

**FISCAL NOTE FOR NON-CAPITAL PROJECTS**

<b>Department:</b>	<b>Contact Person/Phone:</b>	<b>CBO Analyst/Phone:</b>
Seattle Department of Transportation	Tony Mazzella, 684-0811	Christie Parker, 684-5211

**Legislation Title:** A RESOLUTION relating to the Center City Connector; adopting the Center City Connector Transit Study Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA); and endorsing efforts to pursue federal funding for the Center City Connector project.

**Summary of the Legislation:**

This legislation approves the Center City Connector Transit Study Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) (Exhibit A), and recommends endorsement to pursue federal funding for the Center City Connector project, including progressing through the Project Development phase of the Federal Transit Administration’s Small Starts program.

**Background:**

The Transit Master Plan (adopted in 2012) prioritized four corridors with the highest ridership potential and the greatest need for higher capacity transit service, including the Center City Connector. The goal of the Connector is to link the South Lake Union and First Hill streetcars through downtown, and improve north-south mobility. While a significant amount of transit exists downtown, there is a growing demand for Center City circulation trips by visitors, casual users, residents and employees.

In 2012, SDOT secured a \$900,000 grant from the FTA to conduct an Alternatives Analysis (AA) – a study to determine the most suitable transit technology and street alignment to achieve the project’s goals. The AA was the first step in a larger process of going from concept to construction. Completing the study and identifying a locally preferred alternative will put the city in a competitive position for future federal funding opportunities.

Prior to beginning any technical analysis, SDOT’s consultant team conducted interviews with over 40 Center City stakeholders, ranging from social service providers to downtown business interests. A strong majority of these stakeholders favored a First Avenue alignment, primarily because they saw it serving a wide variety of all-day transit users.

The Alternative Analysis involved a three-step evaluation process. The first step looked at a wide array of transit modes and street alignment options. These options were developed with staff input, as well as public input at the project’s kick off open house, attended by over 100 people. After evaluating each option against the project’s purpose and needs, several were screened out, and a streetcar on either First Avenue or a Fourth/Fifth Avenue couplet remained.

The second level of evaluation compared mixed-traffic and exclusive operations of a streetcar on both alignments. At this level, the 4th/5th Avenue couplet was screened out, mainly because it would impact existing transit service on these streets. Throughout the evaluation process, SDOT and the consultant team worked closely with King County Metro and Sound Transit staff to review results and solicit input.

The third level of analysis showed how a streetcar on First Avenue performed in mixed-traffic versus exclusive right of way. The exclusive option outperformed the mixed-traffic option in ridership, travel speed, reliability, annual operating cost and cost per passenger trip.

However, the exclusive alternative increases auto travel time, removes more parking and loading zones, and causes more traffic diversion (though little delay on parallel streets).

At the completion of each stage of analysis, SDOT held an open house to present results and seek public input. After the third open house, SDOT conducted an on-line survey that was completed by about 300 people, over 80% of which favored exclusive-lane operations. Staff also briefed a number of downtown neighborhood organizations throughout the evaluation process.

The 2014-2019 Adopted Capital Improvement Program has allocated \$6.5 million to fund the environmental assessment through to final design of the Center City Connector.

Please check one of the following:

**This legislation does not have any financial implications.**

**Other Implications:**

- a) **Does the legislation have indirect financial implications, or long-term implications?**  
The resolution recommends endorsement to pursue federal funding for the Center City Connector project, including progressing through the Project Development phase of FTA's Small Starts program. Construction of the Center City Connector in the future would require the City of Seattle to provide a local funding match, as well as funding for operations and maintenance.
- b) **What is the financial cost of not implementing the legislation?**  
None.
- c) **Does this legislation affect any departments besides the originating department?**  
No.
- d) **What are the possible alternatives to the legislation that could achieve the same or similar objectives?** N/A
- e) **Is a public hearing required for this legislation?**  
No.

**f) Is publication of notice with *The Daily Journal of Commerce* and/or *The Seattle Times* required for this legislation?**

No.

**g) Does this legislation affect a piece of property?**

No.

**h) Other Issues:**

**List attachments to the fiscal note below:**

Exhibit A: Center City Connector Transit Study Locally Preferred Alternative

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## MODE: MODERN STREETCAR

Modern streetcar vehicles<sup>1</sup>

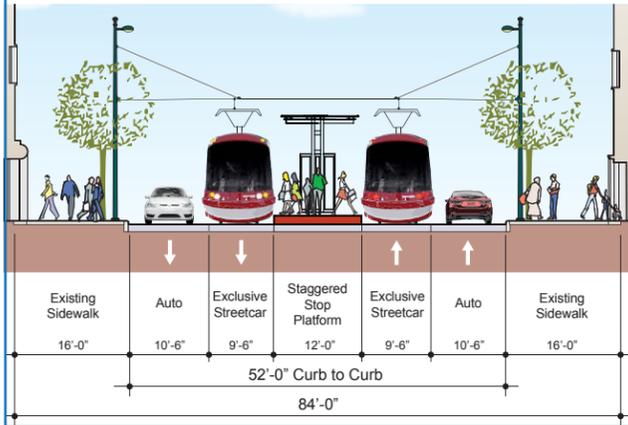


Dublin, Ireland  
Photo Credit: Cian Ginty

<sup>1</sup> Modern streetcar vehicles are known as double-ended trams or light rail vehicles and are commonly used in European Cities; 2.46 meter width, operating at 750V dc.

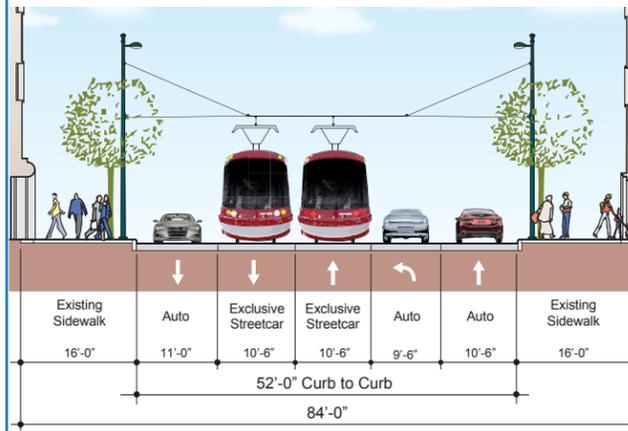
### AT STOPS (TYPICAL)

Streetcar stops at Pike, Madison/Spring, and Pioneer Square would be in the median of 1st Ave.



### BETWEEN STOPS (TYPICAL)

Streetcar would run in the center of 1st Ave, in transit-only lanes with signal priority. Peak-restricted parking would not be permitted in the curbside lanes.



## TRANSIT PRIORITY

### EXCLUSIVE TRANSIT RUNNING WAY

Streetcar would operate in exclusive streetcar lanes (or shared with bus) throughout the Center City Connector alignment.

### TRANSIT SIGNAL PRIORITY

The Center City Connector will run in exclusive transit lanes for the full length of the project and employ transit signal priority treatments (TSP) at corridor intersections. Signal priority will be used to hold lights green for approaching streetcars and shorten red times for streetcars stopped at intersections. Separate streetcar signal phases will be employed where streetcars will need to operate across general purpose travel lanes. Details of signal design will be developed as the design is advanced.

## CORRIDOR: 1ST AVENUE

The Locally Preferred Alternative corridor is First Avenue, between Pike Place Market and Pioneer Square. Two optional alignments for connecting to the Westlake intermodal hub will be advanced to the preliminary engineering and environmental review phase of the project. These are Stewart/Olive and Pike/Pine.



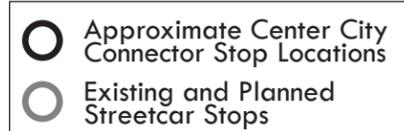
An option using Pike, Pine, 4th, 5th, and/or 6th will be analyzed in the environmental and preliminary design phase.

## STOP LOCATIONS

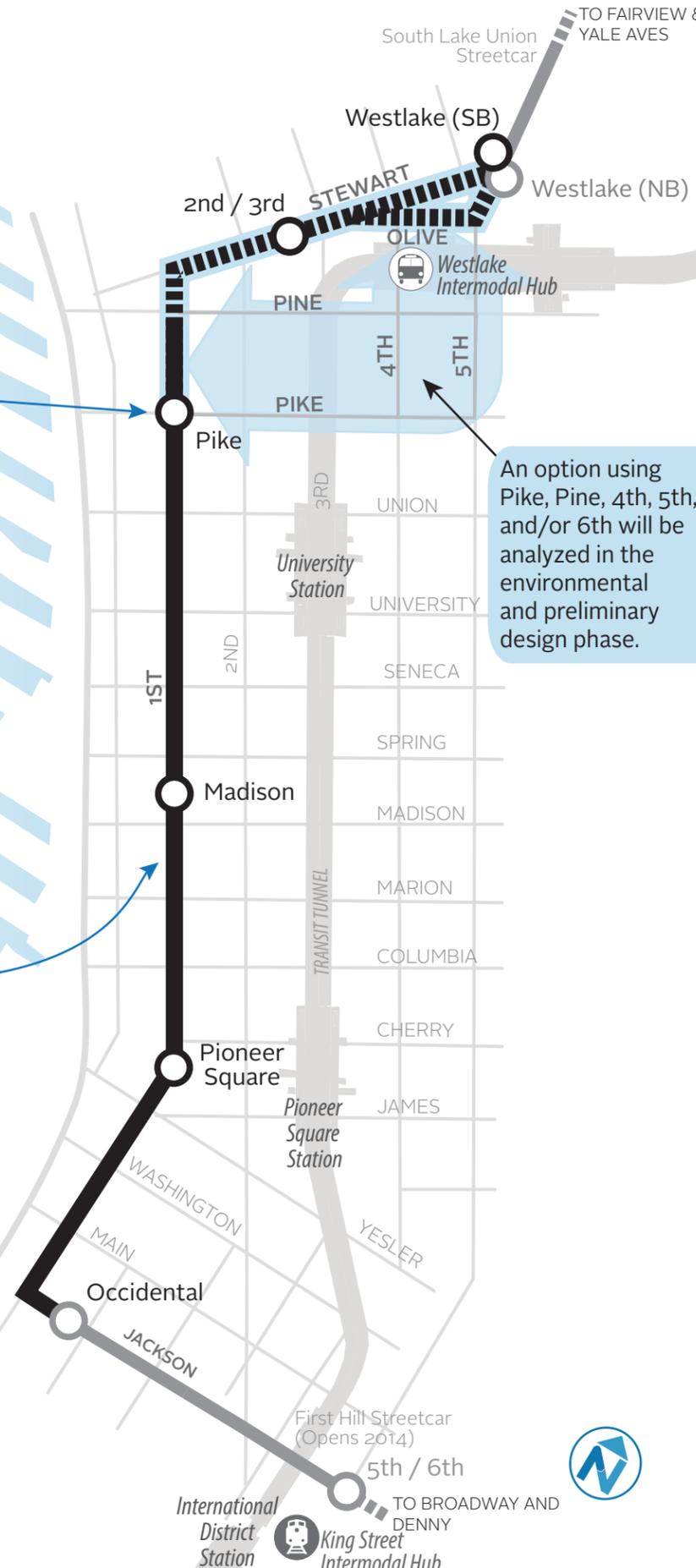
Five new streetcar stops will be developed for the project at the following approximate locations:

- **Westlake.** Southbound only; existing streetcar stop will serve northbound direction.
- **2nd/3rd Avenues.** Between 2nd and 3rd on Stewart Street or Pike/Pine Streets.
- **Pike.** Built as two separate center median platforms on either side of the Pike Street intersection with 1st Avenue.
- **Madison.** Center median between Madison and Spring Streets.
- **Pioneer Square.** Center median between Yesler Way and Cherry Street.

Streetcar stops will have similar scale, facilities, and amenities as existing streetcar stops in South Lake Union. Center median platforms will be 10.5 to 12 feet (3.2 to 3.6 meters) wide and a minimum of 60 to 70 feet (18 to 21 meters) in length.



Stop locations and design will be refined in subsequent engineering and design phases.



## OPERATING PLAN

Operates as two independent, overlapping lines:

- **SLU-King Street ("Red").** One line between South Lake Union (Fairview & Yale Aves) and King Street intermodal hub.
- **Capitol Hill-Westlake ("Blue").** One line operates between Capitol Hill (Broadway & Denny Way) and Westlake Intermodal Hub.

These lines provide overlapping service between these hubs in the downtown core (trains arrive as frequently as every 5 minutes in the core area).

### Daily Span:

Mon-Sat: Up to 20 hours (5 am - 1 am)  
Sun: Up to 17 hours (6 am - 11 pm)

### Headway (per line):

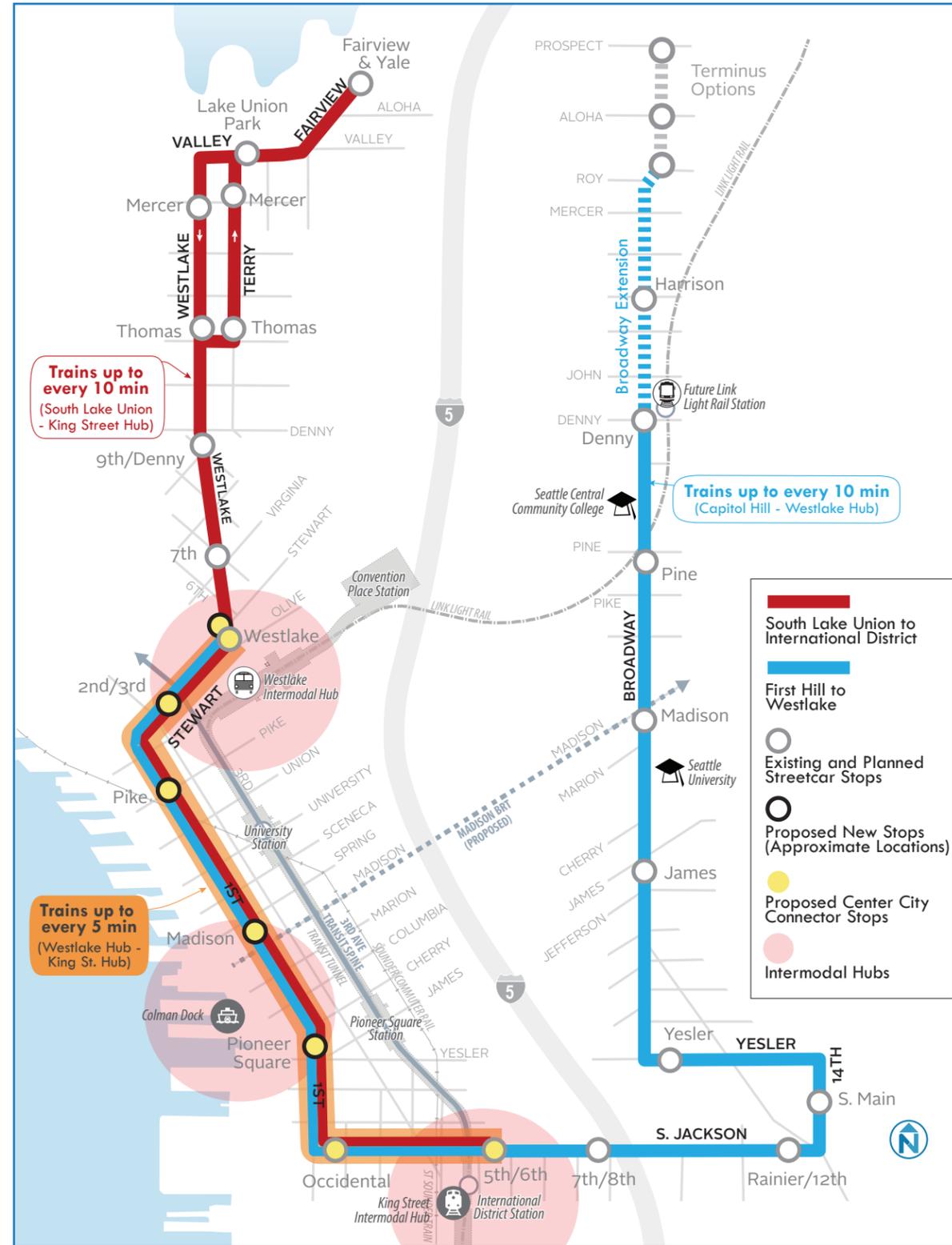
10 min: 7 am - 7 pm weekdays  
8 am - 7 pm weekends  
15 to 20 min: Other times

## CONNECTIVITY

The Center City Connector will link over a dozen Seattle neighborhoods with a Seattle Streetcar system that stretches from Capitol Hill and First Hill, to the International District and South Downtown, and north to the Denny Triangle and South Lake Union, passing through the heart of downtown. By linking existing streetcar investments, the Connector will provide a streetcar system that is highly legible and easy-to-use for a variety of trip purposes serving areas where the City is experiencing intense urban development.

The Center City Connector will link the City of Seattle's three Intermodal Hub areas including, Westlake Intermodal Hub, Colman Dock Intermodal Hub, and King Street Intermodal Hub. The Connector will provide convenient transfers to the Third Avenue Transit Spine at both ends of Downtown, to Link Light Rail via multiple Downtown Seattle Transit Tunnel station entries, and to Sounder Commuter Rail. Future transit investments such as Madison Street Bus Rapid Transit would bisect the Center City Connector.

The Center City Connector will be highly accessible to pedestrians using Seattle's well developed downtown sidewalk system. The Pike Street stop will be accessible from all points of the intersection via the current "all walk" or "barn dance" intersection design. All streetcar platforms will be accessed at signalized intersections or marked mid-block crossings and will be ADA accessible.



## FARE COLLECTION

Seattle Streetcar system will be fully integrated with ORCA, the regional transit fare system. ORCA card readers will be installed at stop platforms and on trains. Other fare media will be available for purchase at each streetcar stop.



## MAINTENANCE FACILITIES

The Center City Connector will require storage capacity for six additional streetcar vehicles. The City of Seattle owns a streetcar operating and maintenance base in South Lake Union and is developing a second facility for the First Hill line in the International District. Existing capacity and new storage tracks at one or both of these existing maintenance facilities will allow the Center City Connector to be built and operated without constructing new facilities to maintain vehicles.

Costs for expanding the existing maintenance facility or facilities (land purchase, design, construction) are included in the overall project cost estimates.

The specific site will be selected in the next phase of project development.

