



Motion No. M2023-84

Approving the East Link Starter Line (2 Line from Redmond Technology Station to South Bellevue Station) Service and Fare Equity Report

Meeting:	Date:	Type of action:	Staff contact:
Rider Experience and Operations Committee	10/05/2023	Recommend to Board	Maria Doucettperry, Chief Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Officer
Board	10/26/2023	Final action	Adrian Mejia, Title VI and Equity Program Manager

Proposed action

Approves the East Link Starter Line Service and Fare Equity report.

Key features summary

- According to Federal Transit Administration (FTA) guidelines, Sound Transit must conduct service and fare equity analyses (SAFE) prior to implementing new starts and major service and/or fare changes to ensure planned changes will not disproportionately affect members of a group identified by race, color, or national origin.
- The East Link Starter Line SAFE included analysis of the following:
 - Service Changes;
 - Assessment of potential adverse effects to minority and low-income populations;
 - Steps to avoid, minimize or mitigate any adverse effects; and
 - Public outreach to inform the decision-making process.
- The service equity analysis concluded the East Link Starter Line benefits the entire population in the service area, of which the minority population is above the system average. The low-income population in the East Link Starter Line service area is smaller than the low-income population in the Sound Transit district, but the analysis found no adverse effects exceeding the policy threshold. Accordingly, there are no disparate impacts or disproportionate burdens.
- Because there are no fare changes associated with the implementation of the East Link Starter Line, nor service changes that would impact the fares that riders must pay, a fare analysis is not necessary.
- The SAFE analysis concluded the proposed changes to transit service comply with Title VI regulations.

Background

As a result of schedule delays and service impacts to the East Link Extension project, the Board adopted Resolution No. R2023-06. This resolution directed staff to develop an option to open a portion of the East Link Extension. Sound Transit staff developed an option in which the East Link Starter Line could be completed and tested in late 2023 and opened for revenue service in Spring 2024 without delaying the Lynnwood, Federal Way, or Downtown Redmond Link Extensions. The

initial 2 Line service will offer Eastside passengers reliable, traffic-free trips between South Bellevue and Redmond Technology stations and connect passengers to Overlake Medical Center, the Spring District and the BelRed area. On August 24, 2023, the Sound Transit Board approved Resolution No. R2023-24 to open the eight-station segment for service in Spring 2024, prior to completion of the full East Link Extension.

Fiscal information

Although there is no direct fiscal action associated with the action, future implementation of recommendations by the service and fare equity report may have fiscal impacts to the Agency. Those impacts will be addressed during future actions as they are presented.

This action does not have an impact of the affordability of the Agency's Finance Plan.

Title VI compliance

Section 601 of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 states: No person in the United States shall, on the grounds of race, color or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.

Sound Transit receives federal financial assistance to design and build the regional transit system through grants primarily awarded and administered by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) of the U.S. Department of Transportation. As an FTA grant recipient, Sound Transit cannot, on the basis of race, color or national origin, either directly or through contractual means:

- Deny an individual any service, financial aid or benefit provided under the program to which he or she might otherwise be entitled;
- Make distinctions in the quality, quantity, or manner in which the service or benefit is provided; or
- Segregate or separately treat individuals in any matter related to the receipt of any service or benefit.

As a part of its ongoing Title VI obligations, Sound Transit must continue to ensure that it complies with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which protects individuals from discrimination on the basis of race, color and national origin in any program receiving federal funds.

Included among the Title VI obligations, Sound Transit must submit a Title VI Program for FTA approval, every three years, which requires inclusion of equity analyses done by Sound Transit.

Public involvement

In July 2023, the project team administered an online open house and survey to inform riders about possible changes to service in 2024, including the possibility of the 2 Line from Redmond Technology Station to South Bellevue Station. The team also distributed information and talked to current riders at major transit hubs served by routes with possible changes.

The online open house and survey was translated into Spanish and Chinese (simplified and traditional). The survey asked respondents to identify demographic information, which was used to understand impacts to Title VI populations and informed the final equity analysis. The East Link Starter Line Service and Fare Equity Analysis was also available for review and comment during the 2024 Service Plan Engagement online open house.

Public comment on the option was also taken during the August 24, 2023, Sound Transit Board of Directors Meeting. Most respondents and commenters supported the opening of the Starter Line and anticipate positive regional impacts on traffic along SR 520.

Time constraints

This document requires Board review prior to the East Link Starter Line revenue service date of Spring 2024.

Prior Board/Committee actions

Resolution No. R2023-24: Authorizing the chief executive officer to implement the phased opening of the East Link Extension via the East Link Starter Line using funds authorized in the approved budget for the East Link Extension, inclusive of \$6 million authorized by Resolution No. R2023-06.

Resolution No. R2023-06: Authorizing the expenditure of up to \$6 million from the East Link project budget, to be funded by the East King subarea, to complete the work necessary to further develop the option to open a portion of the East Link Extension from South Bellevue Station to Redmond Technology Station (East Link Starter Line). This work will inform a final action to be considered by the Board in Fall 2023 on whether to open the East Link Starter Line for revenue service in Spring 2024.

Resolution No. R2022-19: Established when the agency conducts equity analyses as required by the FTA and applies to major service changes, fare changes and siting of maintenance facilities.

Environmental review – KH 9/19/23

Legal review – MT 9/21/23



Motion No. M2023-84

A motion of the Board of the Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority approving the East Link Starter Line Service and Fare Equity report.

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According to Federal Transit Administration (FTA) guidelines, Sound Transit must conduct service and fare equity analyses (SAFE) prior to implementing new starts and major service and/or fare changes to ensure planned changes will not disproportionately affect members of a group identified by race, color, or national origin.

The East Link Starter Line SAFE included analysis of the following:

- Service Changes;
- Assessment of potential adverse effects to minority and low-income populations;
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- Public outreach to inform the decision-making process.

The service equity analysis concluded the East Link Starter Line benefits the entire population in the service area, of which the minority population is above the system average. The low-income population in the East Link Starter Line service area is smaller than the low-income population in the Sound Transit district, but the analysis found no adverse effects exceeding the policy threshold. Accordingly, there are no disparate impacts or disproportionate burdens. Because there are no fare changes associated with the implementation of the East Link Starter Line, nor service changes that would impact the fares that riders must pay, a fare analysis is not necessary. The SAFE analysis concluded the proposed changes to transit service comply with Title VI regulations.

Motion

It is hereby moved by the Board of the Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority approving the East Link Starter Line Service and Fare Equity report.

APPROVED by the Board of the Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority at a regular meeting thereof held on October 26, 2023.

Dow Constantine
Board Chair

Attest:

Kathryn Flores
Board Administrator