

## **Sound Transit Citizen Oversight Panel Virtual Meeting Summary December 16, 2020**

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

**COP Members Absent:** Brett Johnson, Daniel Santon

**Others Present:** Kathy Albert, Katie Flores, Salina Lyons, Adam Montee, Taylor Wilkinson

### **Bus-Rail Integration and the Northgate Link Extension**

- Alex Krieg, Deputy Director of Access and Integration

Alex Krieg gave an overview of Sound Transit's planning for bus-rail integration when Northgate Link opens for service in 2021. Steve Crosley, Transit Integration Program Manager at King County Metro Transit (Metro), Noah Tunick, Transit Integration Manager at Community Transit, and Ben Smith, Senior Transportation Planner at the City of Seattle, also participated in the discussion.

Northgate Link includes three stations, each of which has two station entrances with elevators, escalators, and stairs. The U District Station at Brooklyn Avenue NE, between NE 43<sup>rd</sup> and NE 45<sup>th</sup> Streets, is 80 feet below ground and was designed to accommodate a future building on the site. The Roosevelt Station at 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE, between NE 65<sup>th</sup> and NE 67<sup>th</sup> Streets, is also 80 feet below ground and has bicycle storage and bus connections on three major nearby streets. The station was completed in Fall 2019. The Northgate Station at 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue NE spans NE 103<sup>rd</sup> Street, was designed to accommodate a City of Seattle pedestrian and bike bridge over I-5, includes bicycle storage, a street level transit island, and a 447 stall parking garage.

Northgate Link will connect one service network that will cover a large geographic area with distinct transit markets, served by three agencies with separate governing bodies and different decision-making processes. In order to coordinate this network most effectively, an extensive community engagement and outreach program was undertaken across the region, led by Community Transit and Sound Transit in the Snohomish County/I-5 North corridor, and by Metro with the participation of Sound Transit in Seattle and North King County.

Survey results for Snohomish county proposals revealed excitement about the Northgate Link opening. Increased frequency and improved weekend service were requested. While there was some support and understanding for bus-rail transfers, there was also concern, particularly about travel time, transfers, and fare differences. There was a preference for maintaining direct rush hour service to Seattle. The result of actions taken by both the Sound Transit and Community Transit Boards of Directors mean that ST Express Route 510 and Community Transit 400 services will continue to directly serve downtown Seattle, while other routes will be re-routed to Northgate Station during rush hour, and during midday, evenings, and weekends.

Survey results for draft North King County connections to Roosevelt Station revealed support for the reliability and increased frequency that could come with transfers, and a preference for more frequent Link service to connections at Roosevelt Station. As in Snohomish County, some concern was expressed about travel time, transfers, and fare differences. In November, the Sound Transit Board acted to truncate ST Express Route 522 to Roosevelt Station and increasing its frequency, and linking with proposed Metro Routes 322 and 361 to the Northgate and Roosevelt Stations.

Key themes from the Seattle and North King County surveys included an emphasis on frequent transfers where possible, especially during mid-day, at night, and on weekends. Improved connections to and from major destinations, improved east-west corridor connections, fast, reliable bus connections to light rail, and safe, reliable service throughout the day, particularly during peak hours, were priorities. The third and final phase of engagement, which will affect 40 routes, was recently completed. An ordinance process will begin in early 2021, with a decision expected in April or May.

Coordination efforts to ensure that transit operations and transfer connections at each of the three North Link stations is also underway. Because Northgate Station will be the light rail terminus until the opening of Lynnwood Link in 2024, increased layover capacity is needed for the next three years. At Roosevelt Station, new and relocated bus stops and signals, and improved crossings, are scheduled for implementation in the first half of 2021. Transit pathways at the U District Station will improve access to NE 43<sup>rd</sup> Street and 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE and support the creation of safe, direct passenger connections from local bus stops to light rail station entries.

### **Bus Rapid Transit Program (BRT)**

- Bernard van de Kamp, East Corridor Development Director

Bernard van de Kamp discussed Sound Transit's new line of service, Stride Bus Rapid Transit (Stride), which will serve corridors along I-405 and SR 522/NE 145<sup>th</sup>. BRT technology is designed to replicate the speed, reliability, and accessibility of light rail without the cost or lead time of large rail projects.

In the I-405 corridor, Stride service will run along a 37-mile corridor from Lynnwood to Burien that will include 11 BRT stations in eight cities, three new or expanded parking facilities, and one transit center. Stride will connect to Link in Lynnwood, Bellevue and Tukwila. Ridership is estimated to reach approximately 19,000 – 26,000 by 2042 on two distinct lines: South, from Burien to Bellevue, and North, from Bellevue to Lynnwood.

In the SR 522/NE 145<sup>th</sup> corridor, Stride service will run along an eight-mile corridor from Shoreline to Bothell that will include 12 BRT stations in four cities, and three new parking facilities. Stride will connect to Link in Shoreline and transfer to the I-405 corridor will be available in Bothell, where there will also be separate service to Woodinville.

A new BRT bus base in Bothell north of the Canyon Park Park-and-Ride is nearing final acquisition. The 12-acre site will accommodate 120 buses and include a maintenance and operations building, and a parking structure for buses and other vehicles.

Before the impacts of Covid-19 occurred, construction for most of the BRT projects was expected to begin by 2023 and be completed by 2024/25. At this time, the Stride projects, which are advancing toward 30 percent design, are subject to the Board's realignment process.

### **Discussion**

Northgate Link – COP members were encouraged by the efforts of the agencies to be flexible in their approaches, particularly regarding transfers. More detail about transfers was requested as information becomes available.

BRT – COP members appreciated the comprehensive presentation. The project has progressed well in spite of the difficulties that have arisen.

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

### **Member Reports**

None

### **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) How is real time service information developed and coordinated with Sound Transit's partners?

**Next Virtual Meeting:** Wednesday, January 6, 2021, 8:30 – 11:00 AM

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