Sound Transit Citizen Oversight Panel Meeting Summary  
August 17, 2017

COP Members Present: Fred Auch, Annette Bailes, Sharon Grader, Scott Lampe, Phil Lovell, Don Monroe, Bill Roach, Paul Thompson, Harold Wirch

COP Members Absent: Dave Berger, Ron Davis, Mildred Ollée, Lua Pritchard, Stuart Scheuerman

Others Present: Kathy Albert, other agency staff, members of the public

Legislative Session Overview

Alex Soldano, State Relations Manager, gave an overview of the Washington State Legislature’s 2017 session, the longest on record. Adopting a biennial budget that fully funds the state’s K-12 schools as required by the Supreme Court’s 2012 McCleary decision was a primary focus of the Legislature’s work. While a $43.7 operating budget for 2017 – 2019 was approved, a $4 billion capital budget is stalled over disagreements over a rural water use bill intended to address the Supreme Court’s Hirst decision.

Unlike recent years, when Sound Transit was actively engaged with the Legislature to develop ST3, the Agency kept a low profile during the 2017 session. Proposals regarding the Agency’s governance and the elimination of tolls on I-405 were introduced, along with 24 bills regarding MVET collection, none of which were adopted. The Agency has maintained neutrality on the MVET proposals, reviewing them and providing objective information to the Legislature.

Redmond Link Extension

Leonard McGhee, Project Manager, gave an update on the downtown Redmond Link extension. The project is 3.7-mile extension of East Link scheduled to open in 2024. Two stations are proposed that will include park and ride facilities, 1400 parking spaces, and potential connections to the East Lake Sammamish and Bear Creek Trails and Marymoor Park. Travel time from downtown Redmond to downtown Bellevue is estimated at 18 minutes, and at 38 minutes from downtown Redmond to the International District Station.

The Record of Decision (ROD) for the project was issued in 2011, at the same time as the ROD for the East Link extension. In June 2017, the Board directed staff to analyze proposed refinements to the 2011 project decision, including an elevated guideway in the downtown segment, an at-grade crossing of the SR 520/SR 202 interchange, and an elevated station at the Redmond Town Center. The 2011 Board adopted project budget was $850 million. The ST3 project budget, without reserves, is $950 million. The project budget with proposed refinements is $880 to $915 million, depending on the extent of ramp modifications needed to accommodate an at-grade alignment.
Environmental review is expected to continue through early 2018, after which the Board will select the final project design. Conceptual engineering is underway to develop the design build project, which should reduce the procurement process by six to nine months.

Discussion

The June 15, 2017, meeting summary was approved. (Note: There was a tour of the East Link extension on July 20 in lieu of the regularly scheduled COP meeting. The August 3 COP meeting was cancelled because of low attendance.)

Member Reports

Don Monroe noted a recent *Wall Street Journal* article regarding significant declines in bus ridership in many regions of the country. The Orange County Transportation Authority has been particularly hard hit. A number of factors were implicated in the trend, including ridesharing services and urban expansion.

Bill Roach reported on his analysis of the University of Washington’s 10-year plan. The expansive project envisions 20 percent population growth but appears to have little mitigation for multiple impacts, including bus access and drop-off issues for Sound Transit and King County Metro. A hearing examiner will issue a decision on the plan in November 2017, after which action will be taken by the Seattle City Council.

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

Next Meeting – September 7, 2017, 8:30 – 11:00 AM in the Santa Fe Room at Union Station.