



## Summary Minutes

### Rider Experience and Operations Committee Meeting October 1, 2020

#### Call to order

The meeting was called to order at 1:06 p.m. by Chair Roberts virtually on WebEx.

Due to the Governor’s Safe Start, Stay Healthy Order, public viewing of the meeting was only available via WebEx. The meeting was streamed on

<https://soundtransit.webex.com/soundtransit/onstage/g.php?MTID=e730a6cd17dce175a581845081a2f44c6>.

#### Roll call of members

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

Board Members	
(P) David Baker, Kenmore Mayor	(P) Kim Roscoe, Fife Mayor
(A) Debora Juarez, Seattle City Councilmember	(P) Nicola Smith, Lynnwood Mayor
(P) Ed Prince, Renton City Councilmember	(A) Peter von Reichbauer, King County Councilmember

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

#### Report of the Chair

Public Hearing on 2021 Service Plan – Chair Roberts announced that a public hearing on the 2021 Service Plan was held on September 24. He called on Boardmember David Baker, who oversaw the hearing, to provide a summary. Boardmember Baker announced that two testimonies were received.

The first was from Joe Kunzler, who asked that Routes 510 and 512 stop at Northgate Station when Link service opens, that Next Generation ORCA begin operation, and expressed satisfaction that fares were more synchronized on Link.

The second comment was from Linda Kim, who asked for Route 522 to continue service to downtown, instead of stopping at the Roosevelt Link Station as planned in the 2021 Service Plan.

Chair Roberts advised that additional opportunities to comment would be available at the November Rider Experience and Operations Committee and Board meetings.

Monthly Contract Report – Chair Roberts announced that the CEO Monthly Contract Report was available for review.

#### CEO Report

Chief Executive Officer Peter Rogoff gave the CEO Report.

Federal Update – That week the US House of Representatives released an updated HEROS Act COVID-19 relief proposal which substantially updated the transit aid in ways that made it more favorable

to Sound Transit by recognizing the need for specific assistance to growing systems with a high local overmatch suffering from reduced sales tax collections. The updated proposal would provide \$32 billion in transit relief, of which the Seattle area would receive \$550 million. Sound Transit would receive approximately \$195 million of that amount. Additionally, the legislation would provide \$2.5 billion for projects that received money under the FTA's Capital Investment Grant Program. Both the Lynnwood Link and Federal Way Link Full Funding Grant Agreements meet the criteria, providing for \$375 million more were the legislation to pass. Negotiations continued and a deal was expected to be reached in short order.

## **Public comment**

Chair Roberts announced that due to the Governor's stay home stay healthy order, public comment would only be accepted via email to [emailtheboard@soundtransit.org](mailto:emailtheboard@soundtransit.org).

There were no submissions for public comment.

## **Business Items**

### **Items for Committee final action**

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**It was moved by Boardmember McDermott, seconded by Boardmember Roscoe. Chair Roberts called for a roll call vote.**

#### **Ayes**

David Baker  
Joe McDermott  
Ed Prince  
Kim Roscoe  
Nicola Smith  
Paul Roberts

#### **Nays**

**It was carried by four affirmative votes that minutes of the September 3, 2020 Rider Experience and Operations Committee meeting were approved as presented.**

## **Reports to the committee**

### **Rider Experience Metrics Update**

CEO Rogoff introduced new appointed Executive Director of Operations Suraj Shetty, who would be providing the presentation.

Mr. Shetty reviewed the ridership levels to-date across all modes. As of August 31, 2020, Ridership declined nearly 80 percent since March, and it was not expected to increase in the coming months. Link Light Rail ridership was similarly down since March, experiencing approximately 17,000 boardings per day. ST Express followed a similar trend. Sounder ridership levels experienced the most drastic decline during the COVID-19 pandemic because it was primarily a commuter mode. Tacoma Link experienced the least drastic decline.

### **Vertical Conveyances Update**

Deputy Chief Executive Officer Kimberly Farley introduced Sound Transit's new Deputy Director of Vertical Conveyances, John Carini. She informed the Committee that the agency began to treat its vertical conveyances as their own mode, since they were how many riders entered the system and their reliability was essential.

Mr. Carini reminded the committee of the many vertical conveyance outages over the years, and the negative impact on riders. Recently completed work to remedy those issues included the University of Washington projects allowing for additional station egress options like the cross-mezzanine work and opening of the back stairs. Additionally, a vendor change allowed for new contract language which focused on preventive maintenance. Since the implementation of the contract, downtimes improved.

New data was gathered beginning in 2019 which allowed staff to better analyze outages. The gathering would evolve over the year and culminate in a new reporting system which was expected to be implemented in the first quarter of 2021.

He reviewed Elevator and escalator availability data from 2019 and 2020, noting that nearly all stations improved in 2020. He highlighted the performance increase in escalators at the University of Washington station, which had become one of the best performing stations in the system, and the poor performance of the Downtown Seattle Transit Tunnel stations. Due to the performance increase in the University of Washington station escalators, replacement would be delayed, and the resources would be reallocated to improving performance of the Downtown Seattle Transit Tunnel station escalators. Mr. Carini noted that the agency was increasing transparency to the public and sharing the monthly data on the Sound Transit website and sending daily notifications of planned or unplanned vertical conveyance outages.

Sound Transit was expected to take ownership of the Downtown Seattle Transit Tunnel in 2021, inheriting 58 elevators and escalators across the four stations, 57 of which are currently over 30 years old. An estimated \$8.7 million was requested in the 2021 draft budget to bring the tunnel's vertical conveyances to a baseline safety and performance level by 2023. At the same time, a multi-year capital replacement plan was under development. Mr. Carini advised that transit elevator and escalators had a useful life of approximately 25 years. When the Downtown Seattle Transit Tunnel vertical conveyances were inherited, it would bring the agency's vertical conveyance assets to 47 percent at the end of their useful lives.

Mr. Carini outlined the fleet aging mix, noting that adoption of the Downtown Seattle Transit Tunnel assets would be brought back to a standard maintenance schedule by 2023. He reviewed the estimated annual cost projections through 2045. In 2025, Sound Transit would have over 300 pieces of equipment to maintain, rising to nearly 600 by 2045. Maintenance and replacement costs would rise accordingly.

Mr. Carini outlined the cross functional vertical conveyances team, which included members across the Operations, Passenger Experience, and Design, Engineering, and Construction Management Departments. The team conducted monthly inspections of the equipment to verify safety, cleanliness, and to verify that the vendor was conducting contracted maintenance tasks. Unlike trains and busses, the assets were static, forcing staff to travel from Everett to Lakewood, to Issaquah.

Finally, Mr. Carini reviewed the steps ahead of the team, with a heavy focus on data driven program management.

Boardmember Baker asked what caused the downtime of escalators and elevators at the Westlake and University Street Stations. Mr. Rogoff advised that both stations were still maintained by King County Metro, and that the equipment was older and did not benefit from a strong maintenance and repair regime over their lives. He reminded the Committee that resources would begin to be shifted from the UW Station, due to improved performance, in preparation for the onboarding of maintenance responsibilities. The agency also had a better idea of the cost to replace the vertical conveyances in the Downtown Seattle Transit Tunnel stations and that would be built into the updated financial plan.

#### Presentation on 2021 Service Change Outreach

Brian de Place, Director of System Planning, and Michael Couvrette, Service Planning Manager, provided the report. Mr. de Place reviewed ridership impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and the slow

reopening over the spring and summer. While the continued impact of the COVID-19 pandemic cannot be accurately predicted, it is expected that reduced ridership will continue through 2021.

Mr. Couvrette advised that the planning for the opening of the Northgate Link Extension had been ongoing for many years. He outlined the major changes in service related to the Northgate Link Extension opening, which affected routes 522 which would be rerouted to Roosevelt Station, 542, 555, and 556 which would reroute to University District Station, and 586, which would be discontinued. The proposed 2021 Service levels set Link service at eight-minute headways during peak hours, 15-minute headways on off-peak hours and weekends, and 30-minute headways during late night hours. It maintained the current level of Sounder service, with nine round trips to the South and two round trips to the North. Tacoma Link service remained at full service. ST Express service would continue largely unchanged from current pandemic affected levels, with priority toward all-day/all week travel markets and equitable access, social distancing, and essential trips. Ridership changes would be monitored throughout the fall and into 2021. The agency would need to remain flexible to react to changes in rider levels or revenue changes.

Mr. de Place admitted that the stay at home restrictions due to COVID-19 made outreach regarding the service plan more difficult. The strategies used to reach the public included providing significant amount of detail on the project page, which was translated into several languages. Traffic was driven to the page through social media posts and notices in facilities and vehicles. Outreach began on September 4, 2020 and ended on September 25, 2020. Ten times the typical number of responses were received, which were still being processed and categorized.

Chair Roberts asked for more ridership briefings over the course of the next year to ensure that the service was being appropriately dispatched, as further effects of COVID-19 materialized.

Mr. Rogoff advised that a tight operating budget for 2021 would be presented but warned that depending on the economic state and operational needs, a budget adjustment may be needed at some point.

### **Executive session**

None.

### **Other business**

None.

### **Next meeting**

Thursday, November 5, 2020, 1:00 to 3:00 p.m.  
Held virtually via WebEx

### **Adjourn**

The meeting adjourned at 1:58 p.m.

ATTEST:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Paul Roberts  
Rider Experience and Operations Committee Chair

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Kathryn Flores  
Board Administrator

APPROVED on \_\_\_\_\_, AM.