



Summary Minutes

Rider Experience and Operations Committee Meeting December 5, 2019

Call to order

The meeting was called to order at 1:07 p.m. by Committee Chair Paul Roberts, in the Ruth Fisher Boardroom, 401 South Jackson Street, Seattle, Washington.

Roll call of members

Chair	Vice Chair
(P) Paul Roberts, Everett Councilmember	(P) Joe McDermott, King County Councilmember

Board Members	
(P) David Baker, Kenmore Mayor	(P) Debora Juarez, Seattle City Councilmember
(P) Dave Earling, Edmonds Mayor	(P) Kim Roscoe, Fife Mayor
(A) Kent Keel, University Place Mayor	(A) Peter von Reichbauer, King County Councilmember

Chair Roberts, announced that a quorum of the Committee was present at roll call.

CEO Report

Chief executive officer Peter Rogoff gave the CEO Report.

Safety Update

Mr. Rogoff reminded the committee that the two year anniversary of the tragic Amtrak Cascades derailment accident South of Du Pont was approaching. In May, 2019, the National Transportation Safety Board issued its findings in a report. While Amtrak acknowledged and accepted responsibility for the accident, the report listed 53 finding pertaining to Amtrak, Washington State Department of Transportation, The Federal Railroad Administration, and others. Four of the findings specifically pertained to Sound Transit. The report also issued 26 recommendations, of which 3 were directed to Sound Transit.

Following the release of the National Transportation Safety Board report, the agency launched its own independent third party review to evaluate the incident and Sound Transit's performance from top to bottom. Oregon-based L & H Consulting Group conducted the review and published the completed report. The report identifies a number of preventable errors including failing to adhere to safety plan procedures. Specifically, the decision was made not to prepare a project specific safety and security management plan for the Point Defiance bypass project. Amtrak did not conduct the full pre-revenue simulated service which are required by Sound Transit's policies. Hazard mitigations were not appropriately briefed to the responsible executive action group and the safety certification package was not submitted for approval and ultimate sign-off by the chief executive officer. Sound Transit did not sufficiently understand its responsibilities as the host railroad and incorrectly believed that Washington State Department of Transportation was responsible for overseeing all activities related to Amtrak training and qualifications.

The report's findings and recommendations had a common theme: how the unique operating arrangements enabled management oversights that contributed to the derailment. Sound Transit purchased the corridor between Tacoma and Nisqually in 2005 so the agency could extend Sounder service from Tacoma to Lakewood. The agency was required to purchase the entire corridor from Tacoma to the Thurston County line even though at the time, there were no plans to operate south of Lakewood. In 2008, Washington

Department of Transportation became the sole funders of Amtrak's Cascade service. During the recession, Washington Department of Transportation received a federal grant to rebuild the Point Defiance bypass to enable faster, more reliable, more frequent service and the Washington Department of Transportation continued to use Amtrak as its operating contractor. The led to the current arrangement, in which Sound Transit owns the tracks on which it does not operate, Washington Department of Transportation both funds trains it does not operate and funds capital improvements on tracks it does not own, and Amtrak operates trains it does not fund on tracks it does not own. The report's authors stress that the unique arrangement does not occur anywhere else in the country, but despite that, Sound Transit was responsible as the host railroad to identify, execute, and enforce certain discrete safety related functions. As the owner of the tracks, Sound Transit carries important safety certification and oversight responsibilities.

Mr. Rogoff informed the Committee that he instituted a number of actions in response to the report. Effective immediately, the chief safety and quality officer was removed from his position and may or may not have remained at the agency in a lower level position in a different department. In addition, the process to reorganize and separate the safety and quality management functions was underway so that a separate and distinct office would be focused solely on safety responsibilities. Moises Gutierrez was chosen to lead the new safety office on an interim basis. Prior to this appointment, he was the deputy director of Design and Engineering. A national recruitment to hire a new chief safety officer was initiated, who will report directly to the chief executive officer once they are hired.

The consultant's report includes 22 distinct recommendations including some focused on improving the hazard analysis program more broadly. Many of the recommendations had already been implemented while others were in various stages of development. The agency intended to implement all 22 of the recommendations promptly and fully. Before Amtrak was allowed to resume Cascade services on the bypass, Sound Transit would verify that it has made all necessary changes to correct identified deficiencies. Likewise, the agency would verify that Amtrak's personnel training and testing programs for operation are more than sufficient and that it has appropriately amended its general orders to its crew to reflect operations on Sound Transit track.

Measures already implemented included positive train control along the entire corridor. In fact, Sound Transit is one of only six commuter railroads across the nation which had positive train control fully certified and operational. The agency implemented a new crew focus zone for both Sound Transit and Amtrak crews, as well as graduated speed restrictions and new signage which reduces speed gradually prior to the Nisqually Curve.

Mr. Rogoff emphasized his continued confidence in the agency's practices in certifying the safety of services it operates. The U-Link extension and the extension to Angel Lake Station were conducted fully in compliance with the agency's rules. In addition to remedying the deficiencies in the agency's safety certification of Amtrak Cascade service, the reforms recommended in the L & H Consulting Group's report would further strengthen the already successful record in certifying and commissioning Link Light Rail extensions. The recommendations came at a valuable time, as safety certification for the new light rail extensions were to be conducted in 2020 and each following year through 2024.

Mr. Rogoff added that there could be no compromises when it came to safety and the agency was grateful for the thoroughness of the consultants' review as well as for the National Transportation Safety Board investigation. He assured the Boardmembers that the agency would do whatever it took to address every pertinent finding and recommendation to ensure that safety was the first priority.

Initiative 976 Update

Sound Transit continued to track the litigation on Initiative 976 launched by other agencies.

Following the November 21, 2019 Board meeting, the King County Superior Court issued a preliminary injunction that bars enforcement of I-976. On December 2, 2019, the State filed a motion with the Washington State Supreme Court to stay the preliminary injunction.

On December 4, 2019, the Washington Supreme Court denied the State's motion, meaning that the injunction would remain in effect while the King County Superior Court heard the case in January.

Downtown Seattle Transit Tunnel Single Tracking and Connect 2020

Mr. Rogoff reminded the committee that beginning January 4, 2020 and running through March 15, 2020, Link light rail service would look different as work began on Connect 2020. During this time, crews would close one track at a time at all downtown stations.

Trains would operate between Angle Lake and Pioneer Square, and between UW and Pioneer Square as normal. Riders continuing through Pioneer Square would change trains on the temporary center platform completed in October 2019. Trains would run every 12 minutes at all times, seven days per week.

More than 1,000 of Sound Transit staff members, were scheduled to spend 5 or more shifts in the field assisting riders, especially downtown and at SeaTac Airport. These staff ambassadors would be out in stations starting December 16th and continuing throughout the month to get the word out. Staff would be onsite at various stations throughout the 12 weeks, but with particular emphasis on the early weeks.

Alerts were installed in stations and onboard trains, and a second wave was due to be installed in mid-December.

In November, the agency launched a dedicated website, connect2020.soundtransit.org that comprehensively described what riders could expect. Riders were encouraged to sign up for email and text message alerts, and Twitter users could follow hashtag #Connect2020 for the latest updates.

A multilingual digital campaign began the following week, running through mid-January and Sound Transit partnered with Seattle Department of Transportation to reach limited English proficiency communities in the Rainier Valley. The effort would be the largest in the agency's history. Mr. Rogoff assured the Committee that they and the Board would receive regular updates as the project progressed.

Souder Pedestrian Collisions

Mr. Rogoff announced that Tuesday, December 3, 2019 was a tragic day along the Souder service corridor. Souder trains in three separate incidents struck pedestrians on the BNSF right of way.

A man was fatally struck by a northbound train at approximately 5:30 am between Puyallup and Sumner, causing a cancelled train and several trains to experience major delays. The second fatality occurred about 4:40 p.m. when a Souder South train headed for Seattle struck and killed a pedestrian south of Kent. This incident closed down the railroad for over an hour. There was also an individual struck at about 7:50 am when a north-line Souder train heading to Seattle encountered a man on the tracks. The crew made an emergency stop to investigate, and fortunately, the individual did not suffer any serious injuries.

Report of the Chair

Chair Roberts mentioned that the monthly contract reports, which detail all contracts approved and executed within the CEO's delegated contract authority, were included in the packets.

Public comment

Alex Tsimerman
Will Knedlik
Herb Krohn
Hon. Michael B Fuller
Marguerite Richard

Business items

Items for Committee final action

November 5, 2019, Rider Experience and Operations Committee minutes

It was moved by Boardmember McDermott, seconded by Boardmember Earling, and carried by unanimous vote that the minutes of November 5, 2019, Rider Experience and Operations Committee Meeting be approved as presented.

Motion No. M2019-112: Authorizing the Enhancement, State of Good Repair, Administrative and Transit Operations portions of the Proposed 2020 Budget and Transit Improvement Plan to advance to the Finance and Audit Committee, including revisions to the Proposed 2020 Budget in Attachment A.

Prior to the presentation, Chair Roberts offered an explanation for the procedure of the 2020 Budget Process. Unlike previous years, the action before the committee is to authorize and forward the Enhancement, State of Good Repair, Administrative, and Transit Operations portions of the proposed 2020 Budget and proposed 2020 Transit Improvement Plan to the Finance and Audit Committee. Later in December, the Finance and Audit Committee would consider the budget as a whole, and consider recommending it to the full Board. The full Board was scheduled to consider the recommended proposed budget at its December 19, 2019 meeting. The action before the committee at the meeting was to consider the proposed budgetary items previously mentioned and the revisions provided by staff in attachment A. Procedurally, if a Boardmember took issue with any of the revisions the committee could act to amend attachment A to remove any revisions. Chair Roberts introduced Ann Sheridan, Budget Director, to give the staff report and presentation.

Ms. Sheridan reviewed the amounts of the portions of the proposed 2020 budget under the committee's purview. Examples of items in the Enhancements portion of the budget include the Passenger Information Management System, and Operations and Maintenance Facility renovations. State of Good Repair items include the Downtown Seattle Transit Tunnel improvements, ST Express fleet replacement, and midlife maintenance projects. Administrative items include administrative capital, which is non-revenue fleet, as well as upgrades to owned office space, and agency administrative operating, which is primarily overhead for projects, as well as general and administrative expenses. Charges to transit modes includes overhauls for all of the agency's revenue fleet are included in the projects, but when the work is completed it is transferred to Operations as an expense and cannot be capitalized. It was shown in the budget as such.

The committee had oversight over all transit operations budgets. For all modes, the total came to approximately \$370 million. A notable expenses included purchased transportation, which composed \$203 million of the budget. This figure is five percent higher than 2019 due to higher labor rates and additional platform hours for ST Express. Safety and security is another notable portion of the budget, accounting for \$33 million. This figure is nine percent higher than 2019 due to operations in the Downtown Seattle Transit Tunnel, rate increases, and fewer vacancies.

Projects in the Transit Improvement Plan which are within the committee's authority were proposed to increase by \$341 million. Much of the increase was attributed to existing projects such as escalator modernization, Downtown Seattle Transit Tunnel capital improvements, and agency administrative operating projects. New projects included a SeaTac Airport Station additional elevator and Kinkisharyo light rail vehicle system upgrades.

Following the initial presentation of the proposed 2020 Budget in October, staff made seven revisions to the portions of the budget under the committee's authority. The first revisions increased both authorized project allocation and project budget for the Link radio upgrade. The second revision is to upgrade back-end systems to the Puget Sound Emergency Radio Network. Thirdly, adjustments to the light rail vehicle wash bays are an environmental requirement. The fourth revision was to remove the wheel truing machine project from the 2020 budget and push it to the 2021 budget. The fifth revision, the Sounder Passenger Emergency Intercom, was deferred to 2021. The sixth revision cancelled funding for extension of the Pierce Transit global positioning system. The final revision decreased some funding from the research and technology program, as ST3 offered a similar program. Ms. Sheridan added that all revisions which added to the budget were offset by other revisions.

Mr. Rogoff added that this was the second year in a row that the agency began the budget process by developing an operations funding target and managing it by coordinating within the agency to practice stricter budget discipline. A representation of that philosophy was the net zero increase of the revisions brought to the committee.

It was moved by Boardmember Baker, seconded by Boardmember McDermott and carried by unanimous vote that Motion No. M2019-112 be approved as presented.

Motion No. M2019-113: Authorizing the chief executive officer to execute a contract modification with Insight Public Sector, Inc. to provide technology software, hardware, peripherals, and related maintenance services in the amount of \$2,000,000 for a new total authorized contract amount not to exceed \$5,180,000, plus applicable taxes.

Jason Weiss, chief information officer, provided the staff report. He informed the committee that the modification under consideration was to a “piggyback” contract Sound Transit had with Insight Public Sector Inc. for several years. The contract included items and services such as replacement of aging small hardware and peripherals such as keyboards, the purchase of new software, hardware, and peripherals, for approved agency projects, for Sound Transit employees and consulting staff, and maintenance renewals for software licenses. Using the “piggyback” method procured by US Communities allows Sound Transit to realize significant savings compared to procuring the materials on its own. Approval of the contract would add funds which would align with the extension of the master contract to extend through April 2021.

It was moved by Boardmember Baker, seconded by Boardmember McDermott and carried by unanimous vote that Motion No. M2019-113 be approved as presented.

Items for Recommendation to the Board

Motion No. M2019-114: Authorizing the chief executive officer to execute an interagency agreement with the Pierce County Public Transportation Benefit Area Corporation (Pierce Transit) for operations and maintenance of the Tacoma Dome Station for the period through December 31, 2024, with an option to extend for one three-year period, contingent upon Board approval of the Proposed 2020 Budget through Resolution No. R2019-30.

Shelley Xie, deputy executive director of support services, and Brian Scott, operations business manager, provided the staff report. Ms. Xie explained that Sound Transit had an existing operations and maintenance agreement with Pierce Transit for the Tacoma Dome Station parking garage. The agreement was due to expire on December 31, 2019. The proposed agreement term was a base of five years beginning on January 1, 2020 with one three-year option.

The agreement under consideration by the committee did not differ from the previous agreement which was expiring at the end of the year. The scope of work outlined that Pierce Transit would continue to provide security, operations, and maintenance services of the parking garage facility.

It was moved by Boardmember Baker, seconded by Boardmember Roscoe, and carried by unanimous vote that Motion No. M2019-114 be forwarded to the Board with a do-pass recommendation.

Motion No. M2019-115: Authorizing the chief executive officer to execute an agreement with the Pierce County Public Transportation Benefit Area Corporation (Pierce Transit) to fund a portion of Pierce Transit's Lakewood Base Expansion in support of ST Express bus service for a total authorized agreement amount not to exceed \$1,897,500.

Robin Braziel, director of bus, rail and paratransit, and Dave Turissini, ST Express program manager, provided the staff report. Mr. Turissini explained that Sound Transit and Pierce Transit have worked together since 1999, operating and maintaining ST Express busses from Lakewood. As a result of its recent base master plan, Pierce Transit is implementing base modifications and improvements to meet the demands of operating both ST Express and Pierce Transit local services. The agreement would fund a proportional share of the cost of Phase 1A of the project, which included design work and property acquisition. Sound Transit's share of the phase was 46 percent, based on the prorated share of ST Express busses as compared to Pierce Transit's fixed route buses. The agreement would assist Pierce Transit with expanding its Lakewood base in order to alleviate existing base capacity issues and accommodate projected growth in both Pierce Transit and Sound Transit services.

It was moved by Boardmember McDermott, seconded by Boardmember Baker, and carried by unanimous vote that Motion No. M2019-115 be forwarded to the Board with a do-pass recommendation.

Motion No. M2019-116: Authorizing the chief executive officer to execute an amendment to the Commuter Rail Rolling Stock Maintenance Agreement with the National Railroad Passenger Corporation for the additional scope of Positive Train Control maintenance on Sounder locomotives and cab cars, in an amount not to exceed \$664,580 for a new total authorized agreement not to exceed \$289,240,511.

Robin Braziel, director of bus, rail and paratransit, and Martin Young, Sounder Operations Manager, provided the staff report. Mr. Young informed the committee that the amendment under consideration expanded the scope of the agreement with Amtrak to include inspection and maintenance of the onboard positive train control equipment.

Sound Transit implemented positive train control on the Sounder system, going live on the BNSF corridor in 2017 and extending to the Sound Transit owned Lakewood subdivision in February 2018. The agreement with the vendor who supplied the hardware and software included a one-year warranty period which expired in October 2019, and included equipment maintenance as it was being implemented. Sound Transit previously executed a side letter agreement with Amtrak, in which Amtrak maintained the onboard equipment which was intended to assist in the transition from warranty to the execution of the amendment under consideration. The additional cost for the expanded scope would be reflected in the daily base rate, and was expected to be approximately \$295,000 annually including additional reserve for repairs and spare parts.

The existing five-year agreement with Amtrak had a term through December 31, 2021 and three option-years which was expected to be exercised before the Sounder Maintenance Base was complete in 2024.

It was moved by Boardmember Baker, seconded by Boardmember McDermott, and carried by unanimous vote that Motion No. M2019-116 be forwarded to the Board with a do-pass recommendation.

Motion No. M2019-117: Authorizing the chief executive officer chief executive officer to execute an amendment to the Commuter Rail Service Agreement with the BNSF Railway Company to incorporate changes related to the south line service agreement scope of work for Positive Train Control.

Robin Braziel, director of bus, rail and paratransit, and Martin Young, Sounder Operations Manager, provided the staff report. Mr. Young informed the committee that the amendment under consideration enhanced language related to positive train control support services.

The South Line Service Agreement between Sound Transit and BNSF was amended in 2015 with Appendix L, outlining scope of work for positive train control responsibilities. Since that time, several clarifying points were identified for improvement. The points were reflected in the revised Appendix L and included items such as:

- Clarifying that third-party vendors maintain positive train control wayside equipment
- BNSF employees may need to provide maintenance, and if physical contact was required, Sound Transit would be charged for updating radio software.
- BNSF provided positive train control training for BNSF employees
- Only BNSF may modify the base station radios or back office equipment used in conjunction with positive train control.

Mr. Young added that no additional costs were anticipated.

It was moved by Boardmember McDermott, seconded by Boardmember Baker, and carried by unanimous vote that Motion No. M2019-117 be forwarded to the Board with a do-pass recommendation.

Reports to the committee

Rider Experience Metrics and Operations Report

Paul Denison, executive operations director of light rail, and Russ Arnold, chief customer experience officer, provided the report to the Committee. Mr. Arnold recounted the 2019 presentations given thus far and what would be reviewed in future meetings. He informed the committee that in the first quarter of 2020, the committee would see a prototype of the performance dashboard which would continue to highlight the metrics on the Sound Transit website. He reminded the committee of the three pieces of enhanced service performance reporting: ridership and efficiency, rider experience, and operations.

Mr. Denison reviewed the year-to-date ridership statistics, noting that total system ridership was down by 0.4 percent compared to the same time in 2018. Growing ridership on Link and Tacoma Link continued to be offset by greater declines in ST Express and Sounder ridership. The rate of growth of Tacoma Link on Tacoma Link was higher than previous months due to an increased number of events at the Tacoma Dome.

System wide, across all modes, boardings on the average weekday were down 2.4 percent, or approximately 4000 fewer riders per weekday compared to October 2018. ST Express showed a continual decline in ridership, primarily on the routes affected by the shift out of the Downtown Seattle Transit Tunnel. However, the decline on ST Express stabilized, and October 2019 reflected the first full month of Route 554's return to the Chinatown/International District. I-5 South corridor continues to show rider declines. Sounder ridership remained even year-over-year. Link Ridership increased by one percent, but it was likely due to weekday stadium events.

Mr. Arnold informed the committee that he would be reviewing the customer defined category of "informed". The original definition for "informed" was: Customers should expect rapid notification of service disruptions, awareness of upcoming changes to service, and easy access to schedules and information about their ride. The rider oriented "I" statement was: "I am the first to know about service disruptions and upcoming changes so I can make informed decisions."

Digital Information is easier to measure how people use and access that information. It also allows the agency to focus on quantitative data instead of qualitative data. Website page views were down 35 percent from an average of 2.1 million page views per month in 2018 to, prior to the new soundtransit.org site launch, to 1.4 million page views per month in 2019. This was primarily due to a sharp decline in mobile usage since the launch of the new website. Complaints from site users indicate that a reason may be the loss of full schedule tables on the website. Mr. Arnold acknowledged that the agency was looking into ways to create more mobile friendly schedules to respond to this feedback.

Mr. Arnold then reviewed information visualizing website views for passenger information. Only views searching for schedules, the trip planner, real time data, service alerts, and fare information were included in the data, which accounts for approximately 50 percent of website views. The decline in website page views

correlates with a decline in views for the passenger information visits. February was an outlier, as Seattle was hit with a major snow storm. Views spiked as passengers searched for service alerts related to the weather.

Monthly average trips planned declined by 23 percent between 2018 and 2019, again, likely due to the change in the agency's website. It is expected that comments on the trip planner will exceed those in 2018.

The number of text and email alert subscriptions increased over 2018. The agency continued to balance the amount of information provided through this channel, as customers could quickly become frustrated with too many notifications. Despite the increase in subscriptions, the number of comments remained consistent year-over-year. Comments normally centered on the timing of notifications being sent too late. Customer service was working on initiatives to deliver notifications in a timelier manner, and that would be a focus again in 2020.

There was no data at the time for the number of onboard announcements and spoke alerts, but there was data for customer comments on onboard announcements and spoke alerts. Comments received in 2019 will likely surpass those received 2018, and this category is among the top three which receive customer comments. There was an initiative underway to address improve the consistency and clarity for onboard messages on Link which was scheduled to be completed by the end of 2019.

Boardmember Roscoe asked for more information about the filters one can choose for text and email alerts. Mr. Arnold explained that at that time, riders were not able to receive alerts for specific timeframes or specific stops. The agency was working on allowing Sounder riders to sign up for notifications for Sounder South or Sounder North, and ultimately, the goal is to reach a point where riders can receive notifications for individual stops. Boardmember Roscoe also expressed her frustration with trying to find route schedules. Mr. Arnold acknowledged that it was a concern the agency has heard from many customers. He explained that when the website was updated, it was optimized for mobile use, and to do so required posting schedules as pdf documents, as schedules are difficult to represent through a mobile platform. The agency believed that riders would use the trip planner function, but feedback proved that to be incorrect. An initiative was planned to review methods to integrate schedules into the website.

Mr. Rogoff added that another challenge is attaining real-time information to be able to provide to riders. In respect to Sounder service, coordination with BNSF during maintenance delays, as an example, had been a difficult barrier, but staff was working with them to improve communications so the agency could in turn, pass the information along to its riders.

Boardmember McDermott asked why website views dropped so dramatically between 2018 and 2019. Ryan Ceurvorst, digital marketing manager, explained that the agency began beta testing a new website which launched in November 2018. Between August and November 2018, the agency was directing web traffic to two different websites. After the conversion to the new website, many users expressed having difficulty accessing schedules. Because that was the primary use of the website, web traffic declined as former users stopped accessing the site.

Executive session – None

Other business

Boardmember Baker announced that Sound Transit's received an award at the Puget Sound Regional Council Executive Committee meeting earlier in the Day for design implementation to cater to hearing and visually impaired customers at Judkins Station. He asked if the agency could consider implementing those design facets in future stations and remodels of older stations and if the agency could address this work at a future meeting. Mr. Rogoff added that there is a major facility which serves the visually and hearing impaired community which is in close proximity to Judkins Park Station, including a track crossing. The agency worked in close partnership with the facility in designing the extension and station in the area. He committed

to bringing the team working on that project to a future committee meeting in 2020 to present their work. Chair Roberts asked to hear more about the award to which Boardmember Barker referred in that presentation as well. Mr. Arnold added that the agency's customer service cohort which prioritized customer facing technology. One of the recommendations the cohort was planning on bringing to the Board in 2020 was enhancing accessibility in all stations.

Next meeting

Thursday, December 5, 2019
1:00 to 3:00 p.m.
Ruth Fisher Boardroom

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 2:25 p.m.



Paul Roberts
Rider Experience and Operations Committee Chair

ATTEST:



Kathryn Flores
Board Administrator

APPROVED on January 16, 2020, AM.