

Sound Transit Citizen Oversight Panel Meeting Summary October 3, 2019

COP Members Present: Janice Berlin, Sharon Grader, Scott Lampe, Dan Parker, James Peyton, Helen Powell, Bill Roach, Marie Rogers, Larry Sauvé, Dan Santon, Paul Thompson

COP Members Absent: Fred Auch

Others Present: Salina Lyons, Meghna Shah, members of the public

System Access Fund

Alex Krieg, Senior Manager, Planning and Innovation, gave an update on Sound Transit's System Access Program. The \$100 million System Access Fund is the major component of the ST3 System Access Program, which was originally envisioned as part of ST2, but cancelled during the Great Recession. The fund is divided equally between the five subareas and intended to support improvements like safe sidewalks, protected bike lanes, shared use paths, improved bus-rail integration and new pick-up and drop-off areas. New parking facilities are specifically excluded.

A stakeholder group was formed in 2018 to administer the new program, and the Agency issued a call for projects from February 19 to April 12, 2019, to make up to \$10 million available for each subarea for projects between 2019 and 2025. No fixed completion dates were required. Fifty-three applications from 33 jurisdictions were received, for a total request of more than \$86 million. Requests from each subarea were greater than the \$10 million amount per subarea available. About half of the fund was intentionally held back for future ST3 projects.

Evaluation criteria included policy factors related to customer experience, equity, connectivity, safety and human health. Technical factors focused on project funding and delivery. In an effort to level the playing field among jurisdictions, no project match was required. The smallest request was for \$150 thousand, the largest for \$6 million. A public comment period and online open house were available between July 26 and August 23, 2019. Project-specific survey response ratings largely aligned with project ratings made by the Agency. Connectivity, safety and human health, customer experience, equity, multimodal options and transit oriented development were the most important factors identified.

On September 26, 2019, the Board awarded more than \$40 million to 27 jurisdictions in the five subareas. Thirty applications were fully or partially funded. Most projects are expected to be completed within five years. All projects will be implemented and owned by local governments. Sound Transit will enter into funding agreements with each jurisdiction and closely monitor projects as they progress. Annual updates will be provided to the Executive Committee. Discussion of future rounds will begin later this year through an update of the System Access Policy.

Permit Parking Program

Matt Shelden, Deputy Executive Director, Planning and Innovation, gave an update on the Agency's single occupant vehicle (SOV) permit parking program. The program was launched in 2018 in response to rider complaints about capacity constraints at Sound Transit's parking facilities, 20 of which are at 90 percent capacity and nine of which are at full capacity. Many lots are full before 7:00 AM; the Puyallup Station lot is regularly full by 4:45 AM.

The program's goals and objectives include increasing transit ridership, improving reliability and equity of access, managing parking based on performance, and ensuring financial and environmental sustainability while keeping things simple for customers.

Permit sales and pricing vary by facility and will ultimately be available across the region. Like the carpool permit parking program in place since 2016, the SOV permit parking program provides access to a specific area, but not specific stalls, within Sound Transit owned facilities. Signs indicate enforcement hours, which vary by facility. Permit parking at Sounder stations is reserved from 4 – 8 AM and at Link stations from 4 – 9 AM. As with the carpool program, permit holders must travel to and from a station at least 12 times per month, or about three days per week. After the enforcement period has ended, any space not being used by a hangtag permit holder for carpools or SOVs is open to any customer.

To date, 305 carpool/HOV permits have been issued at 10 Sound Transit stations, 513 SOV permits have been issued at eight stations, and 11 ORCA Lift discounted SOV permits have been issued at three stations. Permit sales were launched at the Federal Way and Kent stations on October 1, 2019, and three more facilities are planned for launch in the fourth quarter of 2019. SOV permits are also available at the Tacoma Dome station and will soon be available at nine King County Metro park and ride lots.

The permit parking program is new, and will be adjusted as knowledge and data are developed. Initial challenges include earlier fill times for unpermitted spaces, appropriate permit area sizing, permit sign adjustment, customer education, and very high demand at South Sounder stations, including a wait list in Puyallup.

Although the Agency's parking supply will nearly double over the next five years, from about 12,500 spaces to about 24,450 spaces, supply will never meet demand. The permit parking program is a tool to help effectively manage the resources available. Sound Transit will continue to coordinate with regional and state partners on permits and parking management planning, including pursuing legislative changes to enable consistent park and ride management across the region. Development of the System Access Program's parking management element will also be underway shortly.

2018 Sustainability Progress Report

Amy Shatzkin, Deputy Director for Sustainability, discussed Sound Transit's 2018 Sustainability Progress Report, which is produced yearly to assess operational performance and efficiency and to report on annual sustainability targets and key performance indicators.

Sound Transit's first Executive Order was issued in 2007 to assure that sustainable business practices and strategies would be integrated throughout all of the organization. The 2018 plan identifies sustainability, including socioeconomic sustainability, as a vital part of the Agency's capital expansion program and day to day operations.

Highlights from the plan's focus on people include expansion of ORCA LIFT services, creation of an equitable transit oriented development policy, and launch of an agency wide equity and inclusion program. Sound Transit employs a diverse workforce of staff and contractors that includes about 8,000 people who last year worked 2.9 million hours and earned \$122 million in wages.

Benefits to the planet include saving three percent more greenhouse gas emissions in 2018 from the previous year, even as ridership continued to grow. The Agency expanded its use of Puget Sound Energy's Green Direct Program, which will provide 100 percent renewable energy for all PSE accounts by 2021. A non-revenue fleet strategy was completed to initiate transition to electric technology for passenger vehicles. A battery electric bus working group was formed and work toward a zero emissions

standard for Link operations in underway. LEED certification is a requirement at all transit centers, while newly developed Envision standards will be used to maximize infrastructure along entire corridors, beginning with the Federal Way and Redmond Link extensions. Three environmental mitigation projects have been completed on the East Link and more than ten others are planned, including advanced tree planting along the Lynnwood Link corridor.

Benefits to regional prosperity derive from improved energy and fuel efficiency projects beginning in 2007 that by 2018 provided more than \$700,000 in annual savings. Building resilience into ST3 capital projects and procuring greener products are highlights of the 2018 plan.

Discussion

Scott Lampe and Sharon Grader were congratulated on their elections as Chair and Vice-Chair respectively, of the COP. Outgoing Chair Fred Auch was thanked in absentia for his work.

COP members expressed appreciation for the presentations and requested follow up briefings on the permit parking program and the System Access Fund.

The summary of the September 5, 2019, COP meeting was approved.

Member Reports

Janice Berlin, a new COP member from Snohomish County, was welcomed. Jan had a long career at King County Metro and is happy to be representing public transportation interests in the City of Edmonds.

Dan Santon reported that King County Metro has leased several battery electric buses for revenue service. The project is an exciting opportunity, although more time and information are needed before an accurate performance assessment can be undertaken.

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

Next Meeting: October 17, 2019, 8:30 – 11:00 AM, Santa Fe Room, Union Station