



Summary Minutes

Executive Committee Meeting July 1, 2021

Call to order

The meeting was called to order at 10:34 a.m. by Committee Chair Kent Keel virtually on WebEx.

The meeting was streamed on

<https://soundtransit.webex.com/soundtransit/onstage/g.php?MTID=e9f3f52e8bec69c0e0a3d30217a31a1c0>

Roll call of members

Chair	Vice Chair
(P) Kent Keel, University Place Councilmember	(P) Paul Roberts, Everett Councilmember (P) Dow Constantine, King County Executive

Board Members	
(P) Claudia Balducci, King County Councilmember	(A) Jenny Durkan, Seattle Mayor
(P) Bruce Dammeier, Pierce County Executive	(P) Julie Meredith, WSDOT Secretary alternate
	(A) Dave Somers, Snohomish County Executive
	(A) Victoria Woodards, Tacoma Mayor

Katie Flores, Board Administrator, announced that a quorum of the Committee was present at roll call.

Boardmembers Backus, Baker, Juarez, McDermott, Roscoe, and Smith attended to participate in committee discussions as non-voting members.

Report of the Chair

Welcome to Boardmembers

Chair Keel welcomed Board members who are not members of the Executive Committee, but joined the meeting to take part in Realignment discussions.

Future Board Meetings

On June 30, 2021, Governor Inslee issued updates to his executive order to reopen Washington State under the Washington Ready plan. The update maintained the requirement that the agency offer a virtual meeting option for public participation in Sound Transit Board and Committee meetings. The update also allowed in-person public meetings under the Open Public Meetings Act without restrictions on capacity or physical distancing requirements. Chair Keel would contact the Board to gather input on what future meetings would look like following the pandemic.

Monthly Contract Report

The monthly contract report was included in members' meeting packets for review.

CEO Report

CEO Peter Rogoff gave the CEO Report.

Federal update – CEO Rogoff announced he and Boardmember Woodards participated in a video

conference with news media, hosted by Senator Murray. There was discussion on recent funding provided by Congress in the American Rescue Plan that included substantial funding over more than \$1 billion for transit agencies in the region. In addition to recent relief funding, the conference also highlighted the Senator's bill, the Public Transit Capital Investment Relief Act of 2021, which Senator Murray introduced in early 2021. The bill would increase funding allocated to projects that have existing Capital Investment Grants. If adopted, the bill would provide \$1.9 billion in additional funding for the Lynnwood and Federal Way light rail extension and would allow the reduction of the agency's affordability gap.

Service during heat wave – Due to the recent heat wave, rail services, both Sound and Link, had speed restrictions applied. On Link, temporary speed reductions were called for because of the overhead contact wire. Lower speeds also helped reduce the stress on the traction power substations. During the three-day heat spell there were several sporadic power outages, medical assistance calls, high-temperature faults and alarms on the infrastructure equipment, and several car temperature faults and shut downs. Frontline employees worked through the oppressive heat to continue service. On Sounder, BNSF followed their protocol and applied speed restrictions based on ambient temperatures and observations from the field. Sounder experienced a 20 to 25 minute delay on all trains and necessitated the elimination of two scheduled trains. Tacoma Link did not operate during this time. ST Express operated almost normally, but experienced several hot roadways in the area. Construction projects continued to progress during this period. Sound Transit Safety and Construction Management teams worked with the agency's contractors to ensure the labor force stayed hydrated and took necessary breaks to avoid heat related health issues and to preserve worker health and safety.

Public comment

Chair Keel announced that public comment would be accepted via email to emailtheboard@soundtransit.org and would also be accepted verbally.

The following people provided written public comment:

Joe Kunzler
Joyce Hengesbach

The following people provided verbal public comment:

Anna Zivarts
Joyce Hengesbach
Alice Lockhart
Jonathan Hopkins
Alex Hudson

Business items

Items for Committee final action

May 6, 2021, Executive Committee meeting minutes

It was moved by Boardmember Roberts, seconded by Boardmember Dammeier and carried by consent of all Board members present that the minutes of the May 6, 2021 Executive Committee meeting be approved as presented.

Reports to the Board

Review Chair's realignment proposal; Resolution No. R2021-05

Chair Keel reminded the Committee that he submitted a realignment proposal, Resolution No. R2021-05 at the June 24 Board meeting. The resolution attempted to capture the intentions of the Board, stakeholders, and the public.

Don Billen, Executive Director of Planning Environment and Project Development, provided a presentation prior to discussion. He outlined the details of the proposed realignment resolution. He explained that project delays could be separated into two categories: planning impacts, which were incurred or anticipated due to the effects of COVID-19, and financial impacts, which included any additional years found to be necessary for the scenario to be affordable at the subarea and agency level based on current cost and revenue projections.

He reviewed lists of projects that have experienced planning delays and others that are not delayed due to financial considerations, although schedule risks remained due to COVID-19 related effects.

Chair Keel advised that his resolution proposed progress in every subarea across the region. It is financially balanced from both the subarea and agency perspectives. It also would deliver all the ST3 Light Rail and Bus Rapid Transit investments with fewer years of delay, with those projects beginning in the first Tier and finishing in the second Tier. He noted the Resolution is consistent with Boardmember Constantine's Motion No. M2020-37 to locate additional funds and that it would set up a process for the Board to adjust plans throughout the following years as an Annual Program Review.

Excluding ST2 parking investments, Chair Keel's proposal would push parking investments until the end of the program. The proposal would balance the delivery of high value transit investments with the financial impacts and realities during the pandemic. Chair Keel noted the continuation and efforts needed to withhold the ST3 plan while staying candid to the voters given the affordability gap.

Vice Chair Roberts appreciated the effort in creating the proposal, believing that it was an improvement over past presented scenarios. He advised that the amendment offered by himself, Board members Smith and Somers, addressed climate change. The program would reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and the amendment provided would further that goal, while opening additional avenues to outside funding.

Boardmember Balducci pointed out that the Board had been considering realignment for many months. She agreed with Boardmember Roberts that the region had a shocking wake-up call in the past week with the heat dome weather event. She also felt it was important to acknowledge how many people were reliant on transit and that the revenue shortfall predicted in 2020 was resolving itself and the remaining problem was cost estimate overruns.

She did not think that schedule delay was the most appropriate lever to use to address the problem. She asserted that the agency could remain on schedule by attacking the cost estimate gaps by assuming and committing to many funding improvements and cost reductions now and then performing on them. She would continue to ask that staff and the Board work with her and others to create that alternative approach.

Chair Keel asked when Boardmember Balducci expected to have her completed alternative proposal. She advised that it would rely on others, with more technical expertise, to complete it. If a hard deadline was presented, she would work to that deadline.

Chair Keel advised that there was a \$7.9 billion problem that needed addressing and he was more prone to practical rather than aspirational solutions.

Boardmember Backus disagreed with Boardmember Balducci's assertion that the Board would be giving up if it accepted the proposal as presented, with project delays.

Boardmember Balducci explained that if the Board accepted the long-range revenue and cost projections as presented now and push out project timelines accordingly, the Board could lose momentum on addressing the cost estimate overruns. She believed that the Board could use the urgency of the moment to address them now, without assuming project delays.

Boardmember Dammeier acknowledged that the process to date had been difficult. He applauded Boardmember Balducci's approach and mindset, however he believed that the Board should take steps that are more pragmatic and prepare for the worst-case scenarios. He supported delivering the system as quickly as possible, but Pierce County was experiencing a revenue influx, which he believed was spurred on by the federal stimulus. He did not want to set assumptions based on economic stimulations that may not exist in the future.

Vice Chair Constantine agreed with Boardmember Balducci and believed the path the Board was setting was not academic but was setting expectations. There were opportunities to shape the scenario ahead of the Board. The Board should actively pursue additional funding and cost reduction innovations instead of accepting delays. The improved economic environment of the moment would likely affect future projections and he asked that Boardmember Balducci be given appropriate time to develop her proposed amendment more fully.

Chair Keel agreed with Vice Chair Constantine that the Board needs to work to address the cost overruns and gain additional funding, but he rejected the assertion that the proposed resolution was giving up and accepting fate. The program was required to be affordable and the only way to do so was to adopt a plan. He set the July 2021 date over a year prior, and it should not have come as a surprise. He asked Boardmember Balducci if her proposal would be affordable. Boardmember Balducci said that her proposal would be aspirational while also remaining realistic. She explained that long-range planning allowed for more flexibility than budgeting. Her plan would keep pressure on the Board in a transparent way.

In clarifying his question, Chair Keel asked if all specific projects would set project dates and be fully funded. Boardmember Balducci advised that no project in any long-range plan could be guaranteed to be delivered by a certain date. She could not outline in detail as her proposal was not yet complete.

Boardmember Roscoe was concerned with the delay of parking structures because many Pierce County riders reach the system by car. She supported the realignment process as laid out by Chair Keel, and had not yet heard a convincing argument to delay that process.

Boardmember McDermott had not heard any assertions that the Chair's proposal was not consistent with long-range planning, but that an alternate approach would allow for a robust discussion. He supported allowing Boardmember Balducci to create her alternate approach.

Chair Keel advised that he too supported Boardmember Balducci's work with staff to create her alternate proposal. Boardmember McDermott clarified that he was not opposed to a decision timeline that would culminate at the end of July 2021, but he wanted to be able to consider Boardmember Balducci's alternate approach even if that was not in July 2021.

CEO Rogoff offered staff to provide a memo to the Board regarding the agency's long-range planning capabilities.

Vice Chair Constantine agreed with Boardmember McDermott's comments and advised that he, Boardmembers Balducci, and Durkan asked for a delay in their April 2021 letter. He asked that staff fully commit themselves to assisting Boardmember Balducci with her proposal and the Board delay a decision until August.

Chair Keel acknowledged the letter Vice Chair Constantine referenced, and noted that the letter asked for a delay in the process, but did not provide a hard date or reasoning by which to make a decision.

CEO Rogoff advised that staff has been working closely with Boardmember Balducci and would continue to do so; however, staff needed a final concept to take to writing.

Boardmember Dammeier supported staff's work with Boardmember Balducci, but did not agree that multiple proposals needed to be considered and therefore delay the existing timeline. If the Board wanted to take up

Boardmember Balducci's proposal after it accepted the Chair's proposal, it could be considered once it was fully completed.

Boardmember Balducci advised that all Board members were equals and some were asking for consideration of additional time to provide an alternative proposal.

Chair Keel acknowledged Boardmember Balducci's comment and request. He advised there would be more discussion to occur. He asked Boardmember Balducci to continue working with staff and in the following week they would check in on the progress.

Executive Session – None

Other business – None

Next meeting

Thursday, August 5, 2021
10:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.
Virtually via WebEx

Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 12:07 p.m.

ATTEST:

Kent Keel
Executive Committee Chair
APPROVED on _____, JG

Kathryn Flores
Board Administrator