



Summary Minutes

System Expansion Committee Meeting November 10, 2021

Call to order

The meeting was called to order at 11:33 a.m. by Committee Chair Balducci virtually on WebEx.

Roll call of members

Chair	Vice Chair
(P) Claudia Balducci, King County Councilmember	(P) Kim Roscoe, Fife Mayor

Board Members	
(P) Nancy Backus, Auburn Mayor	(P) Kent Keel, University Place Mayor
(P) David Baker, Kenmore Mayor	(P) Nicola Smith, Lynnwood Mayor
(A) Jenny Durkan, Seattle Mayor	(P) Dave Upthegrove, King County Councilmember

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

Report of the Chair

Operations and Maintenance – South Materials

Boardmembers received a number of documents pertaining to the Operations and Maintenance Facility South, which would be discussed later in the meeting.

Monthly Contract Report and Agency Progress Report

The meeting packet included the monthly contract report and the September agency progress report.

Finally, Chair Balducci advised that she had personally received several pieces of correspondence applauding the opening of the Northgate Link Extension. She had the opportunity to meet with people who work for and are served by Disability Rights Washington, and they explained that their lives were changed by the new stations, allowing them to travel when they want instead of having to schedule hours ahead.

CEO Report

Chief Executive Officer Peter Rogoff provided the CEO Report.

Federal Update

The long-awaited infrastructure bill is ready for the President' signature. The package has long been a priority of the Biden Administration and many in the Congress, and it represents an historic investment in infrastructure. Public transit and Sound Transit will benefit from the investments provided in the bill and the agency is well-positioned to capitalize on the funding opportunities.

Earlier this week, Vice Chair Constantine and Deputy CEO Kimberly Farley had the opportunity to show Representative Jayapal the Northgate extension, including a ride on the train to tour the Roosevelt

Station and the TOD project, Cedar Crossing, just adjacent to the Station. The tour was great to have the opportunity to thank Rep. Jayapal for her support of the infrastructure package and show her first-hand the benefits of these kind of investments.

Mr. Rogoff summarized that the infrastructure bill provides a total of \$1.2 trillion in both direct appropriations and authorizations across conventional infrastructure programs, including public transit. Importantly, the bill will nearly double the investment in the Capital Investment Grant (CIG) program – the program that Sound Transit has relied on for major federal funding – bringing the CIG total to \$4.6 billion per year. Not only has Sound Transit successfully competed for CIG projects in the past, the agency is well positioned to submit projects to the CIG pipeline in the months and years ahead.

Congress continues to work on the second infrastructure package, the Build Back Better Act, which provides \$1.75 trillion in overall funding, including \$10 billion for an Affordable Housing Access Program to be developed jointly by the FTA and the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to “provide access to affordable housing, improve mobility for low-income riders and enhance access to jobs and educational opportunities and community services.” This program could also benefit Sound Transit as the agency continues to lead the region in commitment to the development of affordable transit oriented development. A vote on this bill may happen next week and if it passes, it will go over to the Senate for consideration.

West Seattle and Ballard Link Extension Draft Environmental Impact Statement Update

The FTA was expected to issue its determination on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement in early 2022, followed by a public comment period and Board process to confirm, or modify the preferred alternative. Staff would be presenting an overview of the process ahead in December, including anticipated engagement with the public, agency partners, and the Board.

Point Defiance Bypass Update

Amtrak would resume service on the Sound Transit-owned Point Defiance Bypass on November 18. The Federal Railroad Administration was on site performing final safety checks the prior week and gave the process and resumption of service its positive recommendation.

East Link Vehicle Testing

Beginning that week, light rail vehicles would begin testing on the new East Link tracks in Bellevue. Crews would begin evaluating controls, safety and signal systems, and communications. The work would be occurring overnight between the Bellevue Downtown Station and Redmond Technology station.

Public comment

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

No written public comment was submitted for the meeting. The following people provided verbal public comment:

Brian Nash
Peter Barbin
Brad Thorson

CEO Rogoff advised that a decision on the OMF-South Preferred Alternative was planned for December, which was just barely within the Target and Affordable project schedule.

Business items

For Committee Final Action

Minutes: October 14, 2021 System Expansion Committee meetings

It was moved by Boardmember Roscoe, seconded by Boardmember Backus, and carried by unanimous voice vote that the minutes of the October 14, 2021 meeting be approved as presented.

East Link Extension Update

Jon Lebo, Deputy Project Director for East Link, began the presentation, he began with a summary of the project timeline and a review of the alignment. The project is currently on schedule to open for revenue service on time in 2023. Mr. Lebo continued to present project challenges which include impacts from COVID-19, station schedules and systems access, the Redmond Technology Station Garage, and concrete quality issues on the I-90 segment.

Mr Lebo reminded the committee about the Redmond Technology Station garage, which had structural cracking. Sound Transit required demolition and reconstruction of the vehicle ramp portion of the garage, which was redesigned to be a stronger element. Construction on the underpass for the Redmond Technology Station had begun to connect both platforms, and the rebuilding of the garage will not effect the revenue service date of the larger project.

Testing has begun on track segments between the Redmond Technology Station and the further alignment, being completed with a light rail vehicle towing vehicle to test for track clearance and other issues. Traffic signal testing at Bel-Red/the 130th Street Station which will continue ahead of the full system testing later. The South Bellevue Parking Garage will be opened on November 15, 2021, in cooperation with the City of Bellevue and King County Metro as a team effort to make the parking facility as early as possible in project delivery.

Jemae Hoffman reviewed the Mercer Island Transit Integration project, showing the Board a visual representation of the project elements intended to improve pedestrian and transit integration access to the station. Ms. Hoffman explained the action before the committee today which would allocate funds for the Mercer Island Transit Integration Project. Mercer Island Station is at substantial completion, and the transit integration project will connect the station to pedestrian and bicycle access, and complete various road improvements to supplement bus pick-up and drop-off, and improve access from nearby trails and thoroughfares.

Boardmember Roscoe asked whether the full Board would receive an update on the I-90 segment track work problems. CEO Rogoff advised that typically it would only be brought to the Committee but that it was up to the Boardmembers discretion whether the presentation should be brought to the Board. Chair Balducci suggested sending a comprehensive memo to the full Board, apprising them of the new information.

Motion No. M2021-67: Authorizing the chief executive officer to execute a contract with Johansen Construction Company for construction of the Mercer Island Transit Integration project as part of the East Link Extension in the amount of \$5,922,391, with a 15 percent contingency of \$890,000 for a total authorized contract amount not to exceed \$6,812,391.

Chair Balducci advised that the committee had been briefed on the action in the East Link Extension presentation.

Motion No. M2021-67 was moved by Boardmember Baker and seconded by Boardmember Backus.

Boardmember Keel expressed excitement regarding the work on the east side, coupled with Northgate and progress on the Hilltop Tacoma Link Extension. Chair Balducci highlighted the opening of the South Bellevue Parking Garage as the leading edge of the public openings for East Link service.

Chair Balducci called for a roll call vote.

Ayes

Nancy Backus
David Baker
Kent Keel
Kim Roscoe
Nicola Smith
Claudia Balducci

Nays

It was carried by vote of six of the Boardmembers present that Motion No. M2021-67 be approved as presented.

For Recommendation to the Board

Motion No. M2021-68: Authorizing the chief executive officer to execute an agreement with the City of Shoreline for Sound Transit to contribute funding for right of way acquisition and construction of the NE 145th Street/I-5 Interchange Project, which would construct a westbound transit priority meter for buses of an amount not to exceed \$10,000,000.

Paul Cornish, Strategic Projects Director for Bus Rapid Transit, provided the staff report. He reviewed the project details, noting that the project was taking place at the far western portion of the SR522/NE 145th Street Bus Rapid Transit project. The city of Shoreline would manage the project and Lynnwood Link Extension construction improvements were reduced to account for a smaller footprint to allow for this project to be completed. Sound Transit was expected to save approximately \$18 million due to this collaborative project taking into account the \$10 million contribution.

Boardmember Balducci asked what bicycle and pedestrian safety considerations were made. Mr. Cornish advised that the sidewalks would be widened to 12 feet, and flashing beacons would be installed. The City of Seattle was working on a pedestrian and bicycle path to the South as well.

Motion No. M2021-68 was moved by Boardmember Baker and seconded by Boardmember Backus.

Boardmember Roscoe asked what allowed the lanes to be shortened. Mr. Cornish advised that the traffic circle would improve traffic flow in an already congested intersection. The bus priority lights would also help busses move through the intersection, so the business and transit lane would not need to extend all the way to 15th Street.

Boardmember Baker asked how traffic was expected to function when it is usually so backed up. Mr. Cornish advised that the project team conducted traffic modeling and they were confident that this project would keep traffic flowing and it would not have an adverse effect.

Chair Balducci called for a roll call vote.

Ayes

Nancy Backus
David Baker
Kent Keel
Kim Roscoe
Nicola Smith
Dave Upthegrove
Claudia Balducci

Nays

It was carried by unanimous vote of the seven Board members present that Motion No. M2021-68 be forwarded to the Board with a do-pass recommendation.

Boardmember Backus commented that she had to leave the meeting.

Motion No. M2021-69: Authorizing the chief executive officer to execute an agreement with University of Washington for construction of a Bus Rapid Transit Station at the University of Washington Bothell campus in the amount of \$1,022,000, with a 10 percent contingency of \$102,200, for a total authorized agreement amount not to exceed \$1,124,200.

Paul Cornish, Strategic Projects Director for Bus Rapid Transit, provided the staff report. He advised that the project would be constructed by University of Washington Bothell, and includes pedestrian improvements and a station platform as elements of the future station. The University would complete its project in 2024, which was two years before planned completion of the Bus Rapid Transit project. With approval of the agreement, Sound Transit would not have to go back in and demolish or reconstruct improvements built by the University. The agreement also established property ownership on behalf of the University.

Chair Balducci asked about the dollar amount as it is not sufficient to complete the project, and Don Billen, Executive Director of Planning, Environment and Project Development, agreed with that sentiment and commented that there would be further future actions allocating funding for the completion of the station itself that will be brought to the committee.

Motion No. M2021-69 was moved by Boardmember Baker and seconded by Boardmember Smith. Chair Balducci called for a roll call vote.

Ayes

David Baker
Kent Keel
Kim Roscoe
Nicola Smith
Dave Upthegrove
Claudia Balducci

Nays

It was carried by unanimous vote of the six Board members present that Motion No. M2021-69 be forwarded to the Board with a do-pass recommendation.

Reports to the Committee

CEO Rogoff advised that Senate Transportation Committee Chair Steve Hobbs was named as the new Secretary of State by Governor Inslee. He explained that Senator Hobbs also served in the National Guard, taking the opportunity to note that as is tradition, the POW/MIA flag was raised above Union Station at the beginning of the month. He thanked Board Chair Keel and Boardmember Constantine who have met with Sound Transit's Employee Resource Veteran's group to share about their experience in the armed forces.

Briefing on System Maintenance Facilities: Operations and Maintenance Facility South; North Maintenance of Way Facility

Karen Kitsis, Deputy Executive Director of Capital Project Development, began the presentation. She advised that actions related to the presentation would be brought to the Committee and Board in the following month.

Four Operations and Maintenance Facilities would be included in the full build-out of the ST3 plan. Two were in service and two more were in the planning phase. Each Operations and Maintenance Facility included a Maintenance of Way facility, however one additional Maintenance of Way Facility was needed to support the alignment between the Northgate Station and the Lynnwood Transit Center.

Ms. Kitsis outlined the differences between a Maintenance of Way (MOW) facility and an Operations and Maintenance Facility (OMF). The key difference was that a maintenance of way facility required significantly less acreage, primarily due to the fact that it did not maintain or store any vehicles.

Chelsea Levy, South Corridor Development Director, and Curvie Hawkins, OMF-South and Tacoma Dome Link Extension Project Director, continued the presentation. Ms. Levy reported that this presentation would summarize OMF South Draft EIS findings, as well as key themes from public comments, and would present the findings of the Title VI Facility Equity Analysis.

There are three sites being considered for placement of the Operations and Maintenance Facility South (OMFS) which are the Midway Landfill in Kent, South 336th Street in Federal Way, and South 344th Street in Federal Way. The Midway Landfill site provides unique challenges due to ground settlement, and there are multiple mitigation options which include the construction of a platform to support OMFS buildings, a concrete slab/beam system to support OMFS facilities, or excavation of contaminated soil and replacement with imported soil. The two locations in Federal Way would require advanced completion of some of the Tacoma Link Extension guideway in advance of that project's construction timeline due to geographical location for access.

The project delivery timeline for the OMFS is quite narrow, and only the project alternatives located in Federal Way would support the timeline for opening the project in time to maintain the project delivery timelines for the Federal Way and Tacoma Link Extensions.

Mr. Hawkins then presented various site characteristics for Boardmember consideration, including business and residential displacements, estimated employee displacements, and environmental factors such as wetland, forest, and stream impacts. Conceptual cost estimates for each site, and the various mitigation strategies for the Midway Landfill location, were also presented.

Public involvement was then summarized including 270 plus public communications, 2,400 plus participants in the online open house, 120 plus attendees at two separate public meetings and hearings, over 9,000 mailers within the project corridor, and over 7,000 recipients of project emails. Mr. Hawkins presented the organizations, agencies, jurisdictions, and tribes that provided comment, and noted that these comments can be made available to the Board upon request.

The comments had themes including preference for the Midway Landfill location due to minimal displacements, cost concerns over the Midway Landfill site, concerns over impacts to local streams and waterways, concerns over traffic impacts, and concerns regarding relocation of the businesses at the S. 344th Street alternative location. Mr. Hawkins then presented the Facility Equity Analysis which concluded that there were no disparate impacts for any of the site alternatives.

Boardmember Keel voiced his concerns over the Midway Landfill site, noting the impacts to the schedule, and asked for more specific examples in future presentations. Mr. Hawkins advised that at a high level, the main reason would be associated with the construction effort needed to stabilize the refuse under the facility, compared to the more simple grading work for the other sites. Regulatory negotiations would also add time.

Boardmember Upthegrove asked whether the agency's analysis went as far as reviewing the impact on cities, and whether the agency contributed to the city in lieu of tax revenue. Ms. Levy committed to providing more detailed fiscal impact information, but the agency did not provide payment to jurisdictions for lost property tax revenue. CEO Rogoff advised that the facility would also be bringing in nearly 400 well-paying jobs, which would benefit the jurisdiction.

Boardmember Upthegrove asked what impact to the church property the 144th Street site would have. Mr. Hawkins explained that the site would have impacts to parking, and not to the structure itself.

Chair Balducci asked that opportunities for development near the facilities be discussed at future presentations. Chair Balducci asked about the distances between the proposed alternatives and the nearest light rail station. Ms. Levy reminded the Committee that during alternatives consideration, many locations closer to light rail stations were proposed, but jurisdictions requested that sites be chosen further away to allow for their own TOD and other development opportunities.

Boardmember Balducci advised that Sound Transit staff was offering a tour of the three sites and suggested that Boardmembers interested in joining contact staff.

CEO Rogoff explained that staff would not be making recommendations about the selection of a preferred alternative. He offered a detailed briefing for any Boardmember who would like one. He also noted the importance of the Committee and Board making a decision in December so that the project can stay on the approved timeline.

Sandra Fann, Acting North Corridor Development Director, introduced Taylor Carroll, Senior Project Manager for the North Maintenance of Way Project. Mr. Carroll reviewed the reasoning for need of the North Maintenance of Way Facility. He explained that maintenance response time targets were 15 minutes. The existing or planned maintenance of way facilities were either too far away, or would not be constructed in time to support the Northgate and Lynnwood Link Extension alignments.

He explained that funding for the facility was budgeted in 2021 and he outlined the activities that take place in a maintenance of way facility.

After an initial criteria search, there were 54 sites considered, and four sites met the evaluation criteria for the facility. Of those four sites, one was on the market. The site in question was for lease with an option for purchase. Staff planned to secure the site with a lease, and after evaluation of the site's meeting of agency needs, will consider purchase. Staff was conducting more research to confirm site suitability, and was negotiating the lease with the property owner. The lease was expected to last for five years with an option for purchase. Staff would bring the lease to the committee in December.

Review of the proposed 2022 System Expansion project budgets

Ryan Fisher, Deputy Executive Director of Financial Planning, Analysis, and Budget, began the report. He reviewed the committee budget purviews and overall proposed budget. Revenue and financing sources was \$3.4 billion, which was a 13 percent increase over the 2021 forecast. Proposed expenditures totaled \$3 billion, most of which was dedicated to projects. Mr. Fisher then reviewed the proposed budget elements by agency department.

Jenny Stephens, Director of Financial Planning, Analysis, and Budget, explained that of the \$2.1 billion dedicated to projects, the System Expansion Committee reviewed all but Transit Oriented Development and other system expansion programs. Ron Lewis, Executive Director of Design Engineering and Construction Management, then walked through the proposed budget for each of the ST3 expansion projects under construction, and other System Expansion projects such as the Light Rail Vehicle Fleet Expansion, and Operations and Maintenance facilities. Mr. Lewis explained that Northgate Link Extension was newly in revenue service, but close out and continued maintenance of the vibration and electromagnetic interference under the University of Washington would contribute to its portion of the budget.

Don Billen, Executive Director of Planning, Environment and Project Development, reviewed the ST3 projects currently in development. He advised that staff would be bringing four preferred alternative decisions to the Committee and Board in 2022. Mr. Billen also overviewed Sounder Investment projects, and the I-405/SR-522 Bus Rapid Transit projects.

Ms. Stephens explained that a mid-year budget adjustment may be needed in 2022 to account for the unpredictable ridership changes related to COVID-19 across the region. She reviewed the next steps in the budget process, which will culminate at the December Board Meeting with consideration of the full agency budget.

Boardmember Keel was interested in learning how the budget process would aid the Board in narrowing the difference between the capital program's target and affordable schedules. Boardmember Balducci added to this, and asked if there was any consideration made regarding activities that the Board may be interested in pursuing as a result of their work in the coming year to close any affordability gaps for projects. CEO Rogoff reminded the committee of the staff's suggestion that a budget adjustment may be brought to the Board following the annual program review in 2022, and that future budget briefings will be given to the Board.

Chair Balducci also commented to ensure that the agency is considering and allocating time and detail in the budget for work addressing realignment.

Executive session - None.

Other business - None.

Next meeting

Thursday, December 9, 2021
1:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.
Virtually via WebEx

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 2:11 p.m.

ATTEST:

Claudia Balducci
System Expansion Committee Chair

Kathryn Flores
Board Administrator

APPROVED on _____, AM.