

Sound Move

The Ten-Year Regional Transit System Plan Launching rapid transit in the Puget Sound Region



Why Sound Move?

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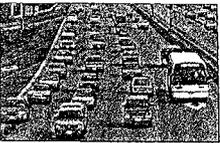
New ways to travel (and new connections)

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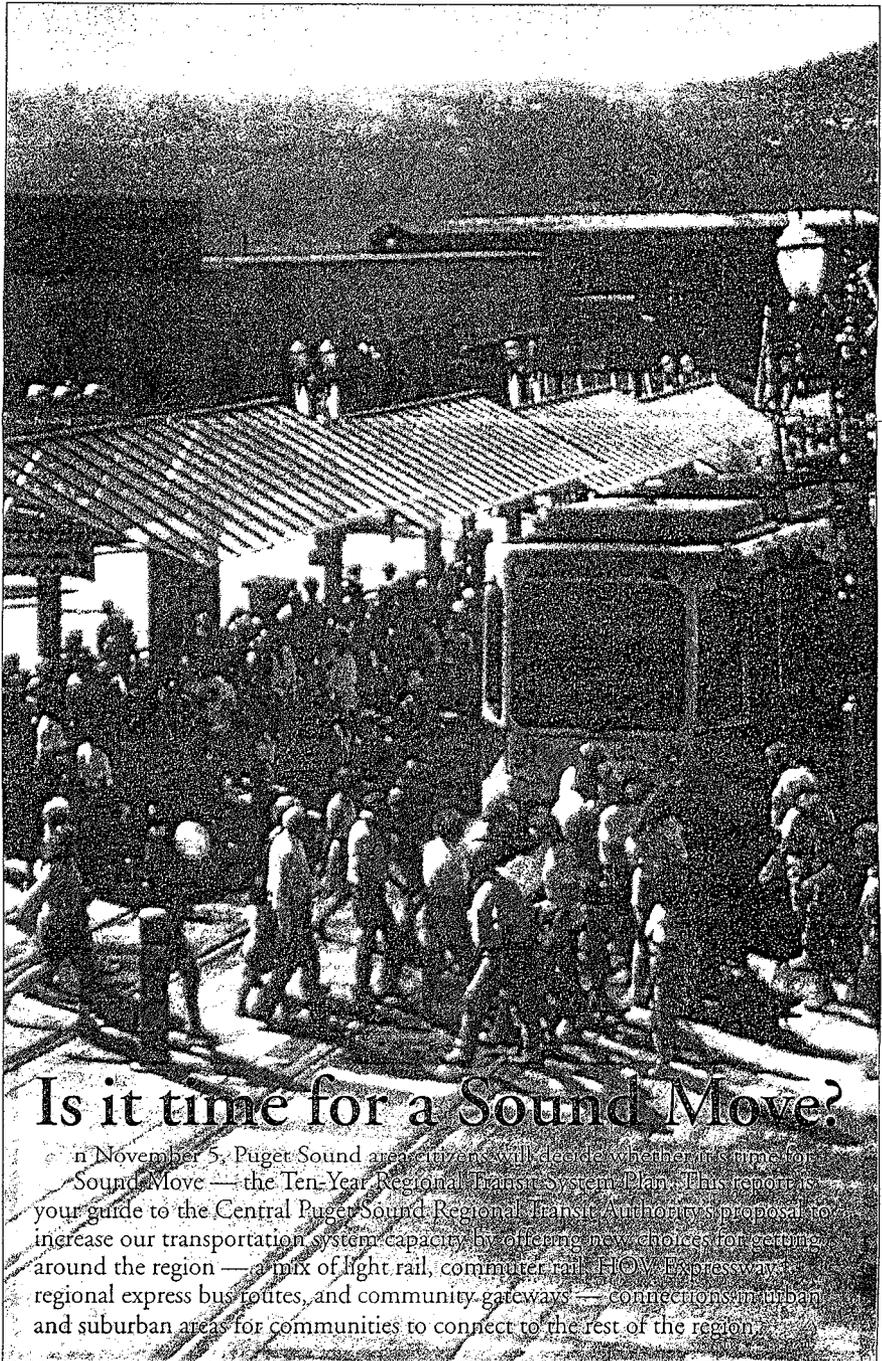
Investing in Sound Move

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Sound Move system map

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Is it time for a Sound Move?

In November 5, Puget Sound area citizens will decide whether it's time for Sound Move — the Ten-Year Regional Transit System Plan. This report is your guide to the Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority's proposal to increase our transportation system capacity by offering new choices for getting around the region — a mix of light rail, commuter rail, HOV Expressways, regional express bus routes, and community gateways — connections in urban and suburban areas for communities to connect to the rest of the region.

Why Sound Move?

What is the RTA?

One thing readily apparent about traffic is that it knows no limits — literally. Congestion doesn't stop at county lines. But until recently, jurisdiction for dealing with public transportation problems — and congestion — did. Recognizing this, the state Legislature authorized King, Pierce and Snohomish counties to create a single agency — the Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority (RTA) — to plan, build and operate a high-capacity transportation system within the region's most heavily used travel corridors. The RTA is governed by a board made up of local elected officials including mayors, city councilmembers, county executives and county councilmembers from within the RTA District, plus the state Transportation Department secretary (see page 8 for a list of RTA Boardmembers).

Over the last 25 years, our region's population has grown by 50 percent. Currently it is increasing at a rate of about 100 people per day. By the year 2020, 1.4 million more people will live here.



One problem is too much traffic and too little space.

Nationwide studies rate our region's traffic among the worst in the country. We've outgrown our current freeway system. And our unique terrain limits the available space to build new highways.

Sound Move is the RTA's proposal to take the first step toward fixing our region's transportation problems. Sound Move offers the region a package of transportation improvements that can provide the people-carrying capacity of another freeway to our transportation system at less cost — financially and environmentally — than building new highways. For example, the two-way light-rail line included in Sound Move can carry the same number of people as 12 freeway lanes, using much less right-of-way and at less than one-third the cost.



Growing and going

Last year, our region's population grew by more than 36,000, about 100 people per day. In another 25 years there will be 1.4 million more people living here. But little or no new capacity is being added to our transportation system.

Sound Move would add capacity to the transportation system and offer people an alternative to congestion. In the year 2010, with Sound Move in place, the number of trips people make in the region using transit is estimated to increase by 50 percent with as much as 40 percent of all rush-hour travel along interstate highways using a bus, carpool, vanpool or train.

Sound Move fits in with the region's adopted vision for maintaining our region's quality of life and preserving our environment. The system's purpose is to improve mobility by providing several convenient, reliable and energy-efficient alternatives to driving alone. At the same time, Sound Move is designed to help support adopted community plans.

Operating cost savings resulting from Sound Move would be used to provide new or improved local services or build new transit facilities specifically to address local needs.

One piece of the transportation puzzle

Sound Move isn't the only thing planned to help fix our regional transportation system. The plan was developed to fit within the state's transportation plan, local land-use plans and the region's comprehensive Metropolitan Transportation Plan. That plan includes all forms of transportation — high-capacity transit, local transit, HOV lanes, ferries, airports, automobiles, freight traffic, bicycles, and pedestrians.

The proposal also fits with the plans of local transit agencies who have been partners in regional transit planning. The RTA has designed new regional services that work with services provided by local transit agencies, offering a regionwide integrated system of routes, schedules and fares. New regional transit service would free up local service resulting in operating cost savings. Those savings would be used to provide new or improved local services or build new transit facilities specifically to address local needs.



Photo: Transit

New ways to travel (plus new connections)

Sound Move proposes adding new ways to travel around the region — a rapid transit system made up of electric light rail using new tracks, commuter rail using existing railroad tracks and regional express buses using a new HOV Expressway. The trains and buses would help large numbers of people travel along our region's most heavily travelled corridors.

Frequent and reliable service

The new regional rapid transit services — buses and trains — would operate primarily in right-of-way separated from other traffic. This means buses and trains could travel at top speeds, on time and on schedule. Customers would be able to rely on dependable, congestion-free service.

Light-rail trains and regional express buses would run on frequent schedules, offering two-way service 18 to 20 hours a day (which means people could use the service without having to decipher complicated schedules).

Gateways to the region — community connections

Combined with existing and planned local transit services, Sound Move would create more than 80 connections or gateways between communities and the rest of the region. Those gateways would include transit stations, park-and-ride lots, transit centers and rail stations creating community connections where people can reach their destination on foot, by bicycle, or by using other transportation services.

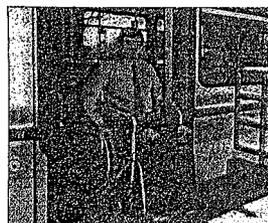
Easy system access

Sound Move is designed to 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.

The RTA will work with local transit agencies, communities and governments to place and design

transit facilities that fit with local community plans. This includes making improvements within one-half mile of each station for safe, easy transit, pedestrian and bicycle access.

Transit facility designs will be flexible, helping communities to tailor station designs to their environment. Standard features for transit customers 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 storage; and convenient access to allow smooth transfers from one type of transportation to another.



Sacramento light rail

Sound Move vehicles and stations would be fully accessible for people with disabilities.

The regional bus and rail system would directly connect almost all of the region's economic centers collectively employing more than 650,000 people with frequent, two-way, all-day service.



Miami commuter train

A one-ticket ride

Since high-capacity transportation provided by the RTA is just one part of the overall regional transportation system, it is important that Sound Move work well with services already being provided or planned at the local and statewide level. One way to make sure Sound Move provides a smooth connection with other services in the region is to develop a uniform, single-ticket fare system among local and regional transit providers. This would allow customers to use a single ticket or pass to travel on any and all of the types of transit within the region (i.e. local bus, regional bus, light rail, commuter rail and ferries). The RTA will work with public transportation providers in the region to develop an integrated fare policy for the entire public transit network.

About 258,000 trips are made each day in the Puget Sound region using public transit. With Sound Move in place, total transit system ridership is estimated to increase by 50 percent; and by year 2010 as many as 40 percent of all rush-hour trips on major highways would be made by transit or carpooling.

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, using common fare structures and coordinating schedules.

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.

The RTA will work with local transportation providers to make sure that local and regional transit schedules mesh.



Portland's MAX light rail and connecting buses

On track — investing in rail

Investing in rail

The RTA is proposing two types of rail transit — light rail and commuter rail — as a significant part of Sound Move because:

- trains travel in their own right-of-way, thus offering a high-speed alternative to cars
- trains in their own right-of-way are reliable — they aren't subject to highway delays caused by traffic, accidents, breakdowns or bad weather.

Electric light rail

Sound Move would serve the core of the region where transit ridership is highest with a new electric light-rail system. The plan includes 25 miles of light-rail with 26 stations within walking distance of major regional destinations, including:

- Education — the University of Washington, the UW Tacoma Campus, Seattle Central Community College, Seattle University and potentially North Seattle Community College.
- Health care — the UW Medical Center, Swedish Hospital, Harborview and Virginia Mason.

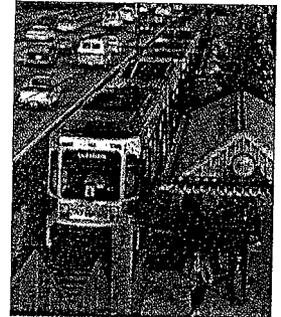
Cultural, convention and sports facilities — the Seattle Art Museum, the Tacoma Theater District, the new Washington State History Museum, Husky Stadium, the Kingdome, the Tacoma Dome, the Washington State Convention & Trade Center, Seattle Center (via Monorail connection) and Benaroya Hall (the new Seattle Symphony hall).

- Other transportation — Sea-Tac Airport, Colman Dock (the Washington State Ferries), King Street Station (commuter rail and Amtrak), the Monorail, Seattle's Waterfront Streetcar and a Tacoma Dome regional transportation terminal. Local and regional buses would serve the stations.

Light rail would use the downtown Seattle transit tunnel and stations (already designed to be rail-convertible). When trains begin operating with buses, the tunnel would be open nights and weekends, tripling its use.

Trains would provide two-way service 18 to 20 hours a day (running every six minutes during rush hours), every day, moving as many as 15,000 people an hour in each direction at maximum speeds of 55-65 m.p.h.

Because of the region's unique topography (hills, waterways, etc.), development patterns, and right-of-way limitations, the light-rail system includes surface-level, elevated and underground segments. Additional community planning and engineering will determine system final design.



Portland's MAX light rail

A two-way light-rail line provides the same people-moving capacity as 12 freeway lanes.

Rail in the most developed areas

The central I-5 travel corridor was selected for a light-rail line because it is the most congested area in the region with little or no room to expand freeway capacity. Arterial streets along the corridor are also congested.

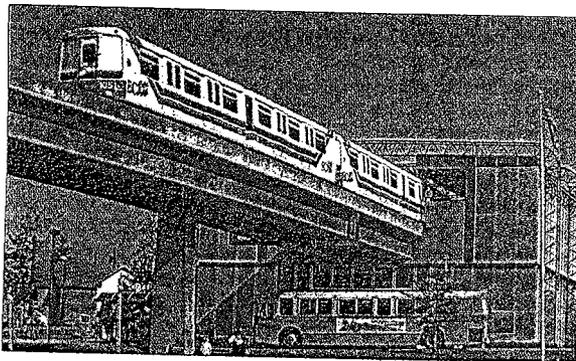
The proposed north-south light-rail system would serve the region's highest concentration of homes and jobs. About half a million people live along this corridor and about 300,000 people work or attend college along the proposed line.

The line would double corridor capacity, attracting an estimated 100,000 plus riders a day (almost four times the current ridership of Portland's 15.1-mile MAX line). This line is also the most cost-effective part of the region's envisioned long-range rail system.

The RTA estimates that about 32 million riders would use the system each year, collectively saving about 5 million hours of travel time annually.

Downtown Seattle to SeaTac

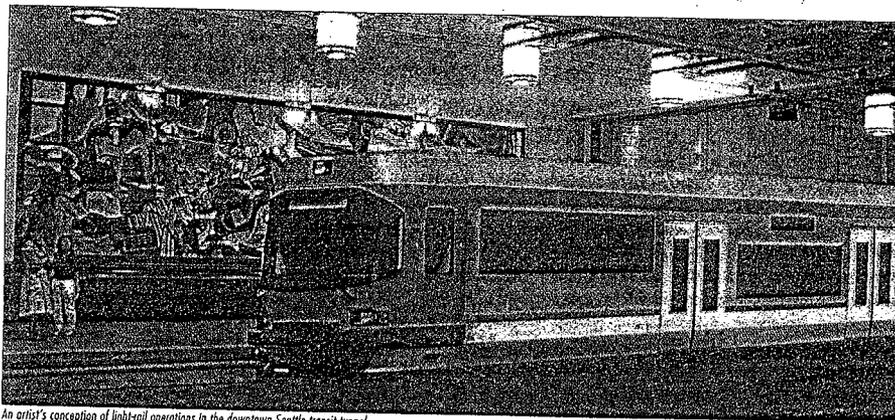
The RTA proposes a south light-rail route through Southeast Seattle (an area with the highest per capita transit ridership in the region) to SeaTac (where 32,000 people work each day). The preferred route includes five stations in Southeast Seattle, and stations at Boeing Access Road, in Tukwila, at the airport and in SeaTac. Between Boeing Access Road and SeaTac, the RTA will evaluate routes using SR-99 or Interurban Avenue to Southcenter.



Vancouver BC's Skytrain

Regional trains and buses would connect with local transit on coordinated schedules.

Light-rail trains would operate jointly with buses in downtown Seattle's transit tunnel, extending its service hours to evenings and Sundays and tripling the use of the facility.



An artist's conception of light-rail operations in the downtown Seattle transit tunnel

Downtown Seattle to the University District

The RTA proposes a north light-rail route from downtown Seattle to the University District (the second largest employment center and transit market in the region) through First Hill and Capitol Hill — two of the largest transit markets in the region. About 43,000 workers and students are concentrated in the area each weekday. More than half the people who work on First Hill live outside the City of Seattle and almost 20 percent live outside of King County.

University District to Northgate

The RTA will seek additional funding to extend the rail line from the University District to Northgate. This segment would be built during the ten-year plan period only if additional funding is available (such as higher than expected federal funds or through cost savings in building other parts of the light-rail system).

Downtown Tacoma - Tacoma Dome connection

Sound Move includes a 1.6-mile light-rail segment between downtown Tacoma and a Tacoma Dome regional transportation terminal serving major destinations with connections to regional and local buses, commuter rail and Amtrak. The Tacoma segment is also designed to serve local destinations such as the UW Tacoma campus under development, the Theater District, the new Washington State History Museum and the Tacoma Dome.

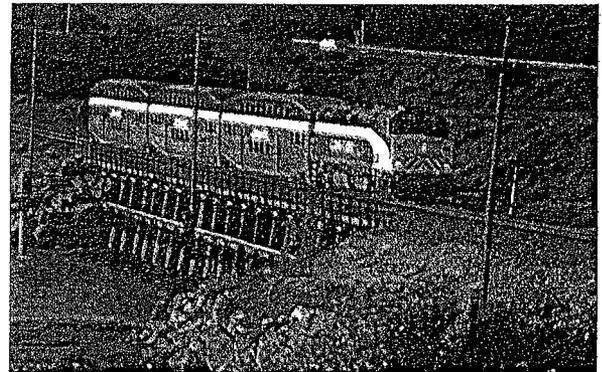
Commuter rail — Lakewood to Everett

The commuter rail component would add two-way rush-hour service using existing railroad tracks between Everett, Mukilteo, Edmonds, Seattle, Green River Valley communities, Tacoma and Lakewood. Commuter rail would offer a fast and dependable commute option. The 81-mile system includes 14 stations (and three provisional stations if funding permits) linking major destinations in Snohomish, Pierce and King counties including:

- Everett Multimodal Station (with connections to Everett Community College) and the Everett Bond Street Station.
- Mukilteo Station (with connections to the Whidbey Island ferry).



Toronto's GO commuter train



San Diego commuter train

- Edmonds Station (with connections to Amtrak and the Kingston ferry).
- Seattle's King Street Station (with connections to Amtrak, light-rail and the Waterfront Streetcar).
- Boeing Access Rd Station (with light-rail connections to the airport and southeast Seattle).
- Tukwila Station
- Kent Station
- Auburn Station
- Sumner Station
- Puyallup Station
- Tacoma Dome Station (with connections to Amtrak and the Tacoma light-rail line to downtown Tacoma).
- S. 56th Street Station (South Tacoma).
- Lakewood Station

Additional stations may be built in future phases. Commuter rail would share several stations with the state's expanded intercity

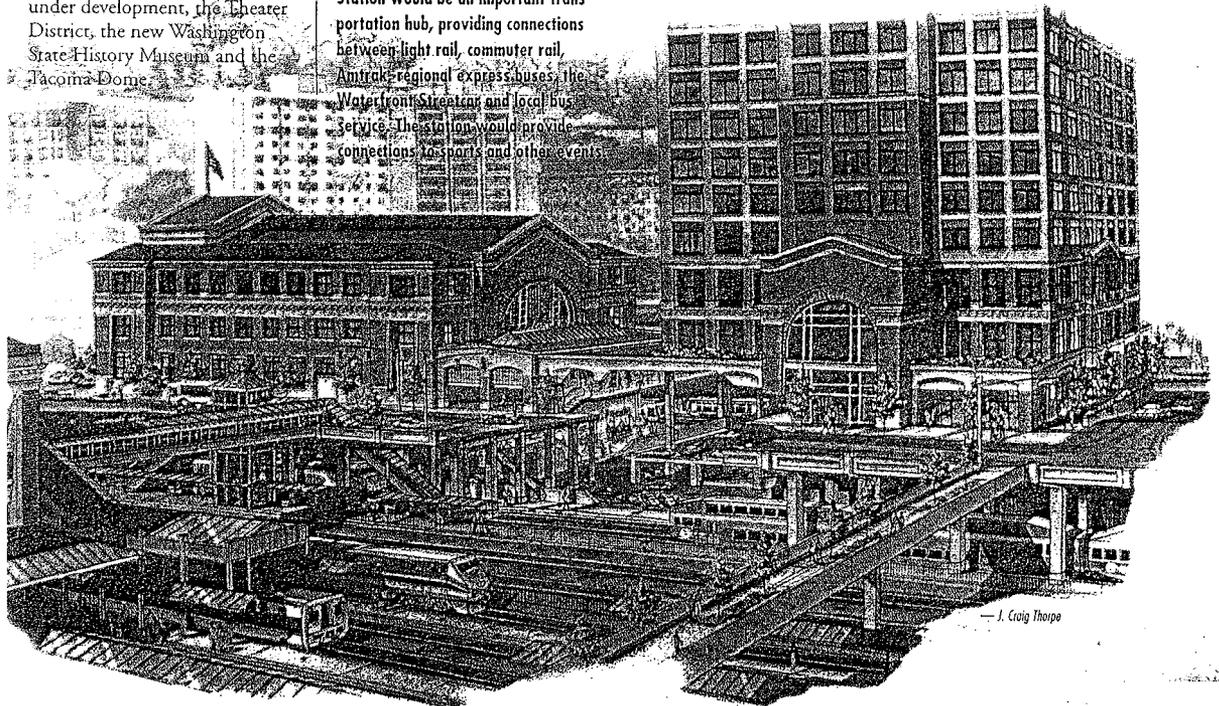
Commuter rail would share existing tracks with freight and Amtrak service.

rail service between Portland and Vancouver, B.C.

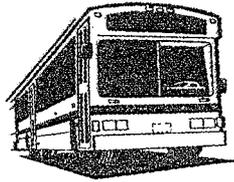
The commuter rail system would be capable of moving 6,000 people per hour (peak direction during rush hours), traveling at speeds of up to 79 m.p.h.

Commuter rail builds on a railroad network already in place, increasing the transportation system's people-moving capacity and, by making necessary track and signal improvements, improving the capacity of the network for other passenger and freight trains as well. Since commuter trains would stop at stations near the Kingdome and the Tacoma Dome, the RTA will explore the possibility of providing special event rail service.

King Street/International District Station would be an important transportation hub, providing connections between light rail, commuter rail, Amtrak regional express buses, the Waterfront Streetcar and local bus service. The station would provide connections to sports and other events.



— J. Craig Thorpe



HOV Expressway and regional express bus benefits:

The HOV Expressway would add capacity on I-405, I-90 and I-5, and improve connections to 24 major urban centers collectively employing more than 650,000 people.

The improved bus speeds and reliability created by the HOV Expressway would translate into travel time savings of about 6,000 hours a day for transit passengers and another 6,300 hours a day for carpool and vanpool users.

Regional express bus routes would offer high-speed, two-way service 18 hours a day to major destinations every 15 minutes during rush hours on most routes and every 15-30 minutes at other times.

Twenty new regional express bus routes:

- Woodinville - Bothell - Northgate
- Issaquah - Bellevue - Northgate
- Redmond - Bellevue - Mercer Island - Seattle
- Bellevue - Renton - SeaTac
- Redmond - Kirkland - University District
- Everett - Aurora Village
- Everett - Lynnwood - Mountlake Terrace - Seattle
- Everett - Mill Creek - Bothell - Kirkland - Bellevue
- Lynnwood - Bothell - Kirkland - Bellevue
- Federal Way - Auburn - Kent - Renton - Bellevue
- Puyallup - Auburn - Kent - Renton - Bellevue
- SeaTac - Burien - West Seattle - Seattle
- Tacoma - Federal Way - SeaTac
- Tacoma - Seattle
- Dupont - Lakewood - Seattle
- Tacoma - Auburn
- South Hill - Dupont
- Lakewood - Tacoma
- Mid-Pierce County - Tacoma
- Lakewood - South Hill - Puyallup

* All routes would be two-way, operating every 15-30 minutes throughout the day.

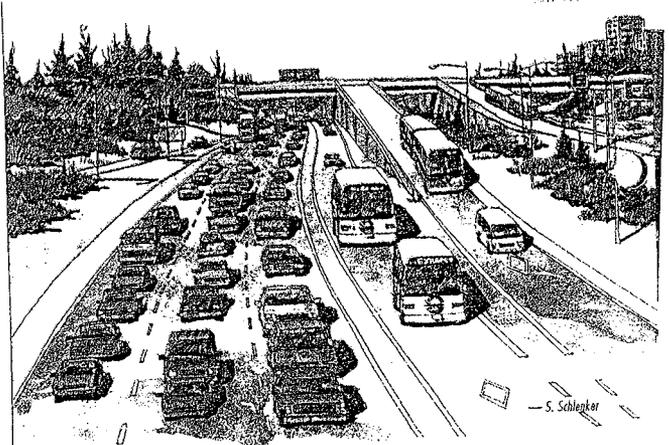
Traveling the HOV Expressway

An HOV Expressway combines more than 100 continuous (left side) miles of state-funded HOV lanes, and RTA-funded direct access ramps. The HOV Expressway would improve connections to 24 major urban centers. It would create new links between suburban centers serving our region's fastest growing areas with fast, efficient transportation options. A single HOV lane carries the same number of people as three general traffic lanes.

How the HOV Expressway works

The HOV Expressway would be developed through a partnership between the RTA and the state Transportation Department. The RTA would build direct HOV access ramps to the portions of the HOV-lane system that are in place or are funded and scheduled for construction. Direct access ramps are simply ramps that connect directly to an HOV lane, avoiding the need for vehicles to cross traffic to get in and out of the lane. Eliminating the often intricate weave through traffic to reach the HOV lanes would improve transit's speed and reliability and make the HOV system safer and easier to use. Eliminating the weave would also improve traffic flow in regular traffic lanes.

New regional express bus routes would serve 24 major employment centers.

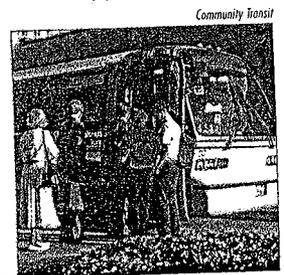


Regional express buses using HOV lanes with direct on/off ramps would provide fast, rail-like service.

Regional express buses would provide direct connections between suburban and urban centers.

The state Transportation Department would move all HOV lanes to the inside lane (particularly on I-405) and fill in gaps and extend its core HOV lane system. The RTA would fund conversion of the center lanes of I-90 to two-way operations instead of the current reversible operations to provide two-way HOV lanes across Lake Washington throughout the day.

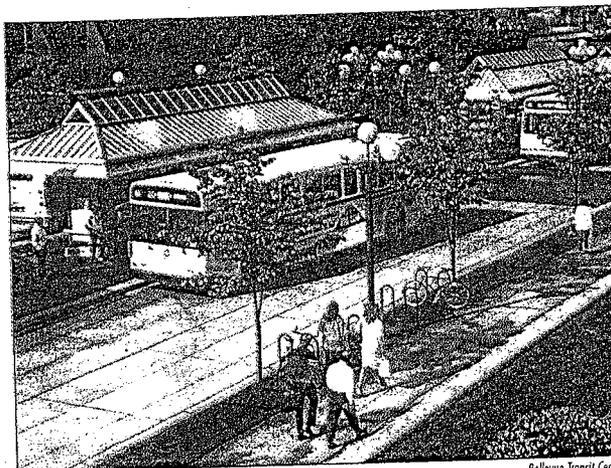
The HOV Expressway would allow buses to operate on the HOV system more like a rail system — making infrequent stops at rail-like stations, running at full speed between them on the HOV lane.



Regional express buses

Sound Move includes 20 new regional express bus routes, many of which would take advantage of the HOV Expressway and rail-like operations. The regional express bus routes would:

- offer high-speed, two-way service every 15 minutes during rush hours on most routes and every 15-30 minutes at other times to major regional centers and destinations throughout the day and evening.
- when combined with other Sound Move components, free up local transit service and reduce operating costs. These cost savings would be used to provide new or improved local services or build new transit facilities to address local needs.



Bellevue Transit Center

Investing in Sound Move

Sound Move components have both costs and dividends. The citizens of the Puget Sound region need to know exactly how and where their money will be used and have assurances that the money is used appropriately.

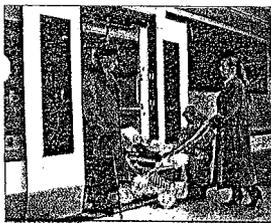
Paying for Sound Move

Sound Move would be paid for with voter-approved increases in local taxes, federal grants, bonding and farebox revenues. Approval of local funding is required before any components can be implemented.

Citizens within the RTA District (made up of most of the urban areas of King, Pierce and Snohomish counties) will be asked November 5 whether or not to approve the local portion of the funding package. That package includes a local sales tax increase of 4/10 of one percent and a motor vehicle excise (license tab) tax increase of 3/10 of one percent. The average income household would pay \$8 per month in added sales tax and license tab tax.

No property taxes would be used to pay for Sound Move.

Sound Move would improve regionwide connections.



Schindler level-loading train car

Conservative cost estimates

An independent expert review panel appointed by the governor and the state Legislature has stated that Sound Move ridership and cost estimates are conservative. The panel reviewed RTA ridership and cost estimation methods and concluded that, "... the breadth and depth of the analysis is far beyond what other U.S. cities have done prior to public decisions."

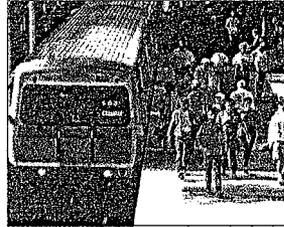
Project costs and revenues for Sound Move have been carefully estimated to provide a cushion in case there are unforeseen expenses or changes in revenues.

Local taxes benefit local areas

The RTA Board recognized that it is important for taxpayers to understand the benefits they would receive from the taxes they pay. Local tax revenues raised within the RTA District would be used to benefit the five subareas of the RTA District (Snohomish County, North King County, South King County, East King County and Pierce County) based on the share of revenues each subarea generates. In other words, the taxpayers in one area of the region won't be asked to pay for parts of Sound Move that directly benefit taxpayers in a different part of the region.

Keeping on track and within budget

The RTA has adopted strict cost-management control principles to avoid cost-overruns. The RTA will use independent auditors and a citizen oversight committee to help assure that the authority is fully accountable to the public and to help Sound Move stay on schedule and within budget. The authority will also use independent professional value



Atlanta's MARTA rapid transit

Transit can be an effective way to serve special events. More than a million trips were taken on Atlanta's MARTA daily during the 1996 Olympics.

engineering to analyze preliminary designs and identify less expensive ways of completing projects.

Expanding on Sound Move or rolling back the tax rate

The RTA Board is committed to completing Sound Move within ten years of voter approval. Any second phase capital expansion program which would use the local tax increases would require another vote within the RTA District. If voters say no to a second phase, the RTA would roll the sales tax rate back to a level necessary to cover operating and maintenance for the initial system.

The dividends

Transportation and the ability to get around is one of life's basic necessities. Mobility affects our economy and our environment. Investing in our transportation system to keep pace with our growing population can enhance economic stability and add to the tax base of the region by attracting businesses and jobs. These additional tax revenues can be used to address other needs like schools, housing, public safety, etc.

Moving people and making connections

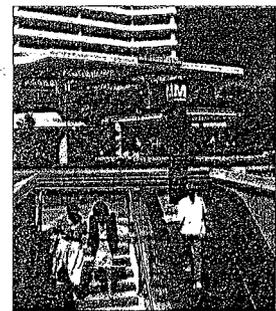
Sound Move expands on existing local transit services with a convenient, reliable, and easy-to-use regional system that is less susceptible to congestion than current services. Sound Move would improve regionwide connections providing increased access to job sites, schools, shops, museums, parks, theaters and sports arenas. The regional bus and rail system would directly connect economic centers collectively employing more than 650,000 people with frequent, two-way, all-day service.

The environment

Cars are our largest source of air pollution, energy use and land consumption. All types of public transportation produce much less air pollutants per rider than a single-occupant car. And Sound Move offers energy-efficient alternatives to driving alone.

The economy

In addition to improving the transportation system, Sound Move is estimated to generate up to \$350 million a year in travel time savings and general economic benefits. The economic benefits include increased commercial activity from new businesses attracted to the region; reduced delays for private and commercial vehicles; construction and related jobs (as many as 8,500 annually while the system is being built); increased rail freight mobility (from track improvements necessary to implement commuter rail); and air quality and health benefits.



Metrorail station

The Commonwealth of Virginia's investment in Washington D.C.'s Metrorail system is projected to spur \$15 billion in new development and generate 90,000 permanent private sector jobs by the year 2010.

Ten-Year Revenues

All figures in 1995 \$ millions

Local taxes	\$1,980
Bonding	\$1,052
Federal	\$727
Farebox / other	\$155
Total	\$3,914

Ten-Year Costs

All figures in 1995 \$ millions

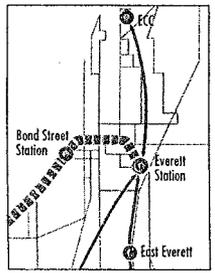
HOV Expressway access ramps	\$377
Regional express bus	\$361
Commuter rail	\$669
Electric light rail	\$1,801
Community connections	\$255
Regional fund / reserves	\$280
Debt service	\$171
Total	\$3,914

Sound Move ten-year estimates include all costs to build and run the system including community planning, engineering, design, environmental mitigation, full accessibility, safety features, station amenities, and a contingency for unforeseen expenses.

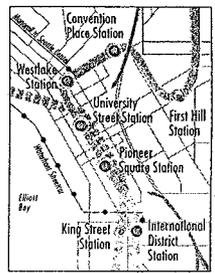
Sound Move

The RTA's first step toward fixing our region's transportation problems

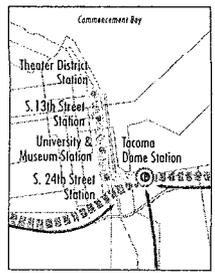
Downtown Everett detail



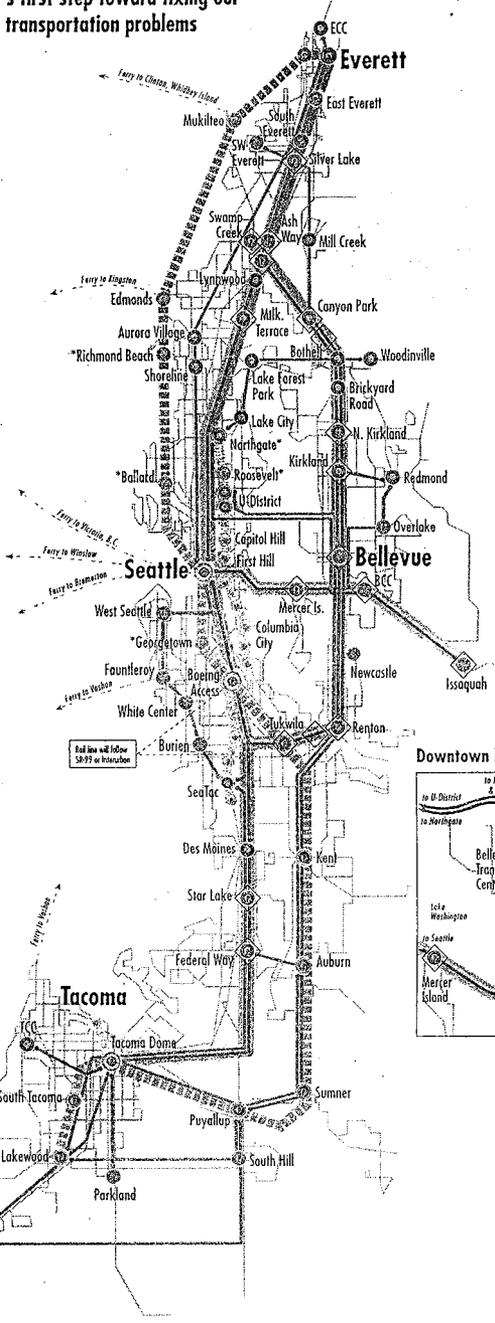
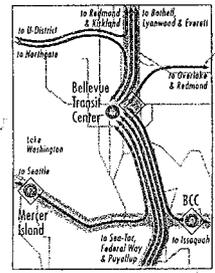
Downtown Seattle detail



Downtown Tacoma detail



Downtown Bellevue detail



Note: Full implementation of the HOV Expressway requires partnership with the Washington State Department of Transportation.

* Provisional station subject to funding availability from within the North King County suburbs.

RTA District Boundary:
The area in white shows the portions of King, Pierce and Snohomish counties where Sound Move benefits would be directly realized and, in which local taxes (authorized by voters within the district boundaries) would be collected.

Map key:

Electric light-rail service
Electric light-rail trains in the region's most densely-developed areas. Dashed line indicates the portion of the light-rail system that will be built if additional funding is secured.

Commuter rail service
Trains using existing railroad tracks between Everett, Seattle, Tacoma and Lakewood.

HOV Expressway
A continuous system of HOV lanes with special access ramps for transit and carpools. Diamonds indicate direct access ramps or flyer stops.

Regional express bus service
New express bus routes using the HOV Expressway, major arterials and expanded system of park-and-ride lots.

Community connections
Major points where local and regional transit services connect. "P" indicates park-and-ride enhancements or new capacity.

Local bus service
Network of bus routes provided by local transit agencies.

RTA Boardmembers

- Chair —**
Bob Drewel, Snohomish County Executive
- Vice Chairs —**
Paul Miller, City of Tacoma Councilmember
Greg Nickels, King County Councilmember
- Boardmembers —**
Martha Choe, City of Seattle Councilmember
Ann Kirk Davis, City of Lakewood Councilmember
Dave Earling, City of Edmonds Councilmember
Mary Gates, City of Federal Way Councilmember
Jane Hague, King County Councilmember
Ed Hansen, City of Everett Mayor
Gary Locke, King County Executive
Rob McKenna, King County Councilmember
Sid Morrison, State Transportation Dept. Secretary
Norm Rice, City of Seattle Mayor
Dave Russell, City of Kirkland Councilmember
Cynthia Sullivan, King County Councilmember
Bill Stoner, Pierce County Councilmember
Doug Sutherland, Pierce County Executive
Jim White, City of Kent Mayor

RTA Executive Director —
Bob White

Want to know more about Sound Move?

All RTA information is available in accessible formats on request at 684-6776 (voice) or 684-1395 (TDD). If you'd like more information about the RTA or Sound Move:

- Write:**
Regional Transit Authority
821 Second Avenue, M.S. 151
Seattle, WA 98104-1598
- Call toll free:**
1-800-201-4900
- E-mail:**
rta@scn.org
- Visit our internet site (think of it as an HOV lane on the information highway) —**
<http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/CPSRTA/>

From several sources. A list of references is available on request.



Cover photo: Portland's MAX light rail