

Madison Street BRT
Seattle, Washington
Small Starts Project Development
(Rating Assigned November 2019)

Summary Description	
Proposed Project:	Bus Rapid Transit 2.3 Miles, 10 Stations
Total Capital Cost (\$YOE):	\$121.18 Million
Section 5309 CIG Share (\$YOE):	\$59.90 Million (49.4%)
Annual Operating Cost (opening year 2022):	\$6.67 Million
Current Year Ridership Forecast (2015):	12,300 Daily Linked Trips 3,685,800 Annual Linked Trips
Horizon Year Ridership Forecast (2035):	17,600 Daily Linked Trips 5,255,500 Annual Linked Trips
Overall Project Rating:	High
Project Justification Rating:	Medium-High
Local Financial Commitment Rating:	High

Project Description: The City of Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) proposes to construct an east-west bus rapid transit line along Madison Street connecting downtown Seattle in the west to the Madison Valley neighborhood in the east. SDOT expects 1.5 miles of the proposed project to be in dedicated transit lanes. The project includes transit signal priority, a real-time bus arrival information system, and the purchase of nine low-floor diesel electric buses. On weekdays, service is planned to operate every six minutes during daytime hours, and every 15 minutes during evening periods. On weekends, service is planned to operate every 15 minutes.

Project Purpose: SDOT expects the project to improve transit capacity, travel time, mobility and reliability in a crowded transit corridor. It provides a vital east-west connection through rapidly growing neighborhoods, while making related improvements to pedestrian and bicycle access to stations.

Project Development History, Status and Next Steps: The project was adopted into the region's fiscally constrained long-range transportation plan in June 2015. SDOT formally adopted a locally preferred alternative in February 2016. The project entered Small Starts Project Development in April 2016. SDOT completed the environmental review with receipt of a Categorical Exclusion from FTA in December 2017. SDOT anticipates receipt of a Small Starts Grant Agreement in late 2020, and the start of revenue service in March 2022.

Significant Changes Since Last Evaluation (November 2018): No significant changes.

Locally Proposed Financial Plan

<u>Source of Funds</u>	<u>Total Funds (\$million)</u>	<u>Percent of Total</u>
Federal:		
Section 5309 Small Starts	\$59.90	49.4%
FHWA Flexible Funds (Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality)	\$9.66	7.9%
State:		
Connecting Washington Grant	\$2.54	2.1%
Local:		
Sound Transit Sales and Use Tax, Motor Vehicle Excise Tax, Property Tax and Rental Car Tax Revenues and Bonds	\$28.50	23.5%
Levy to Move Seattle Property Tax Revenues	\$15.00	12.4%
King County Local Sales Tax Revenues	\$3.46	2.9%
City of Seattle Real Estate Excise Tax, Vehicle Licensing Fee, Development Mitigation Fee and Other Transportation Revenues	\$2.12	1.8%
Total:	\$121.18	100.0%

NOTE: The financial plan reflected in this table has been developed by the project sponsor and does not reflect a commitment by DOT or FTA. The sum of the figures may differ from the total as listed due to rounding.

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LAND USE RATING: Medium-High

The land use rating reflects population density within one-half mile of proposed stations, employment served by the line, and the share of legally binding affordability restricted (LBAR) housing in the station areas compared to the share in the surrounding county.

- The average population density across all station areas is 16,100 persons per square mile, which corresponds to a High rating. Total employment in the station areas is 133,000, corresponding to a Medium rating by FTA benchmarks. Typical daily maximum parking cost in the CBD is \$30, which rates High. The proportion of LBAR housing in the project corridor compared to the proportion in the county through which the project travels is 3.60, which rates High by FTA benchmarks.
- Downtown Seattle is characterized by mid- to high-rise mixed-use office, residential, and institutional buildings. East of I-5, mid-rise residential, office, and institutional uses continue in the First Hill neighborhood. East of Broadway, the character becomes more residential and density decreases somewhat but residential development is still primarily multi-family (typically three to six stories) with retail along major streets. The retail development is surrounded by residential neighborhoods of small-lot single-family and clusters of two- to three-story apartment buildings and townhouses.
- The corridor is highly walkable, with pedestrian facilities and a compact street grid.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT RATING: High

Transit-Supportive Plans and Policies: High

- *Transit-Supportive Corridor Policies:* Seattle has a very strong planning emphasis on transit-oriented and compact development. The City's current comprehensive plan (2005) directs 58 percent of future housing and 73 percent of employment growth within the boundaries of Urban Centers and Urban Villages, with the greatest percentage of that growth directed at the Urban Centers of greater downtown. These percentages would be further increased per the draft comprehensive plan update that is expected to be adopted in late 2016. Neighborhood plans support increasing densities along the corridor, with growth focused in neighborhood centers along Madison Street and other major arterials, and include design guidelines for pedestrian-oriented streetscapes. Seattle's Design Review Guidelines apply to downtown development and address the streetscape to reinforce positive urban form and a strong pedestrian environment. The City has continued to program capital improvements to address pedestrian deficiencies. Parking policies include residential permit zones, on-street priced parking, and prioritizing curb space for transit.
- *Supportive Zoning Regulations Near Transit Stations:* The city's most intensively zoned land use districts are found in the downtown portion of the corridor where incentives are extensively applied to leverage public amenities and transfer of development rights are used. East of the downtown corridor, zoning permits maximum floor area ratios (FARs) in low-rise zones, as well as high-rise zones. Design requirements set small setbacks, restrict parking, and require prominent pedestrian entries. Pedestrian zones limit auto-oriented uses in business districts including along much of Madison Street. Recent code updates increased flexibility for multi-family and mixed-use projects. Parking maximums exist for all non-residential development and minimums are eliminated in designated locations including transit corridors.
- *Tools to Implement Land Use Policies:* Regional and local government agencies have been leading transit-supportive planning and outreach for some time. These efforts have included station area planning efforts led by Sound Transit and the City of Seattle for the existing and planned light rail system. Seattle has a multi-family tax exemption program that has been applied for developments with an affordable housing component in transit station areas. A plan-level environmental impact review can be conducted for major projects to streamline state-level review requirements.

Performance and Impacts of Policies: High

- *Performance of Land Use Policies:* Development in the Madison Street corridor is occurring at a robust

pace. Since 2014, 69 projects have added over 3,100 housing units and 200,000 square feet of commercial space to the corridor. There are 280 projects currently in development in the station areas. These are typically three- to six-story multi-family residential and mixed-use developments, with larger-scale (six to 20 stories or more) projects in the downtown and First Hill neighborhoods.

- *Potential Impact of Transit Investment on Regional Land Use:* The corridor is heavily built up, but the recent volume of infill redevelopment indicates that there is significant potential for further intensification of uses. Over 100 parcels totaling about 62 acres were identified as “redevelopable” within the corridor.

Tools to Maintain or Increase Share of Affordable Housing: Medium-High

- Seattle has adopted a range of plans and policies to support affordable housing, using both public and private market tools. The City is developing new policy goals that will direct the vast majority of new affordable housing into transit communities. The City’s comprehensive plan includes housing production targets by income category. Seattle makes use of incentive zoning, allowing additional residential or non-residential floor area beyond base height or FAR limits to be achieved in certain zones for a variety of incentives including provision of affordable housing. The City’s multi-family tax exemption program also leverages affordable units.

Madison Street BRT - Seattle, Washington

