



Summary Minutes

Rider Experience and Operations Committee Meeting October 7, 2021

Call to order

The meeting was called to order at 1:03 p.m. by Chair Roberts virtually on WebEx.

The meeting was streamed on:

<https://soundtransit.webex.com/soundtransit/onstage/g.php?MTID=eb3452a000565d4b9a2a849f03be0675a>

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) Nicola Smith, Lynnwood Mayor
(P) Debora Juarez, Seattle City Councilmember	(A) Peter von Reichbauer, King County Councilmember
(A) Ed Prince, Renton City Councilmember	

Josephine Gamboa, Board Relations Specialist, announced that a quorum of the Committee was present at roll call.

Report of the Chair

Monthly Contract Report

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

CEO Report

Chief Executive Officer Peter Rogoff gave the CEO Report.

Northgate Link Opening – Northgate Link Extension opened over the past weekend and there were events held at the U District and Roosevelt stations and a series of ribbon cuttings that included an event for the press and civic leaders and October 2, 2021 event for the John Lewis Memorial Bridge. Sound Transit Operations and King County Metro Rail staff were on site over the entire opening weekend working behind the scenes to ensure any issues were promptly addressed. Some issues were setting the final volume levels of the station announcements, fine-tuning the actual train run-times, securing some of the devices on the platforms and quickly cleaning any spills. Train performance over the weekend was high, with only one train having a mechanical issue that was removed from service.

A couple of items to note and improve on were that the agency received several reports throughout the weekend of operators selecting incorrect on-board route codes, which resulted in incorrect messaging displays. The agency had responded by ordering a training blitz to include a leaflet at dispatch and briefings from rail supervisors at termini. CEO Rogoff noted that the vast majority of trains observed by Link Operations staff over the opening weekend were displayed with correct signage. There were

several false fire alarms at Roosevelt Station. Project management, Mass electric and King County Metro electricians were aware of the issue and worked through it. One escalator outage occurred, which was software related and resolved by Sound Transit contractors and staff.

Sound Transit staff ambassadors covered 208 shifts over the opening weekend, including the Preview Ride event. Staff covered 40 shifts in total at all three new stations on Friday, October 1, 2021. The business week of October 4, 2021, staff covered approximately 327 shifts at Northgate, Roosevelt, and U District Stations beginning at 6 a.m. until 6 p.m. Staff reported positively about being at the stations and answering questions and engaging with passengers and experiencing the new stations. CEO Rogoff wanted to note that it did not go unnoticed that on October 1, 2021, the operation and maintenance for the entire Downtown Seattle Transit Tunnel was transferred to Sound Transit.

Operator Shortages and 2022 Service Plan – The draft plan for service restoration in 2022 was shared at the July 2021 Rider Experience and Operations Committee meeting and then released for public input during August 2021. Consistent with industry-wide trends, the agency had been working with its operating partner agencies to track on-going challenges with operator availability. Pierce Transit was critical, they are currently missing upwards of 20 plus trips daily on ST Express Service and more on their local service. They anticipate the problem could last 18 to 24 months. King County Metro is watching but not critical and was not willing to take on any additional services from Sound Transit. Community Transit was watching but not critical. The agency learned recently that operational capacity could limit the ability to further restore ST Express service as proposed in the draft 2022 Service Plan. Moreover, in the coming weeks and months the agency anticipated reductions in service due to operator shortages. All three partners believed they would experience additional operator shortages after the vaccine mandates were established – December 2, 2021 for King County Metro, January 1, 2022 for Community Transit, and Pierce Transit was undetermined at this time as they were waiting more direction from OSHA.

The agency was paying special consideration to any delay to the proposed improvements in the south corridor as they address service equity deficiencies identified in a 2019 Title VI Equity analysis. In response to the late-breaking information, the agency had delayed bringing the 2022 Service Plan to the Board for adoption in order to further evaluate the situation. The proposed 2022 Service Plan would return to the Board in November 2021.

Public comment

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

There following people provided written public comment:

Joe Kunzler

The following people provided verbal public comment:

Joe Kunzler

In response to Mr. Kunzler's verbal public comment, CEO Rogoff commented that Sound Transit had a mandate in place for every employee at the agency. The specific public comment was in regards to how the mandate was applied to the agency's contractors. Mr. Rogoff explained that contractors that conduct business in and around Sound Transit facilities were within the mandate. The class of individuals that the mandate does not apply to were employees that conduct business outdoors or outside of Sound Transit facilities.

Business Items

Items for Committee final action

September 2, 2021, Rider Experience and Operations Committee meeting minutes

It was moved by Boardmember McDermott, seconded by Boardmember Baker and carried by consent of all Board members present that the minutes of the September 2, 2021 Rider Experience and Operations Committee meeting be approved as presented.

Motion No. M2021-57: Authorizing the chief executive officer to (1) increase aggregate amount for on-call temporary staffing service contracts with Hansell Tierney, Inc., Kelly Services, Inc., TEKSystems, Inc., and Robert Half International Inc., in the amount of \$3,000,000 for a new total authorized aggregate contract amount not to exceed \$13,000,000, and (2) execute contract modifications with the above firms for any contracts that exceed \$2,000,000 provided that the aggregate total of all the contracts does not exceed \$13,000,000.

Paula Mendoza, Deputy Director of IT Project and Business Services Management Office, provided the staff report.

Motion No. M2021-57 was moved by Boardmember McDermott and seconded by Boardmember Smith.

Chair Roberts called for a roll call vote.

Ayes

David Baker
Debora Juarez
Joe McDermott
Nicola Smith
Paul Roberts

Nays

It was carried by unanimous vote of five committee members present that Motion No. M2021-57 be approved as presented.

Motion No. M2021-58: Authorizing the chief executive officer to execute a contract modification with Intersection Advertising to extend the term of the contract from 10 to 13 years, add digital advertising services to the scope of work, and reduce the minimum annual guaranteed revenue amounts for the remainder of the original contract term.

Tim Healy, Director of Marketing, provided the staff presentation.

Vice Chair McDermott asked about the extension of the term being only three years given the nature of the contract in bringing in revenue. Mr. Healy responded that the reason for not procuring a new contract at this time was because the market would determine what the rates are and the rates are not in the best condition due to the pandemic. CEO Rogoff noted that the digital advertising was solely visual with no audio to create a less intrusive passenger experience by avoiding constant repetition of audio near a passenger.

Motion No. M2021-58 was moved by Boardmember McDermott and seconded by Boardmember Smith.

Chair Roberts called for a roll call vote.

Ayes

Nays

David Baker
Debora Juarez
Joe McDermott
Nicola Smith
Paul Roberts

It was carried by unanimous vote of five committee members present that Motion No. M2021-58 be approved as presented.

Motion No. M2021-60: Authorizing the chief executive officer to execute a contract with Custom Truck One Source to provide 18 Specialty Hi-Rail Non Revenue Vehicles NRV for a total authorized contract amount not to exceed \$4,505,466 plus applicable taxes.

Jeff Warning, Light Rail Maintenance Manager, provided the staff presentation.

Motion No. M2021-60 was moved by Boardmember Smith and seconded by Boardmember McDermott.

Chair Roberts called for a roll call vote.

Ayes

Nays

David Baker
Debora Juarez
Joe McDermott
Nicola Smith
Paul Roberts

It was carried by unanimous vote of five committee members present that Motion No. M2021-60 be approved as presented.

Items for Recommendation to the Board

Motion No. M2021-59: Authorizing the chief executive officer to execute a regional service provider agreement and a subsequent service level agreement with Kitsap Transit, Pierce Transit, and King County for Sound Transit to perform ORCA vending machine operation and maintenance services to support ORCA and receive compensation via Regional ORCA Operations Team from participating partners Kitsap Transit, Pierce Transit, and King County for the cost of the services.

Bryl Eddy, Manager of Transit Systems Operations, provided the staff presentation.

Motion No. M2021-59 was moved by Boardmember Smith and seconded by Boardmember Juarez.

Chair Roberts called for a roll call vote.

Ayes

Nays

David Baker
Debora Juarez
Nicola Smith
Paul Roberts

It was carried by unanimous vote of four committee members present that Motion No. M2021-59 be forwarded to the Board with a do-pass recommendation.

Motion No. M2021-61: Renaming University Street Station in coordination with the East Link Extension opening.

Candace Toth, Manager of Wayfinding and Signage, and Russ Arnold, Chief Passenger Experience and Innovation Officer, provided the staff presentation.

Motion No. M2021-61 was moved by Boardmember Baker and seconded by Boardmember Smith.

Chair Roberts called for a roll call vote.

Ayes

David Baker
Debora Juarez
Joe McDermott
Nicola Smith
Paul Roberts

Nays

It was carried by unanimous vote of five committee members present that Motion No. M2021-61 be forwarded to the Board with a do-pass recommendation.

Reports to the Committee

Passenger Experience Survey

Michael Berman, Research and Insights Manager, provided a summary of passenger research collected over 2020 to 2021. He covered the methodology of passenger research which would help guide the agency's performance. There were two primary tools to collect passenger sentiment: the passenger experience survey and the Sounding Board rider panel, both of which lead to actionable information about passengers. The Passenger Experience Survey is conducted annually, the last being in November 2020. Upwards of 4,500 riders were surveyed and they were asked questions in a number of categories including passenger characteristics, overall experience and perceptions, and foundational categories that are reviewed during the monthly performance metrics review. Mr. Berman noted the last survey took place during the COVID-19 pandemic and he would review how that affected the survey results. The Sounding Board was a monthly panel that consisted of passengers that agreed to participate in monthly exercises to look into specific topics. He noted the Passenger Experience Survey reviewed a broad spectrum whereas the Sounding Board was narrower in its categories. A few of the Sounding Board's categories included Post stay-at-home transit use, voice of the customer performance metrics, public safety, ride the wave guide, fare enforcement, and others.

Mr. Berman briefly reported eight key findings from the survey. The first finding reported COVID having a clear, significant impact on ridership. 75 percent of passenger respondents who previously made over four trips a week were not currently riding any services. 39 percent of passengers thought Sound Transit addressed passenger concerns and needs during the COVID-19 pandemic in a proper manner. The second finding reported that passengers thought Sound Transit was easy to use and provided good value, but are less convinced that the agency focused on passengers. Mr. Berman noted there was continuous research taking place to dive deeper into what passengers were looking for in terms of maintaining high standards and valuing customers.

He introduced a quadrant analysis that would be of importance throughout the following findings. For every level of performance, an assessment could be made relative to the importance to passengers. The top left quadrant was Monitor, top right was Maintain, bottom left was Invest and bottom right was Improve. Following this quadrant would provide the ability for improvement. For example, if a finding was presented in the lower red quadrant meaning low performance and high importance to passengers, it would indicate space for improvement.

The third finding indicated that availability and dependability are most important to riders. The Safe metric was in Monitor and Informed and Clean Metrics were in Invest. The fourth finding indicated that frequency was an area of improvement for the Availability category. The fifth finding indicated that

service was generally dependable. The sixth finding indicated that safe vehicle operation was the most important component of the Safety category. The seventh finding indicated that passengers generally felt well-informed. The last finding indicated that vehicle cleanliness was the most important element of the Clean category.

Next steps and improvements included conducting the Passenger Experience Survey in 2021, continuing Sounding Board activities, getting more immediate, regular passenger feedback, aligning what passengers think about agency performance with agency internal metrics, and providing additional information to any Board members who may request it.

Performance Metrics Review

Emily Nutsch, Operations Performance Manager, provided the report. August Ridership data reported a steady level of average boardings by day compared to the previous months. John Carini, Deputy Director of Vertical Conveyances, provided the elevator and escalator reports. Data for these reports were available from the month of September. All categories met their target shy of the Downtown Tunnel escalators. Sounder, Link and ST Express elevators all reached their target goals. Beacon Hill elevators were below target due to scheduled maintenance and Tukwila International Boulevard escalators were below target due to annual testing that experienced additional technical issues that delayed its return to service. Downtown Tunnel elevators progressed month over month but had a slight dip due to scheduled maintenance. Downtown Tunnel escalators saw consistent availability month over month and had already met its yearly goal to reach 70 percent availability.

The Safe metric showed zero reportable collisions. The Dependable metric showcases on-time performance and it reviewed scheduling for all modes: Central Link at 90 percent, ST Express at 86 percent, Sounder at 96 percent, and Tacoma Link appearing as a future metric. The Informed and Clean metrics cover studies that were mentioned in the quadrant analysis presented by Mr. Berman during the previous report. Ms. Nutsch explained that refined data for the Clean metric was to be gathered.

Executive session

None.

Other business

None.

Next meeting

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

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 2:39 p.m.

ATTEST:

Paul Roberts
Rider Experience and Operations Committee Chair

Kathryn Flores
Board Administrator

APPROVED on _____, JG.