Sound Transit Citizen Oversight Panel Meeting Summary
April 6, 2017

COP Members Present:  Fred Auch, Dave Berger, Ron Davis, Sharon Grader, Phil Lovell, Don Monroe, Mildred Ollée, Lua Pritchard, Bill Roach, Stuart Scheuerman, Vic Sood, Paul Thompson, Harold Wirch

COP Members Absent: Annette Bailes, Robin Gold, Scott Lampe

Others Present:  Shelly Brown, Jane Emerson, other agency staff, members of the public

Operations, Including Light Rail Vehicles

Michael Perry, Deputy Executive Director, Tracy Reed, Executive Project Manager, and Paul Dennison, Light Rail Operations Director, gave an update on the Agency’s light rail fleet expansion Link operations.  Sound Transit’s original rail car procurement consisted of an initial order in 2003 of 31 Kinkisharyo manufactured vehicles and two option orders for the Airport, University and Angle Lake Link extensions.  The current fleet of 62 vehicles are Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessible and operate at-grade, on streets and in tunnels.  Each car includes four wheelchair spaces, 74 seats and two shared bike and luggage spaces, with room for four bikes if both hanging racks are full.  Seventy percent of the cars are low floor vehicles.

In 2015 the Agency initiated a procurement for 122 additional light rail vehicles with layout and car dimensions similar to the original fleet.  A contract was awarded to Siemens Industry, Inc. for its S70-12 light rail vehicle, and notice to proceed was issued in September 2016.  Assembly is expected to begin in September 2018 and the first cars to be delivered by April 2019.  The new cars will have 30 percent more width in the center sections, larger luggage areas with four bicycle hangers per car, dynamic passenger information displays and LED destination signs.  An option for 30 additional vehicles is pending before the Board in order to optimize the price and delivery schedule.  The S70-12 car includes additional safety features in camera technology, vehicle system monitoring and improvements to the operator’s cab.  The vehicles are lighter, quieter and more comfortably heated and cooled than the original fleet, while still fully interchangeable with it.

There was discussion of the double cab feature of the cars, which is a common feature of North American light rail vehicles but a less frequently used design in other parts of the world.  Sound Transit chose the double cab design because it allows for maximum operating flexibility within the fleet.  Cost saving was also a factor.  When every car is a double cab, any vehicle within any train set can be used in any configuration, which will be particularly important when four-car trains and three-minute peak headways are standard.  St. Louis, Denver, Minneapolis, Phoenix, New York and Portland have also recently procured double cab cars for similar reasons.  At one time, Portland used one car cabs in order to maximize seating capacity, but discontinued the configuration after determining that its impact on operations was too severe.
An update of Link service showed there were 66,000 average weekday boardings in January 2017, an 89 percent increase over the same period last year, but five percent under the 2017 service implementation plan forecast of 69,400. Complaints, at less than two per 100,000 boardings, are at historic lows. Service to Husky Stadium on game days is still a challenge, but has improved with careful coordination of trains. Mechanical problems with escalators and elevators are continuing challenges, with performance currently falling below the industry standard of 93 – 95 percent functionality. The Agency has hired an independent expert to review the situation and provide recommendations for current operations and future procurements.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

Randall Stamm, Project Manager, and Aaron McCullough, Accessibility Coordinator, provided a briefing on the history of the ADA and the Agency’s accessibility programs. The historic, bipartisan civil rights legislation signed into law in 1990 prohibits discrimination against people with disabilities in employment, transportation, public accommodation, communications and government activities. The U.S. Department of Transportation’s (USDOT) ADA regulations require that people with disabilities have the same access to public transportation services as people without disabilities. Wheel chair lifts are required on all buses and light rail vehicles, and supplemental paratransit service is required for all individuals unable to use an existing fixed-route system. In 1999, Sound Transit created a 13 member Citizens Accessibility Advisory Committee to advise the Agency on regional mobility and accessibility issues as they relate to implementing regional transportation plans.

Discussion

Discussion took place throughout the presentations.

Member Reports

Dave Berger reported that he’d had brief discussions with Brian McCartan and Dow Constantine regarding the Agency’s collection of the MVET. He suggested that Sound Transit could offer to accept the newer depreciation schedule now in use in exchange for the Legislature’s agreement to increase the schedule by a percentage amount sufficient to offset the estimated $6 billion loss that Agency would sustain if it switched now to the newer schedule.

Phil Lovell noted that Linneth Riley-Hall, Deputy Chief of Staff, had thanked the individual COP who provided comments to the Agency’s draft System Expansion Implementation Plan (SEIP). He reported that the City of Edmonds has received funding and begun an analysis of alternatives to the at-grade crossing along the Edmonds waterfront.

Bill Roach expressed interest in the SEIP and the COP’s role in it. (NOTE: The SEIP will be the subject of the COP meeting on May 4, 2017.)

Mildred Ollée reported that she had heard an interview of Peter Rogoff on a local public radio station during which he discussed the MVET issues currently pending before the Legislature.
Ron Davis reported that he has become an official member of the Seattle Chamber of Commerce Policy Leadership Group.

Paul Thompson noted that he had provided comments to the SEIP and was interested in the Agency’s next steps in that process.

Stuart Scheuerman thanked Vic Sood for his eight years of service to the COP.

COP members joined in thanking Vic, who received a plaque from the Agency for his service.

**On-Going Concerns**

- Robustness of the data network, including security
- Adequacy of local transit service to ST park and ride lots
- Adequacy of access to area park and rides during East Link construction
- I-90 Track Attachment Design
- Ridership on Sounder North
- Operating costs across modes in comparison to peers
- Orca card integration
- Social Equity
- Convention Center construction and DSTT

The summary of the March 2, 2017, COP meeting was adopted. The summary of the March 16, 2017, COP meeting was adopted as amended.

Next Meeting – Thursday, April 20, 2017, 8:30 – 11:00 AM in the Santa Fe Room at Union Station.