

## **Sound Transit Citizen Oversight Panel Meeting Summary December 19, 2019**

**COP Members Present:** Jan Berlin, Scott Lampe, Dan Parker, Helen Powell, Bill Roach, Dan Santon, Larry Sauvé, Paul Thompson

**COP Members Absent:** Fred Auch, Sharon Grader, James Peyton

Others Present: Shelly Brown, Kathy Albert, members of the public

### **Capital Signage Program**

Candace Toth, Program Manager Capital Signage, and Julie Montgomery, Director Architecture & Art, gave an update of Sound Transit's capital signage program, which is a standard kit of parts for platform identification and customer information that is applied across all of the Agency's transportation modes and maintained by the Facilities and Operations Department.

System wide signage changes are typically tied to system expansion openings. A \$13.7M capital signage fabrication and installation contract has been authorized to support system expansion for six light rail segment extensions between from 2019 to 2025. Projects include new signage and between-car barriers at new stations, as well as required signage updates at existing facilities and on Link light rail vehicles. Additional tactile braille improvements will be added based on input from Sound Transit's Citizens Accessibility Advisory Committee. The Agency is also updating its signage manual to include ideas presented at a recent Asia Pacific Rail Conference, as well as customer requests for real time information.

Since 2014, eight improvement projects have been completed through cross-functional work by a Signage Governance Team. These include revised ticket vending machine wrap, arrival time deployment, new stop markers, supergraphics at King Street and Westlake stations, improved station signage in the downtown core, and destination signs at platforms. In addition, a numbered exits pilot project has been completed that pairs overhead signs and directories at four downtown tunnel stations. Location-relevant line maps will be installed in 2021.

### **Grants Program**

Lisa Wolternik, Director of Fares & Grants, gave an overview of the Agency's grant program. The numbers discussed were based on grant awards, which are used when the Agency executes grant agreements and secures funding. Grant awards differ slightly from grant revenues, which are used in financial reports and reflect grant drawn downs or reimbursements.

Just a few minutes before the presentation, the Agency had closed on its fourth and final Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (TIFIA) loan for \$629.5M, at an interest rate of 2.36 percent for 40 years. Overall, Sound Transit has received \$3.3B in TIFIA low interest loans that will save the region's taxpayers \$200M - \$300M over the life of the bonds. In addition, life to date, the Agency has been awarded approximately \$3.8B in grant funding. A \$790M Full Funding Grant Agreement (FFGA) from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) for the Federal Way Link extension is expected to be executed in January 2020, which will raise the total amount of grant awards to \$4.6B.

Between 2017 and 2041, Sound Transit expects to receive about \$8B in federal grants from three categories of federal programs: New/Small Starts, formula funds based on revenue vehicle miles and other service data, and other competitive grants. Overall, these grant sources equal about 16 percent of the capital cost of ST3. While the funding assumptions are very conservative, they are appropriate to the level of risk associated with budgeting federal funds.

The FTA monitors transit agency compliance with its grant requirements through a triennial review process that evaluates 21 areas of grants management. Sound Transit completed its most recent triennial review in October 2019, during which the single finding was resolved within the three-day review period.

## **Discussion**

COP members appreciated the discussion of signage improvements, which were noted to be needed throughout the system, as is regional wayfinding. Members found the grant presentation articulate and thoughtful.

## **Member Reports**

Paul Thompson reported, in follow up to his earlier observations about the Overlake Transit Center, that some buses are beginning to run through the facility as it nears completion. The majority of the Center will likely remain unused until the scheduled opening of East Link in 2023.

Scott Lampe reported that he would be presenting the COP's letter to the Finance and Audit Committee regarding 2020 internal audit topics following the COP meeting on December 19, 2019.

Jan Berlin reported that progress had recently been made in Lynnwood on a transit oriented development project to be built on the site of an underused strip mall near the Lynnwood transit center.

## **2019 Focus Areas**

- Adequacy and appropriateness of system access to stations
- Ridership on Sounder North
- Social equity
- Awareness of emerging technologies and their impacts
- Labor costs and labor supply
- Publicizing of peer comparison data
- Asset management
- Reliability and availability of federal, state, local and third party funding sources
- Customer experience focus that includes the entire region and all of the transit agencies within it
- Customer experience metrics that focus more specifically on the customer experience

## **Outstanding Questions**

- Federal Way Link – TOD related questions regarding property acquisition and station access

Next Meeting: **COP Annual Retreat, Thursday, January 16, 2020, 8:30 AM – 2:00 PM**, Santa Fe Room, Union Station