

7/1/20201 Executive Committee Meeting
Written Public Comment Submissions

Submissions

<i>Joe Kunzler</i>	2
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Joe Kunzler

An attachment was included in this message which is included at the end of this document.

30 July 2021

Dear Sound Transit Board Exec Committee;

Joe A. Kunzler here. I'm hoping that you can please accept this reminder that:

1) We still have a gubernatorial "state of emergency" over Covid19 due to the Delta Variant.

2) From 22 March 2020, CEO Rogoff to you as per attachment:

I would ask you to take note of item E, Motion 2020-23. This motion would suspend the Board's rules to require electronic submission of during the period of the current COVID-19 emergency. . . . **The situation has challenged our ability to maintain social distancing between public witnesses and between certain public witnesses and staff.** I would ask that you consider this motion seriously to allow us to close the boardroom during this extraordinary time while gathering appropriate public testimony on agenda items in advance of each Committee and Board meeting.

I would submit to you that ever since Motion 2020-23 came into being, Alex Tsimerman was shut down. Other, er, problematic commentators aren't playing in our airspace. Please keep this motion in place, it's so important.

3) Oh and call this a warning... Tackling Tsimerman, Version 2.0 comes out mid-July to help inform Seattle voters and frame the debates just starting on what's next in open meetings. Right now you're the good guys who caught up. Please keep it this way. No *need* to change the meeting format. Please don't.

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FINALLY, on a very personal level I got to see and ride this wonderful thing Saturday:

I let out a happy cheer seeing this beauty after 24 January... 2020. So, so happy to see Sound Transit have 100% mask compliance and still on the rails.

GO SOUND TRANSIT!

Thoughtfully;

Joe A. Kunzler

growlernoise@gmail.com

Joyce Hengesbach

The substance of this message is enclosed in a letter, attached to this report.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide the attached document as input for today's meeting.

Joyce Hengesbach

West Seattle SkyLink

www.westseattleskylink.org

Alex Hudson

This message was sent after the Executive Committee adjourned.

Dear Sound Transit Executive Committee,

Transportation Choices Coalition is grateful for the opportunity to speak before you this morning. We appreciate the urgency to move forward with a plan for realignment, and want to emphasize support for ensuring any adopted proposal prioritizes on-time delivery of voter-approved projects.

The current proposal offers an important starting point, including elements such as:

- Strong and swift commitment to legal and regulatory compliance.
- Continued use of an independent cost consultant.
- Commitment to pursue expanded financial capacity including additional State and Federal funds and increased debt capacity.
- A plan for developing further cost saving options.
- Regular, scheduled program review.
- Meaningful projects in each subarea get people much-needed reliable transit trips.
- Prioritizes equity in program and engagement.
- Pushing structured parking out as a financially and environmentally responsible way to focus on building transit first, de-carbonization, and getting people out of cars.

However to fully deliver on the responsibility for the benefit of taxpayers, the economy, and the environment, any proposal you adopt must go further. Transit project delays are of concern when we need to rapidly shift people out of cars and into public transit. Every element of the agency should strive to aggressively accelerate the delivery of mass transit. We urge the board to create and consider alternative or additive proposals that include:

- Scenario which optimizes for maintaining the voter-approved schedule of transit project delivery.
- Extraordinary commitment institutionalized at the highest levels of the organization, and in partnership with stakeholders, to working on generating new revenue and capacity.
- Inclusive, iterative public process and stakeholder engagement focused on collaboratively working toward solutions.
- Accountability and transparency to the cost-estimating methodology reform.
- Updates to the system access policy to ensure jurisdictions get meaningful mitigations that increase transit access in the interim of potential delays.
- A cautious approach to cost reductions, prioritizing efficiencies over scope changes.
- Prioritization of Graham Street station.
- Continued and deepened incorporation of an equity throughout the process and program.

Few things are more important than accelerating the delivery of alternatives to car-based commutes. We see your commitment to this shared goal, but know that the best decisions can only be made when you have meaningful choices to consider and select from.

We thank you for this opportunity and look forward to further engagement.

-Alex Hudson

From: [Rogoff, Peter](#)
To: [*Sound Transit Board](#)
Cc: [*Sound Transit Board Staff](#); [*Executive Leadership Team](#)
Subject: Update on COVID-19 Response and Other Matters
Date: Sunday, March 22, 2020 10:16:24 PM
Attachments: [031820 Letter Patty Murray.pdf](#)
[image001.png](#)

Board members:

I write to provide you with a recounting of issues we have been addressing over the last two weeks, especially in regard to our response to the COVID-19 crisis. There is much to share, but in the interest of keeping this message to a reasonable length, I will summarize and encourage you to call my cell if you have any questions or concerns.

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Sound Transit employees:

To date, two Sound Transit employees have been positively diagnosed with COVID 19. I'm sure there will be more in the days to come. I have been in touch with both employees. One had a temporary stay in the emergency room but both are now resting at home. We have followed all the appropriate protocols in terms of sanitizing their work spaces, contacting employees with whom they were in close contact, and reaching out to them early and often to meet their needs. The entire agency is teleworking except for a very small number of employees who are essential to ongoing operations and must work out of their duty stations (i.e. staff at the Operations and Maintenance facilities). As a general rule, we are over-communicating with the staff --providing regular updates to our COVID-19 page on the staff intranet site and pushing out regular emails to keep the staff apprised. There was a brief slowdown in productivity as we transitioned entirely to telework, but staff are now getting the hang of it, and the pace of work across all lines of business has sped up rapidly.

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Partner agencies and their employees

As you know, with the exception of our Tacoma Link service, Sound Transit is entirely dependent on our partner agencies (Pierce Transit, King County Metro, Community Transit, BNSF and Amtrak) to operate and maintain our services. Sound Transit has been hosting thrice-weekly calls among the region's transit providers (including Kitsap Transit, Washington State Ferries, and SDOT) and the regional office of the FTA. These calls have been extraordinarily valuable for all involved in sharing best practices on passenger and employee safety, ridership data, funding opportunities, and general situational awareness.

One area that we have all been monitoring carefully is the attendance trends for vehicle operators, maintenance personnel, rail supervisors and dispatchers, etc. Sadly, it was announced on Thursday that Community Transit had four employees positively diagnosed with COVID 19 -- all bus operators.

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Ridership, Service Reductions, and Suspension of Fares

By the end of last week, Sound Transit ridership was declining 9 percent a day, day after day, dropping by Friday to less than 30 percent of average daily ridership when compared to our baseline ridership in February. The diagnosis of the four Community Transit operators came at the same time that we and many of our partner agencies were poised to announce service reductions.

A number of imperatives have directed our thinking as we have developed planned service reductions. First, we want to be sure to provide adequate service for the 30 percent of riders who continue to use our service. We are keenly aware that, if they are still using our service, it is because they have few if any other options, and we are determined to serve these, the most transit-dependent citizens among our riders. So we have planned not to eliminate service at the earliest or latest hours of the day when our low number of riders often include airport workers, health care workers, etc. Second, we need to provide enough service to allow for social distancing on our buses and trains. Third, we need to be mindful of economic efficiencies, maintaining necessary services while not burning through operating funds unnecessarily. Fourth, as I mentioned Friday evening, it is becoming increasingly clear that our service levels could, in the days ahead, depend simply on the availability of operators and other essential personnel.

On Thursday evening, in concert with some of our other transit partners in the region, we announced what I expect will be a first round in a series of service reductions. Our press release can be viewed [here](#). By Thursday night, the diagnosis of the four Community Transit operators (any one of whom might also drive a Sound Transit bus) triggered actions by all of the transit agencies in the region to take immediate measures to better protect our operators. Community Transit instituted procedures requiring rear-door boarding by all passengers. ADA passengers will still board from the front but they will be the only passengers allowed to sit toward the front of the bus. I instructed Community Transit to institute the same procedures for the Sound Transit buses they operate as we developed plans to do the same across all Sound Transit the following day.

The absolute requirement to better protect our operators also made it impossible to collect fares on our bus services, since both the ORCA readers and cash boxes are located at the front door of the buses. Community Transit announced the suspension of fares Thursday evening and we along with King County Metro followed suit the following day. Our announcement on the suspension of fares can be viewed [here](#). I made this decision following conversations with Board Chair Keel and Vice Chairs Constantine and Roberts. We thought it important to suspend fares on all of our services to avoid the confusion of fare-free transit across the region on buses but not trains.

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Vandalism on Link

Increased vandalism in downtown Seattle has been a concern as many citizens have cleared from the streets. One of the benefits of suspending fares across all of our transit modes is that it allows our fare enforcement officers (who had already suspended fare inspections) to change uniforms and instead deploy as security personnel. We are likely to boost our security presence along the light rail system in the days to come for the same reason that a number of businesses in downtown Seattle are boarding up their storefronts for the period they will be closed.

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State monitoring of daily ridership figures

For those of you who have been monitoring Governor Inslee's recent press conferences, state agencies have been gathering data to measure the effectiveness of the governor's directives to stay at home and cease unnecessary travel. This weekend, we and other transit agencies across the state have been asked to provide daily ridership numbers for this purpose and we plan to comply fully.

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Our Financial Outlook

On Thursday, the Finance and Audit Committee convened and received a number of reports from

Chief Financial Officer Tracy Butler. Most importantly, Tracy provided some important data on our financial plan's reliance on different tax sources (especially our 52+ percent dependence on sales tax) and what a recession might mean for those tax streams and the financial plan. Tracy will provide an updated presentation on this same topic for the entire Board at this Thursday's meeting. It is too early for any of us to make predictions as to what the future holds when it comes to our tax revenues. At the moment, different financial advisors are advancing very different predictions as to the length and depth of an upcoming recession. We will obviously be monitoring this data very carefully in the months ahead and will keep the Finance Committee and Board leadership apprised of what we are seeing. I would encourage all Board members to pay careful attention to Tracy's report on Thursday and ask questions they may have, even though we have very little data at this time.

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Federal Relief for the Transit Industry

Negotiations continue at this hour in Washington D.C. between Congressional leaders in the House and Senate on a massive stimulus bill in response to the COVID 19 crisis. The Administration has advanced proposals to bail out certain industries and enterprises as have Senate Republicans and House Democrats. Not surprisingly, there are some significant divisions between the camps, made plain by this evening's failed cloture vote on moving to the House vehicle to which the Senator Republicans hoped to amend their plan. While much of the discussion surrounding transportation funding has been about the air carriers and airports, we have been actively engaged in advocating for relief for transit agencies, especially those that can expect to see precipitous drops in sales tax revenue. I signed onto the attached letter to all members of the Washington delegation on Wednesday evening, explaining our request for Congressional support. Absent any set-aside funding attached to sales tax loss, we also have advanced proposals for formula allocations that would be particularly helpful to Puget Sound transit agencies.

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Thursday's Board Meeting

Both the System's Expansion Committee and Finance Committee held meetings this month utilizing the Board's existing emergency procedures, allowing them to convene and conduct business telephonically. The process worked surprisingly well. We intend to use the same procedures for the full Board meeting this Thursday afternoon, which will be chaired by Vice Chair Paul Roberts. We are working to facilitate a mechanism that will allow Board members to signal electronically to the Chair that they are seeking recognition. Please watch your email for the instructions for this meeting.

The meeting materials were emailed to you by Tony Thomson at 6:55 PM on Friday evening. Among the other important items on the agenda, I would ask you to take note of item E, Motion 2020-23. This motion would suspend the Board's rules to require electronic submission of during the period of the current COVID-19 emergency. During the two Committee meetings this week, and again this coming Thursday, we will have the Boardroom open to the public even though you will be participating telephonically. The situation has challenged our ability to maintain social distancing between public witnesses and between certain public witnesses and staff. I would ask that you consider this motion seriously to allow us to close the boardroom during this extraordinary time while gathering appropriate public testimony on agenda items in advance of each Committee and Board meeting. The legal department has reviewed this motion and finds it consistent with all pertinent laws governing public comment.

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Completion of Connect 2020

I end this rather depressing litany with some good news. As of a few hours ago, our outstanding team completed the Connect 2020 project, passing all tests and certification requirements satisfactorily. You will recall that the initial recommendation was to shut down all Link service for several weeks to complete this work. Instead, through the creativity and professionalism of a great many Sound Transit departments and agency partners, we succeeded in completing this work while maintaining service to our customers. I couldn't be more proud of the staff who made this successful. I only wish their accomplishment wasn't overshadowed by the many challenges we are facing during this crisis.

As always, I ask that you call me if you have any questions or concerns about these or any other matters. -P

Peter M. Rogoff
Chief Executive Officer
Sound Transit
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Sound Transit Values Start With Me & Start With You
Collaboration, Customer Focus, Inclusion & Respect, Safety, Integrity, Quality

To: Sound Transit Executive Board

Date: July 1, 2021

Re: Skylink gondola – a better choice for our environment

Historic high temperatures in the Puget Sound region this past weekend caused Link trains to reduce speed and vehicular traffic to be hampered by buckled roadways.

Gondolas are less susceptible to extreme weather. Their operations are not affected by temperatures in the high 90's to low 100's, per [this report](#) on the gondola at Disneyworld in Orlando, Florida.

In addition to a dependable and comfortable ride, gondola passengers are able to board a gondola immediately and spared time waiting in extreme heat (or cold) as they would for a bus or train. Station wait time is important to West Seattle riders since until 2038 taking light rail to any destination other than SODO will entail two waits, possibly three if a bus is used to reach the initial light rail station in West Seattle. Because gondola passengers could immediately board and travel from West Seattle to the ID transit hub without transferring, a gondola would be more likely to attract riders, including those who typically drive cars.

Record breaking high temperatures emphasize the urgency of reducing the carbon emissions causing global warming. The Skylink gondola could be up and running years before light rail, greatly accelerating the decrease of greenhouse gases.

The Skylink Gondola is a better choice for riders and the planet. We strongly urge Sound Transit to commission a feasibility study of it as an alternative to light rail for West Seattle.