

Sound Transit Citizen Oversight Panel Meeting Summary November 15, 2018

COP Members Present: Annette Bailes, Kevin Brannon, Scott Lampe, James Peyton, Bill Roach, Marie Rogers, Paul Thompson

COP Members Absent: Fred Auch, Sharon Grader, Chris Karnes, Phil Lovell, Don Monroe

Others Present: Shelly Brown, Kathy Albert, other Agency staff, members of the public.

2019 Proposed Budget and Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP)

Ann Sheridan, Budget Director, Jim Hathaway, Budget Manager, Jenny Stephens, Deputy Director of Budget and AJ McGauley, Budget Manager, gave an overview of the Agency's 2019 proposed budget and TIP. The Agency's financial planning includes a long term financial projection to 2041 that encompasses all Sound Move, ST2 and ST3 sources and uses, a TIP to 2024+ that includes all active projects and budgets year to year and a yearly budget, which is the annual appropriation for all revenues and expenditures.

For 2019, the sources and uses are \$2.9 billion. The operating departments budget is \$504 million, up 14 percent overall from the forecast for 2018 primarily due to increased workforce growth necessary to support the expanding system as well as higher services and purchased transportation costs. The Agency proposes to add 117 new positions in 2019, approximately half to support capital projects, 23 percent to support operations and 23 percent to support growing administrative needs.

The transit modes budget is \$345 million, a 7.5 percent increase over 2018 budget that reflects cost increases for public safety and security in addition to the rising costs of operating contracts with the Agency's partners. Purchased transportation for 2019 is \$195 million, up 9 percent for ST Express, 13 percent for Link and 4 percent for Sounder.

The projects budget is \$2.4 billion, primarily for construction, right of way acquisition and preliminary engineering. Enhancement projects totaling \$37 million and state of good repair expenditures of \$73 million are also included. Debt service and other budgets total \$167 million.

For more information, see the 2019 Financial Plan and Proposed Budget, which was distributed at the November 15, 2019, COP meeting and can be viewed electronically at:
<https://www.soundtransit.org/sites/default/files/2019-financial-plan-and-proposed-budget.pdf>.

2019 Proposed Service Implementation Plan (SIP)

Michael Couvrette, Service Planning Manager, and Brian de Place, Director of Support Services, gave an overview of the 2019 Proposed SIP. The SIP, in coordination with the Agency's budget process, guides service delivery in the upcoming year, provides a five-year service outlook and plan, and reviews existing ridership and performance trends. The SIP is also the tool through which major service changes are undertaken.

ST Express service will undergo significant changes in 2019. Growing regional congestion is impacting service quality, resulting in slower speeds and decreased on-time performance. Limited regional bus base capacity reduces the ability to respond. These operating conditions may be reflected in part by the 1.7 percent reduction in ST Express ridership through the third quarter of 2018. During the same period, Sounder ridership increased 2.3 percent and Link ridership 8.2 percent. Tacoma link ridership was down 12 percent, primarily due to closure of the Tacoma Dome for restoration work that is now complete. Ridership is expected to rise to pre-closure levels as concerts and other events are scheduled.

Beginning in March 2019, a series of construction projects will close some transit facilities to buses, most notably in the Downtown Seattle Transit Tunnel (DSTT) and at the Montlake Freeway Station. The DSTT bus closure will require about 10,700 weekday riders to use different stops, many along Second and Fourth Avenues. The fleet will expand by adding 19 buses now in reserves and adding 17,600 service hours to mitigate the longer distance and travel times. At Montlake, new evening and weekend trips will be added on Route 542 until September 2019. A low-performing segment of Route 555 service between Bellevue-Eastgate-Issaquah will be eliminated and reallocated to avoid trip reductions on Route 554. Similarly, a lower-performing service between Lakewood Station and South Hill duplicated by Sounder will be reallocated within Pierce County. In Snohomish County, Route 513 will start at the new Seaway Transit Center and provide more integrated service with Sound Transit's regional partners.

Discussion

There was discussion of the rising costs of purchased transportation. Members requested additional information about whether the Agency could contract with private sector providers or operate its own services. It was agreed that further briefing and follow up is warranted.

The summary of the November 1, 2018, COP meeting was approved.

Member Reports

Bill Roach reported that he would have additional news about the status of the University of Washington's Master Plan and the City of Seattle's response to it at the November 29, 2018, COP meeting.

Kevin Brannon noted that he would be in South Carolina on a work assignment at the time of the COP's January 17, 2019, annual retreat.

Marie Rogers reported that she has received many questions about the new Northgate Transit Center and whether there will be costs for parking there.

Paul Thompson noted that he had yet to see the Agency's Transit Asset Management Plan, which was due in October. Staff agreed to follow up.

Scott Lampe noted that the Agency's *News You Can Use* feature is a very helpful resource.

2018 Focus Areas

- Adequacy and appropriateness of system access to stations
- Ridership on Sounder North
- Social equity
- Impacts of the One Center City initiative
- Awareness of emerging technologies and their impacts
- Labor costs and labor supply
- Publicizing of peer comparison data
- Farebox policy
- Asset management
- Reliability of federal and state funding sources
- Full implementation of positive train control
- Formalized, early identification/evaluation process for alignment options that could necessitate local funding

Next Meeting: November 29, 2018, 8:30 – 11:00 AM in the Santa Fe Room at Union Station.