



Summary Minutes

Rider Experience and Operations Committee Meeting February 4, 2021

Call to order

The meeting was called to order at 1:03 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=ef3825559d57d9d7a4929c3aba439ba24>.

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
(A) 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 Committee Work Plan – The Committee members received a draft copy of the 2021 committee work plan earlier in the week and would discuss its contents later in the meeting.

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 and State Update – Earlier in the week, on Tuesday, the Senate confirmed the nomination of Pete Buttigieg as Secretary of Transportation. CEO Rogoff also joined transit leaders from across the country in a letter requesting Congress provide \$39.3 billion in emergency assistance in the next COVID relief bill. He was also scheduled to meet with FTA Administrator Nuria Fernandez the following week to discuss the importance of growing the agency’s partnership with the FTA.

Two letters were distributed to Boardmembers with a request for their signature. The first letter was addressed to Secretary Buttigieg, urging him to include in the upcoming recovery package a provision which would increase the federal share of the two existing Full Funding Grant Agreements. The second letter addressed to Olympia was consistent with the 2021 legislative agenda adopted in December.

Two of three transportation revenue proposals had been released by the respective Transportation Committee chairs. CEO Rogoff met with Chair Fey earlier in the week to discuss Sound Transit’s needs

to address its affordability gap. Staff also met with Senate Chair Hobbs to share the same message. Finally, CEO Rogoff advised that he would be making requests of the Boardmembers to join in advocating for Sound Transit with legislators in the weeks to come.

Update on Masks – On January 29th, the Center for Diseases Control issued a new order requiring the wearing of masks by riders on public conveyances to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Sound Transit was developing procedures to comply with both the CDC order and the Transportation Security Administration security directive for persons to wear masks while on transit and at transportation hubs. TSA Guidelines state that facemasks must be worn at all times; and failure to comply may result in Federal Civil penalties. The agency would continue to communicate that masks were required and that it was now federal law, and make masks free onboard all light rail and Sounder vehicles.

Since August, compliance increased from 88 percent to 95 percent, were due to the agency's communication and passenger experience efforts. Messaging efforts would be increased to raise the total to 100 percent.

CEO Rogoff added that in a call with the TSA, he asked whether federal agents would collect citizenship information if federal inspections occurred. He received confirmation that no federal agents on transit vehicles would make contact with riders, and more information would be provided.

Transit Equity Day and Black History Month – Sound Transit was celebrating Transit Equity Day, joining hundreds of organizations across the country to honor Rosa Parks' birthday, and her refusal to give up her seat on a Montgomery bus, kicking off a chain of events leading to the desegregation of public facilities nationwide. That Monday, Sound Transit staff also kicked off Black History Month celebrations by raising the Pan-African flag above Union Station for the first time. During the Month, Sound Transit staff would attend a series of workshops that educate and enlighten staff on the intersection of race, housing, transportation, and other issues. CEO Rogoff thanked the Office of Civil Rights, Equity and Inclusion, and the volunteers in the Blacks Empowering Success in Transit employee resource group for their contributions to the events.

Public comment

Chair Roberts announced that public comment would be accepted via email to emailtheboard@soundtransit.org and would also be accepted verbally. No written public comment submissions were received.

Verbal Public Comments:

Hester Serebrin
Joe Kunzler

Business Items

Items for Committee final action

December 3, 2020, Rider Experience and Operations Committee meeting minutes

The minutes were moved by Boardmember Smith and seconded by Boardmember Roscoe.

It was carried by a voice vote that minutes of the December 3, 2020 Rider Experience and Operations Committee meeting be approved as presented.

Motion No. M2021-11: Authorizing the chief executive officer to execute a contract modification with Ultimate Software Group, Inc. to increase the contract amount by \$3,092,521 for a new contract amount not to exceed \$4,833,245 plus applicable taxes.

Jason Weiss, Chief Information Officer, provided the staff report.

Motion No. M2021-11 was moved by Boardmember Baker, seconded by Boardmember Roscoe. Chair Roberts called for a roll call vote.

Ayes

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

Nays

It was carried by majority of committee members present that Motion No. M2021-11 be approved as presented.

Reports to the Committee

Rider Experience Metrics Performance Reporting

(Boardmember McDermott arrived at this time.)

Russ Arnold, Chief Passenger Experience Officer, and Emily Nutsch, Operations Performance Manager, provided the presentation. Mr. Arnold reminded the committee of the metrics and their ultimate goal. He advised that over the following months, the dashboard would begin to roll out different metrics. The dashboard changed since the last time it was presented to the Committee, because the cohort prioritized internal talent to build the tool, and would assess whether a consultant was needed at a later time. Once complete, the dashboard would be available on the Sound Transit website and feature a growing number of metrics at the discretion of the Committee. The first metric the Committee would preview was ridership.

Ms. Nutsch provided the overview of the new Microsoft Power BI dashboard tool and its functionality. She advised that details about the data, including its source, audience, and quality were available on a separate information page in the interest of transparency.

Chair Roberts asked to whom the tool was available. Ms. Nutsch explained that as the tool was being built out, it was only available to staff, but that it would be available to the public when it was complete, and data would be able to be exported to excel if individuals wanted to run their own analyses.

Chair Roberts also asked about the implications of data that was not a “green light.” Ms. Nutsch explained that situations that would warrant a “yellow light” would include those in which data was not complete. She also advised that if there was a case that a “yellow” or “red light” were showing, the information page would explain exactly what was wrong with that specific data.

Mr. Arnold advised that in the following month, the committee would be presented with the safety metric on that same platform, and then the vertical conveyance performance metric the month after that.

Passenger Restroom Update

Russ Arnold, Chief Passenger Experience Officer, and Branden Porter, Director of Transportation Safety and Security provided the presentation. Mr. Arnold advised that staff would present findings and recommendations from the passenger restroom working group and solicit feedback and direction from the Board on the future passenger restroom strategy. He reviewed the direction given to staff in Motion No. M2019-31, which was to propose updates to Motion No. M98-67, regarding passenger restroom access policies.

The original Motion No. M98-67 created the original passenger restroom policy, which placed limited restrooms at across the region and on Sounder trains. The policy allowed for additional restrooms to be built so long as they did not interfere with the agency’s goal to meet budgets and schedules in

coordination with local jurisdictions. Since then, additional restroom facilities were added at the Auburn and Sumner Sounder Stations, the Federal Way Transit Center, and SeaTac and Tukwila Link Stations, bringing the total to nine. By 2024, that total was expected to increase to 16 locations, as the system was built out to Lynnwood and Federal way. Locations were determined on a project by project basis and in conjunction with local jurisdictions.

The working group contacted eight peer agencies to compare policies and determine whether there was a standard or common practice developed. Some consistent trends appeared, notably that restrooms were at major hubs, for passengers only, within fare paid zones, and were locked with requests required for access. Following the research, the working group developed the three criteria for a station to have a restroom: a minimum of 10,000 daily boardings, multi-modal locations with five routes or more, and spacing of approximately 20 minute ride times.

Mr. Arnold reviewed the average annual cost break-down of passenger restroom operations, which amounted to \$322,174 per facility. He presented three options for consideration, the first was the current restroom options, which, operationally totaled \$2,899,566 in expenses. The second option was to proceed with the original restroom expansion plan, totaling \$4,510,430 annually. Finally, the third option would align with the proposed criteria and add two restroom locations at the Seattle Center station and Issaquah station, bringing the operational costs to \$5,154,777.

Finally, Mr. Arnold provided three recommendations regarding restroom policy, which were to limit restrooms to strategically placed locations with passenger access only in fare paid zones, to implement a standard design and operational considerations, and to use a mix of security and customer service presence to control and monitor the passenger restrooms.

Boardmember Roscoe asked if using an ORCA card or paper ticket was under consideration for access to facilities. Mr. Arnold confirmed that it was under consideration, and the work group just learned that date and time specific QR codes could be printed on next-gen ORCA paper tickets, which could be used.

Boardmember McDermott asked whether the security and customer service presence expenses would be new expenses or existing. Mr. Arnold advised that security presence already existed in some capacity at current restroom facilities, but a new mix of customer service would be added to the new and existing stations.

Chair Roberts asked what the next steps would be after this presentation. Mr. Arnold explained that if the Rider Experience and Operations Committee approved of the direction of the policy updates, a formal policy would be drafted and presented to the Executive Committee, which would consider forwarding the policy to the Board for adoption.

Chair Roberts noted that there were no objections to the policy moving forward to the Executive Committee for consideration.

Review draft committee work plan for 2021

Chair Roberts explained that the draft 2021 work plan had been distributed to members and outlined the general actions expected to be taken up by the committee in each quarter.

CEO Rogoff noted that Chair Roberts had previously asked for frequent updates on the agency's COVID-19 recovery plan, which would be added to the work plan.

Boardmember Roscoe asked how staff planned to address the COVID-19 recovery in the work plan. CEO Rogoff advised that due to the breadth of the committee's purview, reports on topics ranging from passenger safety, to ridership demand levels over time. Chair Roberts added that as more information about the virus and state and federal requirements develop, the Committee needs to be up to date on operating procedures for service. Chair Roberts assured the members as new topics became more pressing, the work plan could be adjusted accordingly.

Executive session

None.

Other business

Boardmember McDermott noted that he arrived to the meeting late, and asked that his vote for approval of Motion No. M2021-11 be recorded. Chair Roberts noted there were no objections and approved Boardmember McDermott's request.

Next meeting

Thursday, March 4, 2021, 1:00 to 3:00 p.m.
Virtual meeting held via WebEx

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 2:05 p.m.



Paul Roberts
Rider Experience and Operations Committee Chair

ATTEST:



Kathryn Flores
Board Administrator

APPROVED on April 1, 2021, AM.