

## **Sound Transit Citizen Oversight Panel Virtual Meeting Summary December 2, 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:** Daniel Santon

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

### **Next Generation ORCA**

- Brittany Esdaile, Director of Regional Fare Payment Systems
- Scott Corbridge, Next Generation ORCA Program Manager

Brittany Esdaile and Scott Corbridge gave an update on the Next Generation ORCA project, which is designed to be more secure, flexible, and customer focused through seven goals:

- 1) Improve customer experience
- 2) Increase ORCA usage
- 3) Lower the cost of ownership
- 4) Ensure operational efficiency
- 5) Increase customer and data security
- 6) Ensure flexibility of system architecture
- 7) Accept multiple fare media types

The ORCA program is governed by consensus through a joint board of seven participating agencies. King County Metro trips make up 61 percent of ORCA transactions, Sound Transit trips make up about 27 percent of transactions, and Community Transit, Pierce Transit, Kitsap Transit, Washington State Ferries, and Everett Transit make up the remainder. A Regional ORCA Operations Team (ROOT) sitting at Sound Transit will provide centralized management and operations support of the new fare system for the ORCA regional agencies.

Next Generation ORCA improvements, identified in response to survey feedback from thousands of ORCA customers, include instant account loading, more retail locations, a new and improved website and a new mobile app that can be used both in place of a card and as a tool for managing customer accounts. Preliminary design is complete, final design is 60 percent complete, and system integration, development work, and testing are underway. The start of the transition to the new system will begin by January of 2022. Final system acceptance is expected at the end of 2023.

Customers will be able to continue using their legacy cards through the transition to the new system. At the start of transition, customers can begin connecting their cards to the new myORCA app or the new myORCA.com website. New cards will be available at most locations and virtual cards will be available once the transition to the new equipment is complete. Eventually, legacy ORCA cards will be retired.

### **Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) Update**

- Ben Bakkenta, Director of Regional Planning
- Jason Thibedeau, Principle Economic Development Manager

Ben Bakkenta and Jason Thibedeau briefed the COP on the PSRC's Vision 2050 plan. As the regional planning organization for King, Pierce, Kitsap, and Snohomish counties, the PSRC certifies countywide planning policies and local plans prepared consistent with the requirements of Washington State's Growth Management Act. These regional growth strategies include plans for transportation and economic development that serve as a framework for where development occurs and how growth is managed in a region that is projected to grow by about 1.6 million people by 2050.

The Puget Sound region has undergone significant change since Vision 2040 was adopted in 2008. The SR 520 bridge replacement and Alaska Way Viaduct tunnel projects, express lane tolling, Sound Transit project buildouts, and development at South Lake Union have reshaped the region. In response, Vision 2050 seeks to focus 65 percent of regional population growth and 75 percent of employment growth in regional growth centers and near high capacity transit. Less growth is allocated to rural areas and unincorporated urban areas without high capacity transit. Projected outcomes of the plan include less land converted to new development, greater transit ridership, reduced greenhouse gas emissions, and better drive times. Vision 2050 was adopted in October 2020, by a 97 percent margin.

The 2022 regional transportation plan builds from Vision 2050 through six key policy areas: access to transit, forward thinking future investments like aviation and high speed rail, local agency needs, safety, equity, and climate. The long term impacts of Covid-19 on the region are unknown, and may require a future reassessment of the assumptions on which these plans were based.

The PSRC is also conducting a regional aviation baseline study funded by the Federal Aviation Administration that will not result in the PSRC making recommendations on the expansion of current airports or the citing of new facilities. Rather, the study's objectives include identifying the roles of each airport and the aviation activities in the region, providing a regional perspective on how those activities interact with each other and the broader community, obtaining input from stakeholders about their needs, building a common understanding about aviation and airspace constraints, and identify future aviation needs within the region to set the stage for future planning for commercial, air cargo, and general aviation services.

Key takeaways from the study show that the region's airspace is complex and constrained. Demand for commercial service will more than double by 2050, which Sea-Tac airport will not be able to meet even with planned investments. Drive time to Sea-Tac will also become substantially worse for most of the region's residents. Demand for air cargo service is also expected to double by 2050, and will require additional investment to meet. Demand for general aviation will increase by a third by 2050. While regional capacity exists to meet the general aviation demand, capacity constraints exist at individual airports. Access and congestion issues at these aviation facilities has significant implications for regional transit operations.

## **Discussion**

Next Generation ORCA – COP members commended the progress made since the project team's last update about a year and a half ago. Technical issues made the audio portion of the presentation difficult to hear.

PSRC Update – COP members appreciated the presentation and noted that the annual update is always useful. There is easily enough information to share to make the briefing a two-hour presentation, as it often has been in the past.

The summary of the November 18, 2020, COP meeting was approved.

## **Member Reports**

Scott Lampe noted that Google's purchase of the former Johnson auto dealership at the Kirkland 85<sup>th</sup> Street station area is another indication of support for transit within the region.

Joe Scorcio reported that the Southside Chamber of Commerce would be hosting a webinar on transit issues on December 11, 2020, at 11:00 AM, which would be of interest to COP members.

## **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) Clarification of the roles of partner agencies regarding Sound Transit service changes and implementation. NOTE: This topic will be discussed at the December 16, 2020, COP meeting.

**Next Virtual Meeting:** Wednesday, December 16, 2020, 8:30 – 11:00 AM