

Sound Transit Citizen Oversight Panel Meeting Summary November 29, 2018

COP Members Present: Annette Bailes, Kevin Brannon, Chris Karnes, Scott Lampe, Phil Lovell, Bill Roach, Don Monroe, Marie Rogers

COP Members Absent: Fred Auch, Sharon Grader, James Peyton, Paul Thompson

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

Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) Regional Planning Update

Kelly McGourty, Director of Transportation Planning, briefed COP members on the organizational structure and work of the PSRC. The PSRC is a metropolitan planning organization (MPO) that analyzes a variety of issues related to growth, the economy and transportation in the four county (King, Pierce, Snohomish and Kitsap) metropolitan area. Developing regional data and forecasts is the biggest component of the PSRC's work. The agency also distributes \$260 million per year in federal highway and transit funds. Membership encompasses over 90 organizations, including state agencies, tribal governments, four counties, cities and towns, ports and transit agencies, including the Washington State Ferries (Ferries). The 6400 square mile region is home to 4.1 million people and 2.2 million jobs.

Growth trends show that the region's economy continues its robust expansion, with jobs increasing 2.5 percent in 2017 and 22 percent overall since 2010. Eighty five percent of job growth since 2010 has been in King and Snohomish counties. Unemployment region wide is 3.8 percent, quite close to the national rate of 3.7 percent. Consistent with the increase in job opportunities, the region's population has also continued to climb. Washington State is one of the top five fastest growing states in the country, having gained 444,000 people since 2010 and 80,000 per year for the past two years. Population forecasts estimate that by 2050 there will be 5.8 million people and an additional 1.2 million jobs in the region.

Travel time delays have increased dramatically along with population and job growth, with I-5 accounting for over 65 percent of regional delay in 2017. Transit use is also increasing. The region had the sixth highest number of transit boardings per capita nationally in 2017, the highest of any area without a legacy heavy rail system.

Home prices and apartment rents have shown a dramatic increase of about 60 percent in the past five years.

Vision 2040 is the PSRC's long range plan for addressing these and other issues associated with the region's historic growth. Its objectives are a healthy environment, economic opportunity, regional centers within the urban growth area and fast, frequent transportation and housing for all. Vision 2050, in scoping now and expected to be adopted in 2020, will build on and expand the strategies identified in Vision 2040. The PSRC also adopted a regional transportation plan in May 2018 that, in conjunction with its Vision plans, is designed to help the region catch up and

keep pace with the growth that is forecast. Highlights of the transportation plan include overall investments of \$197 billion, approximately \$60 billion of which is for high capacity transit.

Sustainability Program Update and 2019 Plan Update

Jamie Brinkley, Environmental Planner, gave an update on the Agency's sustainability program and 2019 sustainability plan, its third since the original plan was adopted in 2011. The Sustainability Division has a current staff of four and plans to fill another position shortly. The Division works across the Agency to develop its sustainability strategy and associated policies, monitor and report progress to the Board, administer the environmental and sustainability management system and provide technical assistance to all departments.

Highlights from 2017 include: An overall ridership increase of 10 percent without a related increase in energy; regional savings in greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) of more than five percent over 2016; significant reductions in PM10 and CO due to ST Express and Sounder upgrades; system expansion projects that include green building and sustainable infrastructure cost allowances; initiation of a bus rapid transit (BRT) electric bus feasibility study; use of a resource conservation manager to focus on energy efficient projects; increased participation with clean energy programs through Puget Sound Energy and other utilities; piloting the ENVISION sustainable infrastructure standard; and Angle Lake Station's receipt of the Gold Level LEED certification.

The 2019 sustainability plan will continue through 2024 and establishes six long term goals: Social equity will be addressed and implemented agency-wide; all staff will champion sustainability; carbon free operations will be achieved; ecosystem functions will be enhanced; resilience to climate change and natural or manmade disasters will be increased; and operational efficiency will be maximized.

The plan is currently being distributed for feedback to Agency partners and public interest groups. Comments are expected to be incorporated in December and the final plan sent to the Board for approval in January 2019.

Discussion

Panel members expressed appreciation for the PSRC briefing, which in addition to being very informative also provided context for Sound Transit's work in the region. It was suggested that the PSRC could get ahead of regional issues rather than trying to catch up with them by broadening its vision. It was noted that by 2050 the PSRC's jurisdiction might extend well beyond its current four-county region.

Panel members also expressed appreciation for Sound Transit's commitment to sustainability. It was noted that the Agency has a very good story to tell about sustainability that could be more meaningful if the information were put into context by relating it, for example, to life cycle costs and other measures of comparison. It was suggested that presentations to the COP sometimes seem to have a promotional element.

The summary of the November 15, 2018, COP meeting was approved.

Member Reports

Chris Karnes reported that he'd attended the groundbreaking for the Hilltop Tacoma Link Extension earlier in the month. The project marks an important and exciting time for the community.

Phil Lovell reported on Sound Transit's planned, temporary commuter parking lot in Mountlake Terrace at the site of the former Roger's Market. The new parking site is necessary because parking spaces at the existing transit center will be used for Lynnwood Link Extension construction staging. The temporary lot is a considerable walking distance from the transit center. Phil also reported that Ferries has released its draft long range plan. Among many items of interest is the fact that 35 percent of Ferries operating crews will be eligible to retire within the next five years. Ferries is also contemplating electrification of its fleet, which is one of the largest consumers of diesel fuel in the state.

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: December 6, 2018, 8:30 – 11:00 AM in the Santa Fe Room at Union Station.