

# LRQA/SOUND TRANSIT CASE STUDY

SOUND TRANSIT JOINS HANDFUL OF USA TRANSIT AGENCIES TO GAIN ISO 14001 CERTIFICATION

## ABOUT SOUND TRANSIT:

### HISTORY:

In the early 1990s, the Washington State Legislature authorised three counties to create a single agency – The Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority (Sound Transit) – to plan, build and operate a high-capacity transit system within the region's most heavily travelled corridors. In 1996, voters approved the plan and taxes to fund it.

### SOUND TRANSIT NUMBERS:

- Provides transportation choices to nearly 3 million people.
- Regional express buses, commuter trains and light rail carry about 50,000 riders each working day.
- In 2007, nearly 14 million journeys were provided, representing an increase of 12.3% over the previous year, which is around 6 times the U.S. national increase in public transport usage.

### WEBSITE:

[www.soundtransit.org](http://www.soundtransit.org)

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED:

February 2008: ISO 14001 – Environmental Management Standard



### ISO 14001 AT SOUND TRANSIT

Compliance with the ISO 14001 standard helps companies to identify, prioritise and manage environmental risks, and accreditation by LRQA provides a public demonstration of a company's environmental commitment and helps to ensure that environmental performance is managed and improved.

In 2004 Sound Transit began a long-term initiative to develop an

Environmental and Sustainability Management System (ESMS) designed specifically to meet the requirements of ISO 14001. Sound Transit sees the implementation of ISO 14001 as the vehicle through which it fulfils its responsibilities in the fight against climate change and LRQA was chosen because, as a public service organisation, it was important for Sound Transit to partner with an internationally renowned

certification body. From the outset, Sound Transit was keen to ensure that its sustainability objectives should impact upon every aspect of its operation, from the maintenance and construction of fixed assets to the operation of the public transport system. The creation of an inter-departmental Steering Committee with subcommittees has enabled key staff to address environmental questions from multiple perspectives. This has

provided a strong foundation to support Sound Transit in choosing sustainable and environmentally responsible practices, whilst promoting predictability and consistency in the management of environmental obligations. LRQA has been closely involved in the development of the ESMS, helping to ensure that the objectives defined in ISO 14001 are being met.

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### KEY BENEFITS OF ISO 14001 CERTIFICATION

- Helps to ensure that Sound Transit fulfils its obligations in the fight against climate change
- Ensures implementation of environmental objectives at all levels within Sound Transit.
- Accreditation by LRQA, an internationally respected certification body, provides 3rd party accreditation of Sound Transit's decision to implement continuous improvement in its environmental and sustainability performance.
- Helps create business systems that improve environmental performance
- LRQA accreditation enhances relationships with stakeholders, providing transparency and accountability
- Ensures an holistic approach to environmental management
- Helps promote corporate and individual social and environmental responsibility

### RESULTS SO FAR

The whole process has driven improvements in overall environmental performance and increased efficiency and potential cost savings when managing environmental obligations.

Crucially, the implementation of ISO 14001 has created a comprehensive range of measureable objectives. In 2008, Sound Transit is working on programs to achieve in excess of 50

environmental objectives.

As an example of the environmental and cost benefits that such initiatives can generate, 35 express buses are now parked in Seattle after the morning commute until they are needed to return to the suburbs in the evening. Previously, they returned empty to the suburbs at midday, and Sound Transit estimates that the mid-day bus storage program saved 122,000 gallons of fuel in 2007 and approximately \$700,000 in fuel and maintenance costs.

As part of the overall program, Sound Transit is able to monitor performance and seek further opportunities for improvement.

### THE BIG PICTURE

"Government needs to lead by example when it comes to combating global warming. Sound Transit provides the critical transit options people in the Puget Sound region need to reduce their own carbon footprint, but it is also important that we as an agency do our part strongly," said Sound Transit Board Chair and Seattle Mayor Greg Nickels. "Earning the ISO 14001 certification for our Environmental and Sustainability Management System means that Sound Transit is not just talk--we have measurable targets, tangible goals, and real actions that we will continue to take at every level of the agency to help protect the environment."

"In our view, ISO 14001 isn't a destination – it's a direction, so we are really excited about the future..."

Perry Weinberg, Environmental Compliance Manager for Sound Transit

### WORKING WITH LRQA

Transparency and accountability are vitally important for Sound Transit, so it was important for Sound Transit's environmental initiatives to be ratified by an internationally renowned and highly respected organisation. Furthermore, it was essential for Sound Transit to partner business assessors with the experience, technical ability and credibility with which to challenge and continuously improve the program. Partnering with LRQA is much more than just certification; the company's range of expert services extends to include training, inspection, testing, validation and much more. This means that the LRQA service can be tailored to meet clients' specific needs. Furthermore, the breadth and depth of LRQA's experience in environmental issues means that it is able to offer support in every aspect of environmental management.

As one of the first accredited certification bodies, LRQA is a market leader in the provision of ISO 14001 certification - over half of the world's top 200 companies choose LRQA for certification.

Perry Weinberg, Environmental Compliance Manager for Sound Transit says,

"In our view, ISO 14001 isn't a destination – it's a direction, so we are really excited about the future. We feel that we have created an innovative, robust but flexible, environmental management system that will take us beyond merely fulfilling our environmental responsibilities. The expertise and insight that LRQA have shown throughout the certification process has been invaluable to us. Our partnership with LRQA has ensured that our environmental and sustainability management system is making a measurable difference and improving our environmental performance."

Before presenting Sound Transit with their ISO 14001 Certificate, Andrew Smith, Senior Vice President, Lloyd's Register Americas Management Systems said, "With this certificate, Sound Transit joins more than 7,500 other recipients of the ISO 14001 approvals that LRQA has issued worldwide. This certification is proof that Sound Transit's Environmental Management System meets or exceeds established international guidelines for environmental best practices and I commend Sound Transit for the important steps it has taken to reduce its environmental footprint."

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