

**SOUND TRANSIT
STAFF REPORT**

MOTION NO. M2009-91

2010 State Legislative Program

Meeting:	Date:	Type of Action:	Staff Contact:	Phone:
Board	10/22/09	Discussion/Possible Action	Ron Klein, Communications and External Relations Director Melanie Smith, State Government Relations Specialist	(206) 398-5393 (206) 255-9678

PROJECT NAME

2010 State Legislative Program

PROPOSED ACTION

Adopting the Sound Transit 2010 State Legislative Program and directing staff to continue to evaluate issues for impact to the agency as it continues to successfully implement the regional transportation system.

KEY FEATURES of PROPOSED ACTION

This action would authorize Sound Transit staff and consultants in Olympia to advocate and/or pursue the following positions during the upcoming state legislative session:

- **Seek legislative amendments to Sound Transit's statute to provide for automatic inclusion of areas subsequently annexed by local jurisdictions already within the RTA boundaries.**
Under current state law, when an area is annexed into a local jurisdiction that is within Sound Transit's district, it does not automatically join the RTA as it does for other entities such as Public Transportation Benefit Areas. The Department of Revenue (DOR) has requested that Sound Transit seek amendments to the agency's enabling statute that would provide automatic annexation of areas subsequently added to jurisdictions within the RTA in the future. This change would be consistent with the authority of other public entities and would provide benefit to DOR and businesses that are experiencing complications due to the increasing number of billing codes needed for tax collections.
- **Seek legislation to clarify Sound Transit projects as essential public facilities under the Growth Management Act**
Sound Transit projects are considered essential public facilities under the state's Growth Management Act and a 1999 ruling by the Growth Management Hearings Board. Sound Transit would like to seek further clarity of that status in order to streamline the permitting process and make the agency less susceptible to land-use challenges.
- **Seek legislation to include a Sound Transit representative on the State's Capital Projects Advisory Review Board.**
The Capital Projects Advisory Review Board (CPARB) was created by the Legislature in 2005 to review and make recommendations to policymakers on ways to enhance the quality, efficiency, and accountability of alternative public works contracting procedures. As a public entity engaged in major capital projects in the region, Sound Transit would provide a valuable perspective in shaping future policies.

- **Support efforts to provide timely matching funds by the State for the completion of the I-90 Two Way Transit and HOV project.**
 Recognizing the importance of mobility across Lake Washington, Sound Transit continues its commitment to work with the State of Washington and regional stakeholders to ensure timely completion of the I-90 Two Way Transit and HOV project (R8A). Completion of R8A is necessary to increase throughput in the corridor and sets the stage for adding light rail to the center road way as approved by voters in 2008.
- **Support a balanced statewide and regional transportation investment strategy that includes new funding sources for public transportation and high capacity transit systems.**
 The Sound Transit Board continues to express support for a balanced approach to transportation funding, project planning and implementation and hopes to work with the State as it examines future investments and funding options. Sound Transit encourages the State to continue its efforts to promote public transit and improve connectivity through the Regional Mobility Grant Program and to adopt policies that reflect the critical role of transit in addressing mobility, climate change, and economic development. The Sound Transit 2 Plan approved by voters in 2008, included a commitment by the Board to seek legislative authority to replace or substantially reduce the agency's reliance on the sales and use tax as the primary funding source for regional transit improvements. Sound Transit will continue to explore opportunities to fund high capacity transit investments through other transportation related funding tools such as tolling revenue, user-based fees, vehicles fees, or other potential sources.
- **Support tolling policies that minimize potential negative impacts on transit and provide revenue to sustain and increase transit service.**
 Sound Transit supports efforts to maximize the performance of the transportation system and believes transit should be recognized for its role in improving mobility, reducing congestion, and carrying more people. Proposed state project plans for key corridors to be tolled rely on transit to provide attractive alternatives for commuters and will likely increase ridership demand. State policies should acknowledge that transit agencies are experiencing reduced revenues and service cutbacks by exempting transit from future tolls and provide revenue to help fund needed services.
- **Support and partner with Sound Transit's partner agencies on efforts that would facilitate the cost-effective delivery of transit projects and services.**
 Sound Transit has historically supported the legislative efforts of our partners that facilitate the cost-effective delivery of transit projects and services.
- **Support legislative proposals promoting development that will result in reduced vehicle miles traveled, reduced greenhouse gas emissions, higher transit ridership, enhanced mobility, and sustainability in the communities Sound Transit serves.**
 Mass transit, and in particular high capacity transit, can help the State achieve its goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions, energy consumption and reliance on foreign oil. Policies adopted by the State should recognize the vital role of transit and the opportunities it provides for creating jobs and making our communities more affordable and livable. Sound Transit supports proposals that facilitate future growth and planning that encourage appropriate land uses and densities to reinforce efficient land use and transit connectivity.
- **Oppose legislation which amends Sound Transit's enabling statutes without the consent and advice of the Sound Transit Board of Directors, increases the costs of transit improvements and services or otherwise impairs the agency's ability to deliver its voter-approved regional high capacity transit program.**
 Having served more than 100 million riders in 10 years of service, and with many capital projects built or under construction, the Sound Transit Board will continue to oppose legislation that would change the agency's enabling statutes or negatively alter the oversight, financing, construction, delivery and operation of Sound Transit projects and services.

BUDGET IMPACT SUMMARY

There is no action outside of the Board-adopted budget; there are no contingency funds required, no subarea impacts, or funding required from other parties other than what is already assumed in the financial plan.

BUDGET and FINANCIAL PLAN DISCUSSION

Adoption of the State Legislative Program does not create a budget or financial impact to the agency or any of its programs. Advocacy of the State Legislative Program is fully funded through the Communications and External Affairs Department Budget.

M/W/DBE – Small Business Participation

Not applicable to this action.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION and BACKGROUND for PROPOSED ACTION

Annually, the Sound Transit Board adopts a State Legislative Program. The program has typically included issues and policy guidance to staff and contract lobbyists to assist them in representing the agency's interests during the legislative session.

CONSEQUENCES OF DELAY

Sound Transit's interests are better served at the State Legislature if the Board of Directors adopts a State Legislative Program for the legislative session. Delaying adoption until the start of the session could minimize effective advocacy.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

Not applicable to this action.

ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE

SSK 10-14-09

LEGAL REVIEW

SS 10-16-09