

## Sound Transit Citizen Oversight Panel Virtual Meeting Summary

**September 1, 2021**

**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

### **STart Update**

- Barbara Luecke – Manager of STart

Barbara Luecke gave an overview of Sound Transit's art program, which is funded through one percent of construction budgets, excluding tunneling, to incorporate art into transit facilities. The program creates more vibrant stations by involving communities in artwork development, supporting jurisdictional planning goals, and reflecting the communities served.

In addition to the public benefits provided through station enhancement and neighborhood landmarks, art enhances the individual rider experience by creating facilities with more local meaning. The ST2 STart buildout currently underway employs 37 artists, half of whom are women, and 36 percent of whom are people of color.

The principle of subarea equity applies to the STart program, as it does to other Sound Transit funding sources. Funds collected in a particular subarea are spent there, creating art in spaces that will likely be enjoyed by riders systemwide. Other art planning considerations include project site opportunities, historic and cultural significance, localized impacts, civic importance, and scale. Art can make an enormous space feel more human, create a sense of openness in a tight space, and increase the feeling of overall safety. Art also builds community by preserving neighborhood spirit and creating welcome spaces. Community based projects include engaging local residents and school children in creating murals. For the first time, a Native artist is engaged on a STart project designing art for the Puyallup Sounder garage.

As part of an overall Agency effort to reduce costs through standardizing facilities, a station experience design manual has been created. Architecture and engineering (A&E) elements focus on function, and include accommodation, standardized materials, weather protections, and safety and security. Flow patterns, signage, ticketing and lighting are end products of A&E design. Art elements focus on experience by creating landmarks, emotional connections, enhanced perception, and human scale.

Photos and descriptions of several STart ST2 Projects-in-Motion were of particular interest to COP members.

### **Northgate Link Start-Up Plans**

- Rick Capka – Deputy Executive Project Director
- Lauren Albert – Event Marketing Program Manager

Rick Capka and Lauren Albert briefed the COP on start-up work underway for the official Northgate Link extension opening scheduled for October 2, 2021. The project is a 4.3-mile extension from UW Station to

Northgate that includes three light rail stations and a 450-stall parking garage. Transit-oriented development projects are planned or underway at all three stations. The line will serve three academic facilities and three business districts and provide 14-minute service from Northgate to Downtown. The project is 99 percent complete, with a projected underrun of more than \$52 million.

Safety, always the first priority, is a particular focus now, as track access is coordinated between contractors and operations crews and the safety certification process for revenue service is underway. Operator familiarizations have begun, trainway and stations handover operations are underway, and simulated revenue service has begun. A station evacuation drill was held on August 28, 2021, with participation from the Seattle Police and Fire Departments. All vibration and electromagnetic interference (EMI) testing is complete, and an updated operating agreement with the University of Washington is expected by the week of September 13. An Americans With Disabilities Act rider familiarization event will take place at all three stations.

The passenger experience team has been integrated into all opening projects. A welcome manifesto has been developed that emphasizes community connections and ownership, and welcomes all riders to the new stations. Welcome signage is presented in multiple languages and reflects a diversity of community members.

A preview opening event for media, stakeholders and partners will take place at 5:00 PM on October 1 at the top of the Northgate parking garage, which will include group rides and station tours. A public opening will begin on October 2 and continue throughout the month. Experiential installations, welcome ambassadors, digital experiences, and business sponsorship/partnerships will be among the events included. Because no single, large scale community opening event will take place, a series of individualized station area activities will welcome riders and familiarize them with the new facilities.

## **Discussion**

STart Program – COP members expressed appreciation for the art program and its multiple benefits to the community.

Northgate Link Start-Up Plans – COP members noted the milestone represented by the Northgate Link opening and commended the Agency for keeping the project on time and budget in spite of the pandemic. It was noted that the timing of the Friday afternoon preview event coincides with peak rush hour traffic and would prevent some guests from participating. It was also noted that the timing allows for sightseeing prior to the opening and attendance at a sporting event afterward.

A briefing on service revisions to support Northgate Link was requested and will be provided as part of the service plan update at the COP's October 20, 2021, virtual meeting.

The annual call for nominations for COP Chair and Co-Chair were announced. COP Chair Scott Lampe and Co-Chair Larry Sauvé have completed their two-year terms. Larry Sauvé was nominated as incoming Chair and Helen Powell was nominated as incoming Co-Chair. Additional nominations will be accepted through September 10.

The summary of the August 18, 2021, virtual COP meeting was approved as amended.

## **Member Reports**

None

## **2021 Focus Areas**

- Adequacy and appropriateness of station access, including use of emerging technologies
- Monitoring and review of social equity, racial equity, fare enforcement, and inclusion policies
- Uses of peer comparison data
- Asset management plan progress
- Reliability and availability of federal, state, local, and third-party funding sources
- Customer experience focused metrics across the RTA region and transit agencies within it
- COVID-19, contingency planning, and disaster preparedness
- Program realignment, interagency cooperation and interoperability
- Coordination with local jurisdictions to mitigate impacts of unauthorized parking around stations

## **Outstanding Questions**

None

**Next Virtual Meeting:** Wednesday, September 15, 8:30 – 11:00 AM

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