

Seattle streetcar:

Half million riders and counting...

*Mayor Nickels announces free rides for holiday season
December 10, 2008*

SEATTLE – Mayor Greg Nickels celebrated with community members today the one-year anniversary of the Seattle Streetcar, announcing that the South Lake Union line has served more than 507,000 riders, far exceeding original estimates.

To thank residents who have made it a success and to celebrate the one-year anniversary, the mayor announced free streetcar rides Dec. 12 through Dec. 26, 2008.

"A half million riders on just the first line reflects the tremendous potential of streetcars," said Nickels. "A Seattle streetcar network will be an important part of our future, offering a climate-friendly transportation choice that helps attract employers and encourages more job creation."

The South Lake Union line connects thousands of new housing units and major employers, such as the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center, the University of Washington, Amazon and Microsoft.

Nickels said the city and Sound Transit are moving forward with a second streetcar line connecting First Hill to Link light rail stations on Capitol Hill and downtown. With funding recently approved by voters as part of Sound Transit's Proposition 1, the next line will deliver people to major work centers, including Swedish Hospital, Virginia Mason Medical Center, Harborview Medical Center, Seattle University and Seattle Central Community College.

"One year ago we opened the



South Lake Union Streetcar line," said City Councilmember and Transportation Committee Chair Jan Drago. "One month ago voters approved the First Hill line as part of Sound Transit Prop 1. And Monday the City Council voted to pursue more lines. Momentum is really building for the network and I am so excited to see it happening."

No city general fund dollars were used to construct or operate the line. Roughly half of the \$52.1 million cost for the line's design and construction and the purchase of its three streetcars came from property owners along the line, who contributed \$26 million through an approved Local Improvement District fund.

Since its inaugural trip on Dec. 12, 2007, the Seattle Streetcar has carried thousands of passengers every week between South Lake Union, the new waterfront park, the Denny Triangle and downtown at Westlake. Stronger-than-anticipated use during morning and evening commutes, weekday lunch hours and

summer weekends helped the streetcar beat daily ridership estimates by more than 30 percent.

Operated for the city by King County Metro, the streetcar route features 11 stops and allows connections to light rail, regional buses and the monorail at Westlake. The line uses three streetcars, which can carry 140 passengers each.

The 2.6 mile round-trip line was proposed by Nickels in 2003 and approved by the City Council in 2005. No city general fund dollars were used to construct or operate the line. Roughly half of the \$52.1 million cost for the line's design and construction and the purchase of its three streetcars came from property owners along the line, who contributed \$26 million through an approved Local Improvement District fund. The remainder came through federal, state and local government grants.

Get the Nickels Newsletter and the mayor's inside view on transportation, public safety, economic opportunity and healthy communities at mayor.seattle.gov

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