

## Sound Transit Citizen Oversight Panel Virtual Meeting Summary

**February 2, 2022**

**COP Members Present:** Fred Auch, Scott Lampe, James Peyton, Helen Powell, Larry Sauvé, Joe Scorcio, Paul Thompson

**COP Members Absent:** None

**Others Present:** Kathy Albert, Katie Flores, Adam Montee

### **West Seattle and Ballard Link Extensions (WSBLE)**

- Cathal Ridge – Executive Corridor Director
- Leda Chahim – Government and Community Relations Manager Central Corridor

Cathal Ridge and Leda Chahim gave an update on the WSBLE, which includes two light rail extensions, a new downtown tunnel exclusively for light rail, 12 miles of new Link service and 14 new stations. A draft environmental impact statement (DEIS) for the project was published on January 28, 2022. Public comment will be accepted through April 28, 2022. The 90-day comment period is twice as long as the typical 45-day review for an DEIS. The Board is expected to confirm or modify the preferred alternatives in the summer of 2022. A final EIS and federal Record of Decision are expected in 2023. West Seattle service is expected to begin in 2032. Under the Agency's realignment program, Ballard service is anticipated to begin in 2037 with target delivery or in 2039 with affordable delivery.

An extensive community engagement process is underway for the DEIS, which includes an online open house, four virtual meetings and one in person meeting scheduled for March. A DEIS mailer has been delivered to 130,000 addresses. Four community advisory groups along the corridor have been meeting monthly since November 2021. Other activities include community briefings, fairs, festivals, property owner webinars, office hours and community liaison outreach.

Additional, detailed information about the WSBLE is available in the presentation materials provided as part of the COP briefing.

### **Efficiency and Sustainability Program**

- Amy Shatzkin – Director of Sustainability

Amy Shatzkin gave an overview of Sound Transit's Efficiency and Sustainability Program (ESP), which is part of a \$25 million fund approved as part of ST3 to advance the Agency's strategic sustainability priorities within the existing transit system. The ESP focuses on sustainability, resource conservation and efficiencies in long-term operations and maintenance. Three projects were launched in 2021:

A \$1.1 million LED lighting retrofit at the UW, Capitol Hill, Beacon Hill and Stadium stations is expected to save \$176 thousand annually. The project is fully scoped and will begin implementation in 2022/2023.

A \$367 thousand wayside energy storage (WES) feasibility study for Link light rail is underway. WES transfers otherwise wasted braking energy to a nearby energy storage system for later use. The project is a study of WES technologies and their applicability to the Link system. Phase I of the study is expected

to be complete by the end of the first quarter of 2022. Phase II of the study will begin in the first or second quarter of 2022.

A \$35 thousand solar and battery storage backup feasibility study for elevators is being scoped for implementation in the first quarter of 2022. The project, which focuses on Tukwila International Boulevard Station, will determine whether batteries and solar panels are suitable for emergency backup power in elevator systems.

## **2021 Sustainability Year in Review**

In 2021, Sound Transit launched three ESP projects, which are described above. About 119,000 tons of greenhouse gas emissions were averted by transit ridership, despite lower ridership due to the pandemic. Five facilities are in the process of being certified to minimum LEED Silver standards. Sound Transit became the third transit agency to receive gold status with The Climate Registry. Two corridors are undergoing ENVISION certifications with the Institute for Sustainable Infrastructure. Two climate vulnerability analyses were completed and a third is being scoped.

Workplan priorities for 2022 include securing agreement on design criteria updates, developing a zero-emissions bus plan, coordinating regional battery electric bus infrastructure planning, finalizing an electric vehicle strategy for facilities, determining a renewable energy strategy, funding additional innovative projects through the ESP, and increasing staff engagement via a new learning community.

Opportunities for improvement include engaging a new CEO, continuing to clarify Tribal coordination, increasing internal coordination for federal funding opportunities, streamlining the on-call contract process, continuing collaboration with the Office of Civil Rights, Equity and Inclusion, and developing a single point of accountability for waste and recycling.

## **Discussion**

West Seattle and Ballard Link Extensions – COP members expressed appreciation for the detailed presentation of complex options in the corridor. It was noted that escalating real estate costs had made the tunnel alternative more competitive with aerial and surface alignments. While third party financing may still be necessary, it may not be as significant a component of the cost as once thought. Tunnel options would preserve views and parks and ultimately have less impacts than elevated options. The lack of representation on the Panel by COP members from the West Seattle and Ballard areas was regrettably noted.

Efficiency and Sustainability Program and Sustainability Year-End Report – COP members noted the important work of the sustainability group. They commended the innovations of the ESP, which encourages internal brainstorming and innovation.

The January 19, 2022, virtual COP meeting summary was approved.

## **Member Reports**

Larry Sauv  reported that the COP administrator recruitment process had been restarted. If the schedule goes as proposed, a new administrator could be on board by the April COP meeting.

## **Outstanding Questions**

Puget Sound Regional Council response to Kemper Freeman transportation study.

**Next Virtual Meeting:** Wednesday, February 16, 2022, 8:30 – 12:00 PM - COP Annual Retreat