

# THE AMBAUM-DELRIDGE SERVICE IMPLEMENTATION FINAL REPORT – AUGUST 2005

## Introduction

The Ambaum-Delridge corridor was the major focus for September 2004 service changes that restructured transit service in the Burien, Des Moines, White Center, Shorewood, Highland Park, and Delridge areas of Southwest Seattle and Southwest King County. These changes build on an earlier round of service improvements implemented in September 1998 as part of King County Metro's first Six-Year Transit Development Plan. Steady ridership growth along Ambaum Boulevard SW and Delridge Way SW coupled with stagnant or declining ridership in West Seattle and Burien outside the Ambaum-Delridge corridor provided the impetus for a major restructuring service in the area in the context of no new hours available for the project.

Specific objectives guiding the restructure were:

- Make the best use of existing resources in a zero-sum budget environment to increase transit ridership.
- Shift resources within the service area to respond to the ridership growth trend along Ambaum Boulevard and Delridge Way.
- Improve connections between bus routes through improvements to core frequencies.
- Enhance passenger facilities at bus stops in the area.

Advance planning for the service restructure began in Fall 2002. The restructuring was a multi-faceted effort taking advantage of previous Transit Division experiences in coordinating service revisions, facility improvements, operator outreach at bases, and field checks of service quality after a service change.

The restructuring entailed reallocating service hours from services that carried less ridership, specifically midday SR-509 express trips as well as hourly local services with close coverage, to a consolidated core service along Ambaum and Delridge. Major aspects of the change were:

- New Route 120 replaced services generally operating every 30 to 60 minutes with a consolidated service operating every 15 minutes or better on weekdays, and upgraded most evening and weekend service to every 30 minutes. King County Metro's new air-conditioned, low-floor articulated buses were assigned to Route 120.
- New Route 125 provided replacement service to South Seattle Community College with expanded peak 15-minute service in both directions, more 30-minute service evenings and weekends, and later hours of operation. Trips on Route 125 also were through-routed with Route 11 to provide a no-transfer "college-to-college" connection between South Seattle Community College and Seattle Central Community College on Capitol Hill.
- Less productive midday express trips on SR-509 express services were reduced by 50%, and the three SR-509 routes were renumbered for better distinction between freeway and local arterial services.
- Local service between White Center, Highland Park, and downtown Seattle was consolidated into a single new route, Route 23, and 30-minute frequency was maintained.
- Local all-day transit service between Burien and Park Lake (adjacent to White Center) was consolidated from two routes to a single new route, Route 131.
- Limited directional service on weekdays was provided along 4th Avenue SW between Burien and Park Lake in the form of new Route 134 as a response to adverse public reaction to complete discontinuation of service along a portion of 4th. This street is three blocks from parallel local service in the 1st Avenue S corridor.
- Facility improvements were made along Delridge Way SW and Ambaum Boulevard SW. These are described in more detail below.

## Ridership Results

Preliminary weekday Automatic Passenger Counter (APC) observations through Spring 2005 indicate that average weekday daily rides in the entire area have continued to increase.

	<b>Fall 2003</b>	<b>Spring 2005</b>	<b>Percentage Change</b>
<b>Total Weekday Riders</b>	13,800	14,900	+ 8.0%

By comparison, the overall system ridership grew 4%-5% system growth between Fall 2003 (91.6 million excluding Sound Transit) and Fall 2004 (95-96 million), based on annualized Fall 2003 APC data adjusted to include the ride-free area. Most of the growth between Fall 2004 and Spring 2005 can be attributed to increasing ridership on Route 120.

### Ambaum-Delridge corridor

The new core service on Route 120 has experienced a ridership growth rate much higher than the 4%-5% system growth between Fall 2003 and Fall 2004. Following the route promotion activities in Fall 2004, weekday ridership continued to increase, growing from Fall 2004 through Spring 2005 by nearly 600 daily rides or +12%. Weekend ridership has grown even more steeply, particularly on Saturday where maximum loads average 44 riders or more over most of the day's trips. West Seattle and South King County service initiatives have been proposed for 2006 to consolidate duplicative service as a means of generating redeployable hours to help improve Route 120 Saturday frequency to every 15 minutes.

<b>Ambaum-Delridge Corridor Ridership</b>	<b>Fall 2003 (portions of four former routes)</b>	<b>Fall 2004 (new Route 120)</b>	<b>Spring 2005 (new Route 120)</b>	<b>Fall 2003 – Spring 2005 Percentage Change</b>
<b>Weekday Riders</b>	3,888	4,935	5,516	+ 41.9%
<b>Saturday Riders</b>	2,790	2,688	3,302	+ 18.4%
<b>Sunday Riders</b>	1,894	2,301	2,774	+ 46.5%

### South Seattle Community College

The increase in weekday ridership on new Route 125 serving Shorewood and South Seattle Community College has been more modest, close to the system rate of growth. However, APC data indicate a significant increase in weekend ridership.

<b>SSCC &amp; 16th Ave SW Ridership</b>	<b>Fall 2003 (portion of former Route 135)</b>	<b>Spring 2005 (portion of new Route 125)</b>	<b>Percentage Change</b>
<b>Weekday Riders</b>	1,669	1,707	+ 2.3%
<b>Saturday Riders</b>	667	827	+ 24.0%
<b>Sunday Riders</b>	348	601	+ 72.4%

### SR-509 Express services

APC data to date indicate that ridership has declined on the SR-509 Express services since Fall 2003. This has not been surprising, considering that half of the former midday express trips have been discontinued. Following several adjustments to schedules and connections implemented in February 2005 in response to customer comments, ridership has stabilized.

<b>SR-509 Express Ridership</b>	<b>Fall 2003 (former routes 130-Express, 132-Express, and 137-Express)</b>	<b>Spring 2005 (new routes 121, 122, and 123)</b>	<b>Percentage Change</b>
<b>Weekday Riders</b>	1,964	1,692	- 13.8%

Burien, Des Moines, and Highland Park local services

Weekday daily rides on local service serving Burien, Des Moines, and Highland Park have declined slightly over Fall 2003 levels, while weekend ridership has declined on Saturday but increased modestly on Sunday. The retention of limited weekday service on 4th Avenue SW by operating new Route 134 in combination with consolidated service on new Route 131 has helped to maintain weekday ridership. On weekends, only routes 131 and 132 operate.

<b>Burien / Des Moines Local Ridership</b>	<b>Fall 2003 (portions of former routes 130 and 137, plus routes 132 and 139)</b>	<b>Spring 2005 (new routes 131 and 134, plus routes 132 and 139)</b>	<b>Percentage Change</b>
<b>Weekday Riders</b>	4,027	3,977	- 1.2%
<b>Saturday Riders</b>	2,926	2,674	- 8.6%
<b>Sunday Riders</b>	2,113	2,206	+ 4.4%

After an initial loss of 3% in weekday ridership, Route 23 rebounded to grow 5% from Fall 2004 through Spring 2005. On weekends, ridership has also increased so that Saturday now shows only a slight decrease and Sunday a positive increase over ridership levels before the restructure. Schedule adjustments were implemented in February 2005 to shorten the transfer waiting times between routes 23 and 120 in White Center for making connections to and from Burien.

<b>Highland Park / SODO Ridership</b>	<b>Fall 2003 (portions of former routes 136 and 137)</b>	<b>Spring 2005 (new Route 23)</b>	<b>Percentage Change</b>
<b>Weekday Riders</b>	1,659	1,689	+ 1.8%
<b>Saturday Riders</b>	1,069	1,059	- 0.9%
<b>Sunday Riders</b>	827	880	+ 6.5%

**Facility improvements**

Bus stop and transit priority facility improvements in the Ambaum-Delridge corridor have been implemented in coordination with new Route 120. This effort involved coordination among King County Metro’s Transit Route Facilities, Transit Speed & Reliability, Power & Facilities, Transit Security, and Transit Design & Construction groups, plus the Seattle Department of Transportation, Seattle City Light, and the White Center Chamber of Commerce.

Most of these improvements were in place by the time of the service change, and included:

- Advance consolidation of 24 bus stops
- New shelters at four bus zones comprising the White Center hub at 15th Avenue SW & SW Roxbury Street, plus four new bus shelters along Ambaum Boulevard.
- Extensive tree-trimming and new shelter and street lighting at the White Center hub at 15th & Roxbury as part of security improvements that generated positive feedback from transit customers.
- Benches installed at 17 stops along Ambaum Boulevard and Delridge Way that previously had no customer seating.
- New “Ocean Wave” etched windows or mesh installed at seven shelters.
- Repainted passenger facilities and graffiti cleanup at Burien Transit Center.
- Bus stop curbs repainted at 77 bus stops.
- P.M. peak parking restriction along southbound Delridge Way SW between Spokane and Oregon streets.
- Corner radius revision at 16th Avenue SW / SW 107th Street.
- New layover zone at 15th Avenue SW & SW 104th Street to accommodate most layover needs in White Center, an action supported by the White Center Community Development Association.

