

Sound Transit Citizen Oversight Panel Virtual Meeting Summary September 16, 2020

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

COP Members Absent: Hally Bert, Daniel Santon

Others Present: Shelly Brown, Kathy Albert, Katie Flores

East Link Extension Update

- Mike Bell, Executive Project Director - East Link, DECM

Mike Bell gave an update on the East Link Extension, a 14-mile light rail extension from Seattle's International District to the Redmond Technology Center. The project includes 10 stations, two parking garages, a retained cut tunnel, and the first of its kind light rail track bridge installed on a floating bridge. Service will run every six minutes during peak hours; daily ridership of 43,000 to 52,000 riders is expected by 2026. The project budget is \$3.677 billion, \$2.634 billion of which has been incurred to date. Revenue service is scheduled for June 2023, but could begin in the fall of 2022 due to ample and untapped project float.

While the project is in good financial condition, the Covid-19 stop work order in March resulted in significant contractor claims that will likely impact all project contracts. Late design changes from external and internal partners also create financial risks. Other challenges include maintaining station construction schedules, ramping up system installations, repairing cracks that have developed at the Redmond Technology Center Garage, and addressing bus access at the Mercer Island Station.

Operations and Maintenance Facility East (OMFE)

- Tracy Reed, Deputy Executive Director – Project Management New & Existing Facilities, DECM

Tracy Reed gave an update on the OMFE, which is designed to service, deploy, and store 96 light rail vehicles and maintain new mainline track, systems, and stations. The fully furnished design-build project will operate 24 hours a day, 365 days a year with a capacity of 260 employees. The facility will support the operation of the East Link, Downtown Redmond, Lynnwood, and Federal Way Link extensions. The baseline budget is \$449.2 million, 81 percent of which has been committed and 77 percent of which has been incurred. The remaining contingency balance is 14.5 percent. The project is expected to be complete in December 2020. Craft labor hours to date are 570,000. The design builder meets or exceeds contract specific and program wide small, disadvantaged business, and equal employment opportunity goals except for the category of women, which is trending up.

Risks and challenges include Covid-19 cost impacts, unforeseen system testing issues, balancing Sound Transit human and fleet resources across multiple projects, implementing and testing changes to support Series 2 light rail vehicles, staff training, preparation for facility use, and maintenance.

West Seattle and Ballard Link Extensions

- Cathal Ridge, Executive Corridor Director

Cathal Ridge gave a presentation on the West Seattle and Ballard Link Extensions, a large, complex project with numerous alternatives that were identified by the Board in May and October 2019, and are being considered during the draft environmental impact statement (DEIS) work currently underway. The project is subject to Sound Transit's realignment process, which is also ongoing, and may result in schedule adjustments prior to the expected completion of the DEIS in the spring of 2021. A final EIS and federal record of decision is anticipated in 2022. The material presented was based on pre-Covid-19 schedules. Detailed descriptions and maps of each alternative were included and described, and may be reviewed at: <https://www.soundtransit.org/get-to-know-us/news-events/calendar/citizen-oversight-panel-meeting-2020-09-16>.

The robust community engagement and outreach program moved to a virtual format in March 2020, and has focused for the past several months on building general awareness of the project, the DEIS process, and how to engage. Outreach efforts include the application of a Racial Equity Toolkit to the project, community briefings, a waterway users survey, fieldwork notifications, door to door outreach as needed, email updates and outreach reports, and response to inquiries by phone and email. Upcoming work includes an online engagement platform, additional community briefings with an emphasis on new groups and vulnerable populations, equitable engagement approaches, a Near Neighbor mailer, and outreach to property owners.

Discussion

East Link Extension – COP members appreciated the candid discussion regarding Covid-19 related claims, which are a significant concern. Disappointment was expressed about ongoing issues with the City of Mercer Island, which the Agency has worked hard to resolve. The entire corridor has been challenging from the beginning. That the project is still on schedule without the use of float is very impressive.

OMFE – The project continues progressing well without significant challenges. COP members noted its accomplished woman project manager.

West Seattle and Ballard Link Extensions – COP members commended the professionalism and expertise of the corridor director, who was able to make an immensely complicated project accessible.

The summary of the September 2, 2020, COP meeting was approved.

Member Reports

James Peyton reported that progress on the Federal Way Link extension is evident and good to see. The work, which includes moving enormous amounts of dirt, appears to be going well.

Paul Thompson noted that the Redmond Technology Center parking garage is undergoing extensive, supplemental work necessary to stabilize the structure, which is directly across the street from the Microsoft campus, where 28 construction cranes are currently on site.

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

- 1) Has the Agency considered contracting with the University of Washington or another appropriate institution to study the transmission of Covid-19 on public transportation?
- 2) What is the cost of keeping major projects shovel ready while realignment work takes place?
- 3) Is it possible to record COP comments for potential feedback to presenters?

Next Virtual Meeting: Wednesday, October 7, 2020, 8:30 – 11:00 AM