

Seattle Transit Study

for Intermediate Capacity Transit

Look inside for:

- ➔ A faster way to get around Seattle—Intermediate Capacity Transit (ICT)
- ➔ Recommendations for ICT between West Seattle–Downtown–Ballard–Northgate



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Strategic Planning Office

Want to learn more about the Seattle Transit Study or the Ballard-Fremont-U-District Corridor?

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Want to get involved in planning for the West Seattle-Downtown-Ballard-Northgate Corridor?

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www.elevated.org



Seattle Transportation

Want to find out how the City maintains our transportation system?

CONTACT 206.684.ROAD
www.cityofseattle.net/td/ashome.asp



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CITY OF SEATTLE
PAUL SCHELL, MAYOR
STRATEGIC PLANNING OFFICE
DENNA CLINE, DIRECTOR

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Summary Report

An integrated transportation network is key to Seattle's high quality of life. **Intermediate Capacity Transit (ICT)** is part of this network, offering higher passenger carrying capacity and more dependability than our current transit system of buses mixed in with traffic.

The City, its partner agencies, and a consultant team have been examining the feasibility of ICT since June 2000. ICT technologies examined include:

Bus Rapid Transit – buses moving quickly and reliably in transit-only lanes or with devices that activate green lights at intersections

Street Cars & Trams – electric vehicles running on rails in the streets

Elevated Transit (like monorail) – electric vehicles separated from traffic

ICT service would connect neighborhoods directly to each other, to major destinations, and to transit transfer stations. There would be fewer stops than regular bus service so travel would be faster. ICT would improve Seattle's transportation system, giving us more transportation choices and less dependence on cars.

Based on technical studies, stakeholder meetings and input from the public, we recommend moving ahead with ICT from West Seattle through Downtown to Ballard and Northgate.

Please look inside to see how we arrived at this recommendation and what comes next. Maps show how a system of ICT might serve Seattle, recommendations for an initial corridor, what ICT technologies might work best in different parts of the corridor, and more.

How We Did the Study

The Seattle Transit Study was led by a partnership of agencies responsible for transportation in Seattle:

- City of Seattle
 - Elevated Transportation Company
 - King County
 - Sound Transit
 - Washington State Department of Transportation
- These agencies and a consultant team experienced in transportation planning and engineering developed technical information for review by staff and the public. Technical information included:
- Ridership projections
 - Costs to build and operate
 - Conceptual engineering and operational designs
 - Preliminary identification of potential environmental impacts in corridors

In the first part of the study, conducted in 2000, we focused on identifying corridors which could form a future ICT system. (See **Creating the Future System** inside.)

During 2001, the study focused on two corridors that could provide the beginning of this future system. (See **Recommendations** inside.)

What We Learned

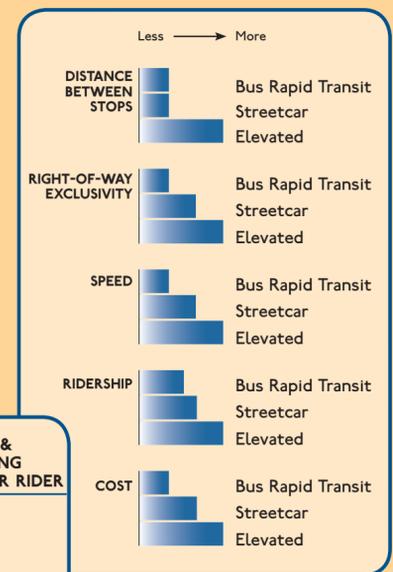
Making a decision requires balancing the different trade-offs each route and technology present.

SPEED ➔ RIDERSHIP ➔ COST

The faster a technology is, the more time transit riders save. Two main elements impact overall travel time: dedicated right-of-way (not having to share space with other vehicles) and the distance between stops. A combination of exclusive right-of-way and greater stop spacing makes elevated transit the fastest technology.

Generally, faster technologies attracts more riders but cost more to build.

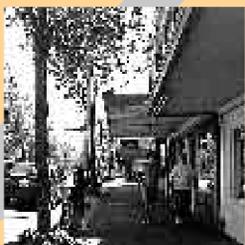
CORRIDOR	DAILY RIDERS	CAPITAL COST (in Millions)	COST PER MILE (in Millions)	CAPITAL & OPERATING COST PER RIDER
NORTH SEATTLE				
Elevated	56,100	\$1,037	\$79	\$5.75
Streetcar	33,500	733	54	8.05
Bus Rapid Transit	32,500	187	12	2.60
WEST SEATTLE				
Elevated	28,700	899	89	9.60
Streetcar	25,700	461	55	6.50
Bus Rapid Transit	10,200	114	11	5.10



"Make sure the system is close to where people live."



"Build a real 24-hour transit center with transit connections, retail space (food, drug store, dry cleaners, restaurant and maybe even a cinema) and parking."



What We Heard

Advice from the public was an important part of the Seattle Transit Study. We met with stakeholders representing neighborhoods and businesses in the North Seattle and West Seattle corridors.

We also held five open house meetings that more than 200 people attended. Study materials were available on our website, and newsletters were mailed to the public. We invited comments in person, over the phone or internet, and in writing. These are the issues we heard most often:

- Integrate ICT service with other transit systems including neighborhood bus connectors
- Consider parking impacts, including loss of on-street parking
- Accommodate freight mobility
- Consider pedestrian and bicycle impacts
- Consider benefits to current transit users

"Make sure to accommodate bikes."



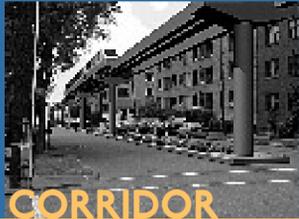
"Create and maintain attractive pedestrian environments."

"Create and maintain attractive pedestrian environments."



Recommendations

WEST SEATTLE – DOWNTOWN – BALLARD – NORTHGATE



NORTH SEATTLE CORRIDOR

The study showed that elevated transit may be best for this corridor.

- Elevated transit attracts a significant number of new riders and provides the greatest travel time advantage for current riders.
- Elevated transit would need a dedicated ICT structure to cross the Lake Washington Ship Canal.
- Serving Northgate, a regional urban center and transit hub, maximizes the investment of building the line across the Ship Canal.

KEY FACTS (elevated only)

Daily Ridership	37,000 – 50,000
Capital Costs	\$600 – 850 million
Capital Cost per Rider	\$5 – 6



WEST SEATTLE CORRIDOR

The study showed that whether ICT service connects West Seattle to Downtown from West Seattle Junction or Morgan Junction, no one technology is clearly better than another.

- Elevated transit would attract slightly more riders than other modes at a higher cost.
- Streetcars would approach the speed and ridership numbers of elevated transit if stops were spaced, similar to elevated, one mile apart instead of every quarter mile.
- Bus Rapid Transit, with stops every quarter mile, would also attract a similar level of new riders and would have much lower start-up costs.

KEY FACTS (elevated, streetcar & bus rapid transit)

Daily Ridership	10,000 – 26,000
Capital Costs	\$60 – 680 million
Capital Cost per Rider	\$5 – 12

During the study we looked at two corridors in more detail because ICT looked very promising:

- Northgate–Ballard–Downtown
- West Seattle–Downtown

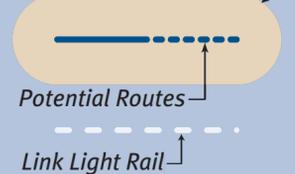
NEIGHBORHOOD TRANSPORTATION CENTERS

Neighborhood transportation centers in West Seattle, Ballard and Northgate will make ICT more effective. They will support local communities and business districts by concentrating transportation services and offering more choices for getting around. On-site features and services could include express bus service, convenient transfer points, taxi stands, car sharing, vanpool meeting points, easy pedestrian access, secure bike racks and off-street parking.

Strong neighborhood business districts bring shopping and entertainment close to home and convenient to transit. That means less driving.



Proposed ICT Corridors



CREATING THE FUTURE SYSTEM

Forty-seven routes were considered, drawn from neighborhood plans, previous studies, public suggestions and the work of City staff. From these 47 routes, seven broad corridors were selected for further study. Five of these corridors were identified as potentially feasible:

- Aurora–Greenwood–Downtown
- Ballard–Fremont–U-District
- Downtown & Environs
- Lake City–Northgate–Ballard–Downtown
- West Seattle–Downtown

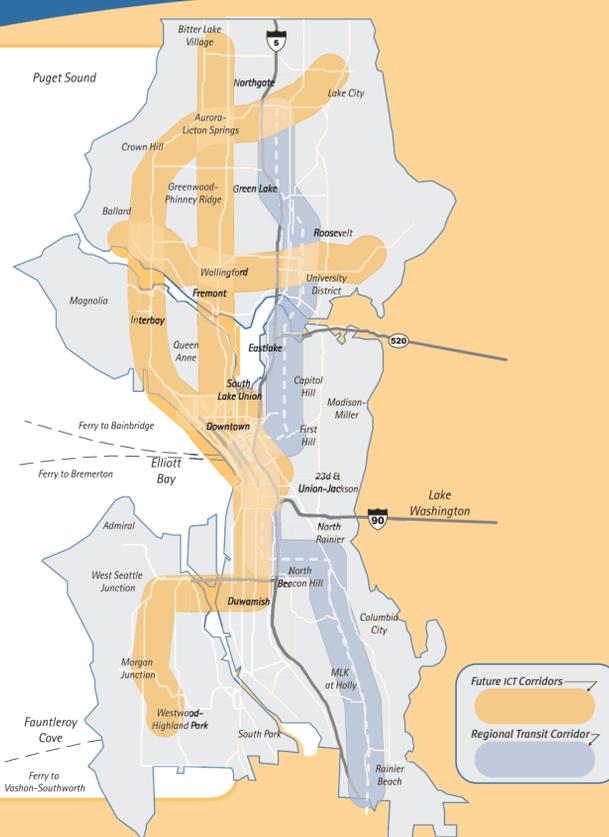
Corridor feasibility was determined by several key factors:

- Ability to carry existing and new transit riders
- Cost of implementing technology
- Potential impacts within the corridors

An integrated system may eventually be developed along all five corridors. Combined with the two regional transit corridors planned by Sound Transit, these corridors represent the backbone of a transit network for Seattle.

Since implementation of all seven corridors may take 30 years to complete, they must be integrated into existing plans. Two steps can help make this vision a reality:

- Designate the five ICT corridors and two Sound Transit corridors as part of the City's long-range transportation plan.
- Look for opportunities to support the long-range transit plan as the City and other agencies consider major transportation projects.



WHAT'S NEXT

Building on the results of this study, we're working to fulfill the vision of an integrated transportation system for Seattle:

- Assisting the Elevated Transportation Company (ETC) as they develop a Seattle Popular Transit plan to submit to the voters in November 2002.
- Incorporating the Future System into the City's long-range plans.
- Exploring development of neighborhood transportation centers in West Seattle's Alaska Junction, Delridge (near the West Seattle Bridge), Ballard and Northgate.
- Working on another important corridor. We will coordinate with King County Metro and neighborhoods along the Ballard–Fremont–U-District corridor to make transit service more reliable.

While all this is happening, we'll continue to improve our transportation system in other ways: maintaining streets, sidewalks and bridges; synchronizing traffic lights; adding more bike paths and sidewalks; supporting car sharing and more.