

Making the Red Line Green

Construction and operation of the Red Line will involve a wide range of health and environmental impacts and improvement opportunities. Instead of the conventional approach of identification and mitigation, the Red Line provides the opportunity for improving the quality of the air, water and health of the City and its residents. To the extent economically possible, the Red Line should improve the air and water quality, increase green space and improve the quality of life in the City compared to the conditions existing prior to implementing the Red Line. By implementing the following objectives and goals the Red Line can have an overall positive impact beyond that of providing clean transportation.

They did it. So can we.

Seattle's Sound Transit Environmental Policy in Action

Sound Transit has made up for impacts of Link light rail construction to a small wetland located along the line. Mitigation includes restoration of another wetland owned by Seattle Parks and Recreation. Prior to restoration, the site consisted of an abandoned vehicle turnaround and paved boat ramp. In partnership with Seattle Parks, Sound Transit restored the wetland site that had been degraded by invasive plants, trash, and asphalt, and turned the site into a scrub-shrub and forested wetland with a vegetated buffer.

During the initial five-year monitoring period after construction, Sound Transit has been coordinating with Seattle Parks to maintain the mitigation area and control the presence of seasonal mosquito larvae in the ponded areas. The site has become a habitat for many animal species, such as turtles, amphibians and birds. It also provides natural treatment for stormwater runoff before it drains to Lake Washington.

Future plans at Beer Sheva Park include installing a sign illustrating the history of Beer Sheva Park and including information about wetlands.

Leverage Water Quality Improvement Opportunities

By partnering with the agencies responsible for implementing and regulating water quality, such as the Baltimore City Department of Public Works and Maryland Department of the Environment, MTA will seek to do the following as part of the Red Line construction process:

- Increase green space and reduce impervious surfaces through project landscaping where appropriate.
- Determine and implement improvements to the man-made drainage system crossing or being impacted by the Red Line.
- Use best management practices for storm water management at all Red Line parking facilities.

Realize the economic and environmental benefits of clean energy use on the Red Line

Major infrastructure projects like the Red Line can accelerate the use of renewable energy resources to provide cleaner energy for transit and the community. If designed properly, the Red Line Transit Project can result in a zero-emissions service. MTA will consider the following strategies as part of Red Line construction:

- Design Red Line buildings and facilities to conform to recognized sustainability criteria such as LEED.
- Work with local utilities to utilize clean energy production sources to meet the new energy demands of Red Line and associated energy users.
- Investigate the generation of energy as a revenue source for the Red Line and possible sources of funding/grants.
- Replace all buses in the MTA fleet with diesel hybrid electric models as current buses are retired.

Increase green space along the Red Line

As part of designing and constructing the Red Line, the City will work with the MTA and Red Line-area communities to do the following:

- Make excellent connections between the Red Line and the existing trail system.
- Look for opportunities to create green space along the Red Line for biking, walking and as a natural buffer between the system and the neighborhoods.
- Utilize this green space as a means to better integrate the Red Line into the community as a transition and as neighborhood commons for entertainment and exercise.

Create a Safe and Accessible Red Line

- The Red Line must not just be accessible for the elderly and people with disabilities; it must be convenient. MTA will include features such as low-floor vehicle boarding, elevators, etc. in the final design of the Red Line.
- The Red Line will be designed with pedestrian safety in mind. The City will coordinate with MTA and communities to ensure that positive guidance measures are used to steer pedestrians toward safe crossing locations and “safe routes to schools” concepts are used near schools along the Red Line. The MTA and the City will work together to improvement quality of pedestrian signals near stations, including the implementation of “countdown” pedestrian signals.
- The City will work through with the affected communities on alterations to traffic patterns necessary because of Red Line.
- The City will coordinate with MTA to maximize pedestrian safety through access to crosswalks, especially in neighborhoods where the Red Line runs on the surface.