

For Immediate Release

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Mayor Launches First New Rail in Seattle in 30 Years, Seattle Streetcar Opens Today

Hop on board – all rides are free during December

As the newest link in Seattle's multi-modal transit network, the Streetcar will honor all METRO transit passes, PugetPass and bus transfers starting in January 2008

SEATTLE – December 12, 2007 – Mayor Greg Nickels today announced the opening of the South Lake Union line of the Seattle Streetcar, a new mode of urban transportation that links residents and employees to the downtown transit hub and Lake Union area. It is the city's first new streetcar line in nearly three decades.

Beginning today, passengers can ride the 2.6-mile line (round trip) from Westlake Center in downtown to the Denny Triangle and South Lake Union neighborhoods and back again. Three new, modern streetcars will make 11 stops along the line and, to kickoff the launch of Seattle's newest rail transit system, all rides will be free during the month of December.

"Streetcars are back in the city, and we couldn't be more excited," said Seattle Mayor Greg Nickels. "Starting today, people will have a new, easy and green way to travel from our downtown transportation hub to South Lake Union. The Streetcar demonstrates that Seattle can build effective new transportation solutions that will help us reduce global warming pollution. I hope this will be just the first in a new streetcar network that unites city neighborhoods."

In his 2008 budget, Mayor Nickels set aside money to study a potential streetcar network. In addition, the community-based Streetcar Alliance recently announced its support for five potential streetcar lines to help reconnect Seattle's urban neighborhoods.

"The launch of the Streetcar is great news for the South Lake Union community and Seattle," said U.S. Senator Patty Murray (WA). "I want to congratulate the neighborhood's residents, businesses, and the City's elected leadership. They persevered to create a project that will enhance mobility and bring new jobs to the community, and I was proud to be a partner in the effort."

"As we step on this streetcar today, we are taking a huge step forward for our neighborhoods," said Jan Drago, Seattle City Councilmember and chairperson of the Transportation Committee. "People will get out of their cars as they realize that streetcars are affordable, neighborhood-friendly transit that will move them around quickly and efficiently."

The Streetcar is expected to carry 330,000 passengers in its first year. A one-way trip is expected to take less than 15 minutes. Beginning in January, an adult ticket will cost \$1.50, senior citizen (ages 65 and over) and youth (ages 6-17) fares are 50 cents and children ages 5 and under are free.

Streetcars will operate from:

- Monday through Thursday, 6:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m.
- Friday and Saturday, 6:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m.
- Sundays and holidays, 10:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.

The Streetcars will run in approximately 15-minute intervals.

Reconnecting Seattle's Urban Neighborhoods with Rail

The South Lake Union line of the Seattle Streetcar marks a significant step for urban transit connections in the city.

The Streetcar's southern terminus at the Westlake Hub is one block from the recently reopened bus tunnel and monorail. When Sound Transit light rail comes online in 2009, there will be a complete rail link from South Lake Union to downtown to the airport, with connection via bus and rail to the University of Washington and all other destinations in the greater metropolitan area.

The new line is expected to spur new jobs and homes in the South Lake Union neighborhood by connecting it to downtown Seattle and the larger transportation network.

Group Health recently moved its headquarters to South Lake Union, Microsoft has announced that it is opening additional office space in the neighborhood and UW Medicine is also expanding in the area. Organizations such as the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center, Seattle Cancer Care Alliance and the Seattle Biomedical Research Institute and companies like Jones Soda, Skanska, PEMCO, NBBJ, and Tommy Bahama already have office space in South Lake Union.

Innovative Funding Used Private Funds, Grants, Sponsorships

The South Lake Union line of the Seattle Streetcar was delivered on time, in 15 months of construction, and it was paid for by an innovative public-private partnership. No city general fund dollars were used to construct or operate the line.

The total budget for the purchase of the three Seattle Streetcars as well as design and construction of the South Lake Union line—\$52.1 million—was paid for by property owners along the line who agreed to contribute \$25.7 million toward the project through an approved Local Improvement District (LID) fund. The remainder came through federal, state and local government funds. Streetcar and station sponsorships will provide 25 percent of the service cost for operations.

This funding model for the Streetcar was so effective that Mayor Nickels has set aside funds in his 2008 budget to help develop a streetcar network using similar strategies. A new streetcar network will help connect Seattle's urban neighborhoods and provide a convenient and reliable way for people to get around the city and to and from the downtown business district.

High-Tech, Modern and Colorful

The new Seattle Streetcars have many unique and innovative features. Designed and manufactured by the Czech Republic based Inekon Group, each of the three Seattle Streetcars can

carry approximately 140 passengers. Low-floor center sections make it easy to board and all Streetcars are ADA accessible. Bike storage is also available.

The brightly colored red, orange and purple trains feature air conditioning, a passenger information system with audible announcements and LED message signs. These environmentally friendly trains have regenerative braking so that each time the brakes are applied, an electric motor sends electricity back into the grid, thus saving energy.

The Seattle Streetcar's Web site (www.seattlestreetcar.org) features Global Position System (GPS) technology that alerts passengers to streetcar arrival times making it easy to schedule and plan a trip.

The Streetcar can be accessed via 11 stops:

1. Westlake & Olive (Pacific Place Station)
2. Westlake & Seventh (Seattle Children's Hospital Research Institute Station)
3. Westlake & Denny (Pan Pacific Hotel Station)
4. Terry & Thomas (Group Health Station)
5. Terry & Mercer (Station sponsorship still available)
6. Lake Union Park (University of Washington/UW Medicine Station)
7. Fairview & Campus Drive (Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center Station)
8. Westlake & Mercer (Station sponsorship still available)
9. Westlake & Thomas (Evergreen Bank Station)
10. Westlake & Ninth (2201 Westlake Station)
11. Westlake & Seventh Avenue (Station sponsorship still available)

The Mayor's Office of Arts & Cultural Affairs will commission artists for three permanent, site-specific artworks along the Streetcar alignment. The projects will be completed by summer 2009 and are funded by the Seattle Department of Transportation 1% for Art Fund.

For more information about the Seattle Streetcar, please visit www.seattlestreetcar.org.

About the South Lake Union Line of the Seattle Streetcar

The South Lake Union line of the Seattle Streetcar is a 2.6-mile (round-trip) passenger rail line connecting South Lake Union to the Westlake Hub. Three new, modern streetcars that will make 11 stops along the line will serve the route. Operated by King County's METRO Transit Division, the Streetcar is part of Seattle's transportation network. Fares are \$1.50 for adults, .50 cents for senior citizens (ages 65 and over), 50 cents for youth (ages 6-17), and children ages 5 and under are free. METRO transit passes, Pugetpass or bus transfers are honored. Trip planning assistance and streetcar schedules are available at www.seattlestreetcar.org.

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