESOLUTION of the Board of the Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority approving the proposed 2003 Service Implementation Plan authorizing staff to implement one new ST Express route and increase service on nine existing ST Express bus routes between 2004 and 2006, and begin the procurement process for new buses to support the proposed service expansion.

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 \$506 million (YOES) 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 July 8, 1999, by Resolution No. R99-15, the Sound Transit Board of Directors adopted the 1999 Service Implementation Plan; and

WHEREAS, on June 8, 2000, by Resolution No. R2000-06, the Sound Transit Board of Directors adopted the 2000 Service Implementation Plan; and

WHEREAS, on May 10, 2001, by Resolution No. R2001-04, the Sound Transit Board of Directors adopted the 2001 Service Implementation Plan; and

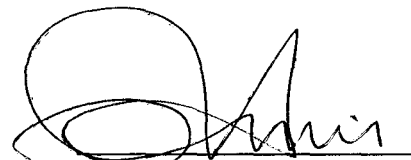
WHEREAS, on May 9, 2002, by Resolution No. R2002-07, the Sound Transit Board of Directors adopted the 2002 Service Implementation Plan; and

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 ST Express 2003 Service Implementation Plan.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of the Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority hereby approves the proposed 2003 Service Implementation Plan authorizing staff to implement one new ST Express route and increase service on nine existing ST Express bus routes between 2004 and 2006, and begin the procurement process for new buses to support the proposed service expansion.

ADOPTED by the Board of the Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority at a regular meeting thereof held on December 11, 2003.



Ron Sims
Board Chair

ATTEST:



Marcia Walker
Board Administrator