

SOUND TRANSIT

MOTION NO. M2008-61

A motion of the Board of the Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority authorizing the chief executive officer to execute a three-year contract with two one-year options with Veolia Transportation, Inc. to operate and maintain Sound Transit express bus service between Everett and Bellevue for a total authorized contract amount not to exceed \$5,400,000.

Background:

ST Express Route 532 provides weekday peak period service between Everett, Bellevue and intermediate stops along Interstate 5 and Interstate 405. The service currently has over 1,000 passenger boardings per day and ridership has been steadily increasing. Under Sound Transit's service agreement with Community Transit, Route 532 is operated by a private company under contract to Community Transit, utilizing Community Transit's Kasch Park maintenance base in Everett. Kasch Park is currently at capacity and will require major improvements to accommodate additional buses.

To respond to increased ridership expected with the opening of the South Everett Park-and-Ride lot, the Sound Transit Board approved plans for expanded service on ST Express Routes 510 and 532 as part of the 2008 Service Implementation Plan. Start-up of the expanded service is budgeted for September 2008 to coincide with the expected completion date of the South Everett project. To operate the service, ten new 40-foot buses were purchased at a cost of \$426,000 each. Sound Transit was unable to reach agreement with Community Transit on a near-term solution to the base capacity issue, so a Request for Proposals (RFP) was prepared seeking a firm capable of operating Route 532 using its own maintenance base. Route 532 was chosen because it could be scheduled efficiently as a "stand alone" route. In addition, research indicated that several private service providers might have sufficient base capacity to accommodate the number of buses needed for this route.

The contractor is responsible for providing the operating base, all vehicle operations and maintenance, fuel, tires, repair parts, insurance and day-to-day staff supervision. While the hourly contract rate is fixed, staff recognized the difficulty of anticipating diesel fuel costs over the three-year term so the contractor may claim a monthly fuel cost adjustment with certified documentation of actual costs.

Sound Transit received four proposals in response to the RFP. The finalists were carefully evaluated and interviews were conducted with the principals and staff members of each firm. Based on its evaluation, staff recommends that the contract be awarded to Veolia Transportation, Inc. Veolia's operating plan is comprehensive and provides sufficient back-up for employee absences, unexpected incidents and emergencies. The company understands current ADA requirements and trains its employees in specialized transit industry procedures such as wheelchair lift use, security procedures, stop announcements and farebox operation. A strong commitment to service quality was evident in the company's submittal and during follow-up interviews with staff. Veolia has an existing paratransit operating base in Bellevue that can accommodate Route 532 service with relatively few modifications, making it likely the firm could meet the required September 22, 2008 service date. Finally, the company has a well-established record of operating both fixed-route transit and paratransit services in several major cities across the country.

Motion:

It is hereby moved by the Board of the Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority that the chief executive officer is authorized to execute a three-year contract with two one-year options with Veolia Transportation, Inc. to operate and maintain Sound Transit express bus service between Everett and Bellevue for a total authorized contract amount not to exceed \$5,400,000.

APPROVED by the Board of the Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority at a regular meeting thereof held on _____.

Greg Nickels
Board Chair

ATTEST:

Marcia Walker
Board Administrator