

Sound Transit Citizen Oversight Panel Virtual Meeting Summary July 22, 2020

COP Members Present: Fred Auch, Hally Bert, Scott Lampe, Dan Parker, James Peyton, Helen Powell, Bill Roach, Larry Sauvé, Joe Scorcio, Paul Thompson

COP Members Absent: Brett Johnson, Dan Santon

Others Present: Shelly Brown, Kathy Albert, Katie Flores, Taylor Wilkinson

Capital Construction Impacts Due to Covid -19

- Ron Lewis, Executive Director of Design, Engineering and Construction Management (DECM)
- Matt Preedy, Director of Construction Management

Ron Lewis and Matt Preedy briefed the COP on the impacts of Covid-19 on Sound Transit's major capital construction projects. On February 29, 2020, the Governor declared a state of emergency due to Covid-19. Social distancing orders were issued on March 13 and a Stay Healthy, Stay Home order was issued on March 23. Construction continued on Sound Transit projects with the use of updated safety plans until increasing supply chain interruptions became so disruptive that the majority of construction was suspended in early April. About 20 percent of construction work considered essential continued under social distancing guidelines and other protocols.

Construction work began revamping on May 4 under best practices guidance developed through a committee chaired by the Director of Construction Management. All contractors were required to verify training and field surveys to assess adherence to Covid-19 safety plan elements, which include hygiene stations, the use of facemasks and other personal protective equipment (PPE), and mandatory social distancing consistent with state and national directives.

Two general contract provisions apply to the April stop work orders: General Condition 10.02, unavoidable delay or force majeure, and General Condition 12.01, suspension of work. Contractors must separate impacts arising from an unavoidable delay, which don't require reimbursement, and those resulting from the suspension of work, which may result in additional costs to the contractor. Sound Transit is working on a contract by contract basis with each contractor involved in the April shutdown to determine the eligible costs that resulted.

Overall, the new protocols are working well. Not every construction site can perfectly implement every requirement. Complaints about sanitation equipment and supplies at the I-90 Judson Park site were addressed through a quick contractor response and labor support. Leslie Jones, Chief Business and Labor Compliance Officer, is invaluable in helping develop solutions. Previously strong partnerships with the Association of General Contractors, King County, the Port of Seattle, the Washington State Department of Transportation, the Federal Transit Administration and others have become even stronger over the past several months as entities that usually compete against each other have worked together to develop safety solutions that benefit everyone.

Labor Impacts Due to Covid-19

- Leslie Jones, Chief Business and Labor Compliance Officer
- Chris Elwell, Deputy Director, Labor Compliance

Leslie Jones and Chris Elwell discussed the impacts of Covid-19 on the area labor force. The first known Covid-19 victim died on February 29, 2020 in Kirkland. On March 11, CEO Peter Rogoff directed all non-essential Agency staff to begin working from home. On March 23, the first construction worker on a Sound Transit project contracted the virus. On March 31, the first labor briefing between the Agency and its partners from Washington State, King, Pierce, and Snohomish Counties took place, and has continued on a weekly basis ever since. All participants have very positive relationships, many as members of the state's Construction Roundtable, which helped when issues related to the governor's lockdown orders needed clarification.

All construction sites were reconfigured to provide the safest environment possible for workers, many of whom don't have access to employer provided health care. Carpooling was discontinued after a Covid-19 transmission was traced to the practice. Temperature checks are required before entering a worksite, no large gatherings are allowed, work and lunch breaks are staggered, sanitation crews frequently clean common areas, masks are required on all job sites, and Covid-19 safety managers are assigned to each project to encourage and educate workers on the new normal. Many of these safety measures, particularly the requirements for continuous mask use and 14 day quarantines, have added to the stress already prevalent in the construction trades. Roundtable members track and report on these issues weekly and partner in their efforts to provide physical and mental health support for all job site crews.

Between March 1 and July 13, Covid-19 has been confirmed in 26 workers. Twenty-three of the cases occurred between June 10 and July 13, an average rate of five cases per week. With the exception of one case transmitted through carpooling, there is no evidence of transmission on the job site.

Discussion

COP members appreciated the detailed and frank presentations, which highlighted the expertise of the Agency's staff. There were questions about best practices, lessons learned, impacts to the supply chain, service disruptions, and the critical path for capital projects. In many instances it is too early to know what long term impacts will be, particularly across jurisdictions. Two additional topics were added to the 2020 focus areas list: The impacts of Covid-19 on system operations, and program realignment, interagency cooperation and interoperability.

Member Reports

Scott Lampe reported that the City of Bellevue had disseminated a video flyover of the East Link project that he would forward to COP members.

James Peyton reported that a virtual groundbreaking for the Federal Way Link project was particularly well done.

2020 Focus Areas

- Adequacy and appropriateness of station access
- Monitoring and review of social equity, racial equity, fare enforcement, and inclusion policies
- Implications and impacts of emerging technologies
- Workforce development and measurement of outcomes
- Uses of peer comparison data
- Asset management plan progress
- 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
- Safety performance and function
- Contingency planning and disaster preparedness
- Cost management for the System Expansion Implementation Plan
- Impacts of Covid-19 on system operations and program realignment
- Program realignment, interagency cooperation and interoperability

Outstanding Questions

None

Next Virtual Meeting: Wednesday, August 5, 2020, 8:30 – 11:00 AM

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