



Summary Minutes

Rider Experience and Operations Committee Meeting November 5, 2020

Call to order

The meeting was called to order at 1:01 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=e64700efa740f5accc38da92dc726c9c0>.

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
(P) 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

2021 Service Plan Presentation – Chair Roberts explained that the Committee would receive a presentation on the public feedback received for the 2021 Service Plan, and the changes to the plan made in response. The presentation was originally scheduled for the October 22, 2020 Board Meeting.

2021 Enhancement and State of Good Repair, Agency Administration, and Operations Budget Review – Chair Roberts reminded the Committee that it would receive an update on the 2021 budgets for which the Committee was responsible. In its December meeting, it would advance those portions of the 2021 Proposed Budget to the Finance and Audit Committee, which would forward the full Proposed Budget to the Board for final approval.

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. He congratulated the City of Seattle and King County Metro on their successful ballot measure. He also congratulated Boardmember Dammeier on his reelection as Pierce County Executive.

Veterans ERN – The agency's veterans Employee Resource Network raised the MIA POW flag over Union Station for the first time in honor of Veterans Day. It would remain for the rest of the Month.

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.

Jack Whisner

Business Items

Items for Committee final action

October 1, 2020, Rider Experience and Operations Committee meeting minutes

The minutes were moved by Boardmember McDermott and seconded by Boardmember Baker. Chair Roberts called for a roll call vote.

Ayes

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

Nays

It was carried by four affirmative votes that minutes of the October 1, 2020 Rider Experience and Operations Committee meeting be approved as presented.

Items for recommendation to the Board

Motion No. M2020-66: Authorizing the chief executive officer to execute an amendment to the commuter rail service agreement with BNSF Railway Company extending operation of Sounder north-line service by 10 years and adding two five-year options to extend in an amount not to exceed \$37,958,689 for a new total authorized amount not to exceed \$90,904,587.

Martin Young, Commuter Rail Operations Manager, provided the presentation.

Motion No. M2020-66 was moved by Boardmember McDermott, seconded by Boardmember Baker. 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 the majority of the committee present that Motion No. M2020-66 be forwarded to the Board with a do-pass recommendation.

Resolution No. R2020-18: Adopting the 2021 Service Plan with major service changes for implementation in March and September of 2021.

Brian de Place, Director of System Planning, and Michael Couvrette, Service Planning Manager, provided the presentation.

Resolution No. R2020-18 was moved by Boardmember McDermott, seconded by Boardmember Baker. 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 the majority of the committee present that Resolution No. R2020-18 be forwarded to the Board with a do-pass recommendation.

Rider Experience Metrics Performance Reporting

Russ Arnold, Chief Passenger Experience Officer, provided the presentation. He reviewed the system's total ridership, noting that the COVID-19 pandemic drastically affected ridership, with small, incremental increases month over month. Link was the largest contributor to the system's increases. Short-term projections optimistically predicted increases in ridership by April and May, 2021, but it presupposed beneficial changes to COVID-19 restrictions and employer requirements. Sounder ridership remained consistent, with the majority of riders coming from Pierce County. ST Express ridership was stable with consistent and growing ridership in South King County and Pierce County, and slight increases in mid-day ridership following the September service changes. Tacoma Link ridership remained flat.

All Sound Transit operated Link station elevators were meeting the agency target of 97 percent uptime with the exception of Beacon Hill Station. A two-week major project had just been completed at that station which required taking multiple elevators out of service for multiple days. King County Metro continued to experience performance issues with the Downtown Seattle Transit Tunnel station elevators.

The struggles continued for King County Metro with its escalators. Sound Transit's operated Link Station escalator performance was below target. Sound Transit decided to take advantage of the period of lower ridership to perform maintenance on many of its escalators, which was the cause of the performance dip.

Mr. Arnold reviewed Sounder and ST Express station elevators and escalators, noting that Kent Station's elevator number 3 was taken out of service due to structural concerns. The elevator was put back into service in June 2020 once the damage was repaired.

Mr. Arnold then reviewed the Link Passenger Count Dashboard, which launched earlier in the week on the Sound Transit website as part of the agency's Passenger Confidence Initiative. The dashboard allowed for users to review past ridership data on an hour-by-hour basis, to determine which times were the safest for social distancing.

Review of the Proposed 2021 Enhancement & State of Good Repair Budgets and Agency Administration Budget

Tracy Butler, Chief Financial Officer, and Jenny Stephens, Deputy Director of Financial Planning and analysis and Budget, provided the presentation. Ms. Stephens outlined the committee's budgetary responsibilities. She reviewed the proposed sources and uses, which amounted to \$3.1 billion, noting that \$700 million of borrowing.

Suraj Shetty, Executive Director of Operations, reviewed the transit operations budget, which totaled \$381 million. This was increased over 2020 primarily due to new service with opening of the Northgate Link Extension and Operations and Maintenance Facility - East, as well as inheritance of the Downtown Seattle Transit Tunnel. This budget was \$17 million, or around five percent about 2020 forecasts. He reviewed details of the new services the agency would be offering in 2021 which would add \$15.4 million, and the state of good repair projects totaling \$8.5 million.

Chair Roberts highlighted that the operations budget increased only due to the operations expansion scheduled to take place in 2021, but that all other aspects of the operations budget were reduced.

CEO Rogoff noted that if ridership were to increase beyond expectations, staff would likely return to the Board to amend the budget to accommodate the increased demand.

Mr. Shetty outlined the Operations managed projects budget, which was reduced compared to 2020, and totaled \$45.6 million.

Jason Weiss, Chief Information Officer, reviewed the Information Technology projects, which totaled \$14.6 million. Ron Lewis, Executive Director of Design, Engineering, and Construction Management, reviewed the projects managed by that department, which totaled \$8.6 million. These projects revolved around safety system expansion, as the system expanded outward and safety studies. Julie Marshall, Director of Project Transition, outlined the Project Transition Office managed projects, primarily related to inheriting the Downtown Seattle Transit Tunnel, and which totaled \$8 million. Russ Arnold, Chief Passenger Experience Officer, reviewed the Passenger Experience projects, which totaled \$5 million.

Ms. Stephens explained that staff may return to the Board for a budget amendment in the future, depending on financial outlooks and potential changes in ridership, and outlined the next steps for Budget approval.

Enhanced Digital Passenger Information

Ryan Ceurvorst, Digital Marketing Manager, provided the presentation. He reviewed the rollout of the current soundtransit.org website, noting that traffic dropped significantly afterward due to unforeseen usability issues. The new model of website, centered on a mobile-friendly widget, was not well suited for search engine optimization among other problems which users did not like. In 2019, staff analyzed user needs. Goals were developed to get riders to better information faster, provide full-table schedules, and to improve search engine optimization for routes and stops. In 2020, a new experience, informed by the analysis and goals, was developed, which was planned to be rolled out in the first quarter of 2021. Mr. Ceurvorst outlined the website traffic trends, noting that more than 53 percent of website traffic would be impacted by these new updates.

He reviewed the various updates to the user experience and the timeline, which included a phased roll out to the public between January and March of 2021.

Boardmember Roscoe asked when the decision was made to make the changes outlined in this presentation. CEO Rogoff, advised that the decision coincided with the Agency's adoption of its six core values, one of which was the passengers.

Chair Roberts advised that members across the community with various comfort levels with technology should be tapped to test the new experience.

Executive session

None.

Other business

None.

Next meeting

Thursday, December 3, 2020, 1:00 to 3:00 p.m.
Virtual meeting held via WebEx

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 3:05 p.m.

ATTEST:

Paul Roberts
Rider Experience and Operations Committee Chair

Kathryn Flores
Board Administrator

APPROVED on _____, AM.