



Summary Minutes

Rider Experience and Operations Committee Meeting April 7, 2022

Call to order

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

The meeting was streamed on:

<https://soundtransit.webex.com/soundtransit/onstage/g.php?MTID=e6f49ad909debe556d3542961421132ca>

Roll call of members

| Chair | Vice Chair |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| (P) Kristina Walker, Tacoma Councilmember | (A) Ed Prince, Renton Councilmember |

| Board Members | |
|---|---|
| (P) David Baker, Kenmore Councilmember | (P) Kim Roscoe, Fife Mayor |
| (P) Christine Frizzell, Lynnwood Mayor | (P) Dave Upthegrove, King County Councilmember |
| (A) Debora Juarez, Seattle City Councilmember | (A) Peter von Reichbauer, King County Councilmember |

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

Report of the Chair

Revising the agenda

Chair Walker explained that item 6.B needed to be removed from the agenda due to changes in the contract. It would be brought at a later date. There were no objections from the committee.

Introducing the Board's Independent Consultant

Dave Peters introduced himself as the newly selected independent consultant for the Board.

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.

Federal Update – Less than two weeks after signing the \$1.5 trillion fiscal year (FY) 2022 Omnibus appropriations bill into law to fund the government through September 30, 2022, President Biden released his budget request for \$5.8 trillion spanning across all federal agencies for FY 2023. As part of the budget proposal, the Federal Transit Agency (FTA) published recommendations for the Capital Investment Grant (CIG) program, including funding for Sound Transit's two Full Funding Grant

Agreements (FFGA) for Lynnwood Link and Federal Way Link.

The FY 2023 budget proposed \$716.6 million for Sound Transit (ST). For Federal Way Link, the budget would, in a single year, complete the FTA's multi-year full funding grant agreement (FFGA) for that project, three years sooner than previously committed. The proposed budget for Lynnwood Link would position that project's grant to be paid off at least three years sooner than expected. If Congress were to enact the funding levels laid out by the FTA, this accelerated funding would create more than \$40 million in borrowing savings for regional taxpayers that would benefit the agency's financial plan.

The agency would be asking the delegation to provide early money for projects that were just entering the CIG pipeline to continue to take advantage of those dollars. The agency had significant federal funding assumptions and planned to go after FFGAs for four Link extensions: West Seattle and Ballard Link Extensions, Tacoma Dome Link, and Everett Link.

Early CIG funding saved significant financing costs and would also help complete FFGA appropriations closer to the opening of service, rather than years after construction was completed and revenue service had begun. There had been work on smaller requests to each of the agency's members to allot some funding in the FY 2023 appropriations process for Sound Transit projects in their districts. The general rule is for these requests to be in the \$1 to \$3 million range. Members would review requests in the coming months to determine if they want to forward them to the appropriations committees.

Concrete Strike update – It was the fifth month of the concrete delivery strike, which continued to take a toll on construction projects. Since the Teamsters made a limited return to work last month for some projects, including ST's, the agency had gotten some deliveries, but not nearly enough to overcome the deficit that was incurred. Since the strike began on December 3, 2021, ST missed delivery of more than 43,000 cubic yards of concrete. Which was equivalent of a bumper-to-bumper line of concrete trucks stretching 29 miles. ST contractors have had to lay off more than 200 workers because of work-related delays caused by the lack of concrete.

Both parties returned to mediation on April 6, 2022, but unfortunately there was no immediate end to the strike in sight, which was affecting ST's ability to meet project's schedules. CEO Rogoff noted that the concrete strike wasn't the only headwinds that ST's projects were facing. The construction industry as a whole was facing tremendous cost pressures. The Association of General Contractors (AGC) issued a report on inflation in construction. Inflation in construction over the past year soared to record levels. The producer price index, the cost of goods, was 24.1 percent from June 2020 to June 2021, and by December had moderated only slightly to 19.6 percent for the year. The report noted that supply chain issues were causing delays on project schedules throughout the industry. As a result, nearly three quarters of the respondents to AGC's outlook survey said that projects were taking longer than they anticipated in 2021.

Public comment

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

No written public comments were received.

The following people provided verbal public comment:

Joe Kunzler

Business Items

For Committee final action

March 3, 2022, Rider Experience and Operations Committee meeting minutes

It was moved by Boardmember Roscoe, seconded by Boardmember Frizzell and carried by consent that the minutes of the March 3, 2022 Rider Experience and Operations Committee meeting be approved as presented.

Chair Walker reminded the committee that item 6.B was removed from the agenda and they would move on to items recommended to the Board.

For Recommendation to the Board

Resolution No. R2022-08: That (1) funding to continue the Fare Ambassador Program based on the pilot program initiated in August 2021 is approved through December 31, 2022 and (2) amending the Adopted 2022 Annual Budget to increase the Transit Operating budget by \$1,300,000 from \$440,862,228 to \$442,162,228 to account for the establishment and delivery of the Fare Ambassador Program in 2022.

CEO Rogoff noted the Executive Committee discussed an update to the Fare Compliance policy at the April 7, 2022 meeting. Because of committee responsibilities, the Executive committee would make the referral on the overall policy but the Rider Experience and Operations committee would discuss what's within their areas of responsibility, which would be to make the operations budget amendments to implement the policy and program recommendations.

As part of the comprehensive equitable fare compliance efforts, one part was about how the agency collected fares and checked compliance and the other part was how to improve access to fares. The agency would also propose key reduced fare efforts in reducing ORCA fare from \$1.50 to \$1.00, setting a goal to enroll 80 percent of ORCA lift eligible and likely transit riders in a reduced fare program, and extend participation in the Annual Subsidized Pass program, which was formerly known as the Very Low Income Pilot Program.

Russ Arnold, Chief Passenger Experience and Innovation Officer, Sandee Ditt, Manager of Fare Engagement, and Carrie Avila-Mooney, Director of Regional Government and Community Relations, provided the staff presentation.

Resolution No. R2022-08 was moved by Boardmember Baker and seconded by Boardmember Roscoe.

Boardmember Roscoe commented in favor of there being zero barriers for citizens to obtain ORCA cards. She mentioned the program seemed like a great way to showcase the ease to obtain fare and expose riders to the ORCA lift program and how the tap system works.

Boardmember Frizzell asked about how paid boardings were enforced in 2019. Mr. Arnold answered that in 2019 it was via fare enforcement officers who were managed under the Securitas contract. The officers would enter from both ends of the trains and work their way towards the center while asking passengers for proof of payment. If no proof of payment was given, they would ask for identification (ID) to scan. They would scan the ID and depending on the information shown upon scan, that would determine the following interaction. If the passenger did not carry an ID, the fare enforcement officer would contact the Sheriff's department because the agency did not have the ability to ID an individual without identification. They would be asked to depart the train and the Sheriff's office would verify their identification and would then determine whether to ask the passenger to leave the station or return to their trip. CEO Rogoff noted the importance of the current phase of the fare ambassador program which does not issue citations but treats it as an educational experience. Motion No. M2020-74 prohibited reinstating fines and citations until the Board would amend the policy in April 2022 after reviewing the different approaches.

Boardmember Frizzell asked how many years it would take to recover cost of fares. Projections had changed from \$9.5 billion to be between \$6.1 billion and \$7.5 billion. The delta was dependent on fare compliance, fare rates and timing of increases, ridership recovery, daily paid parking, and reduced fare

programs which would all reach towards \$7.5 billion recovery. Boardmember Frizzell asked if the agency wanted to increase ridership how long would the fare ambassador program continue for. Mr. Arnold noted the motion was suggesting the pilot program be funded until August 2022 and continue until end of the year and would return to the Board for a permanent program for 2023 and beyond. The program needed to analyze long term financial impact.

Boardmember Upthegrove asked how people that would not show ID were handled. Mr. Arnold responded there was no current solution. It was recognized at Board direction to remove law enforcement and data showed increases of individuals that don't have ID. It was proposed to return to the Rider Experience and Operations committee on a quarterly schedule to show metrics of how the program was progressing. CEO Rogoff asked staff to provide data on failures to produce ID. Ms. Ditt shared that 76 percent of passengers interacted with do not show enough information to track their current action phase. Out of those 76 percent, 40 percent are not showing any form of ID so staff are unable to track the individual or phase. The team was working through language to better encourage passengers to show ID. Boardmember Upthegrove asked what happens in that situation and if they are then asked to leave. Mr. Arnold responded that they are not – instead, staff were given direction to allow passengers to continue to their destination and handle the situation as an educational opportunity to the passenger. Boardmember Upthegrove noted that if 76 percent of passengers aren't providing enough identification to give a warning, it was under the impression that passengers could ride for free if there's no consequence. CEO Rogoff acknowledged the issue.

Chair Walker thanked staff for overview of program and work of ambassadors on trains and busses during the pilot project. She looked forward to future meetings and receiving data to ensure the program's success and reviewing lessons learned.

Chair Walker called for a roll call vote.

Ayes

David Baker
Christine Frizzell
Kim Roscoe
Dave Upthegrove
Kristina Walker

Nays

It was carried by unanimous vote of five committee members present that Resolution No. R2022-08 be forwarded to the Board with a do-pass recommendation.

Motion No. M2022-27: (1) Authorizing the chief executive officer to implement a lower, \$1.00 fare for ORCA LIFT riders on Sound Transit Services for a six-month period beginning as soon as administratively possible; (2) directing staff to conduct a public outreach process and prepare a Title VI fare equity analysis to support a possible Board decision to make this change permanent; and 3) directs staff to undertake actions to help achieve a goal of enrolling eighty percent of the likely ORCA LIFT market.

Chair Walker noted the presentation was given with the previous action item.

Motion No. M2022-27 was moved by Boardmember Frizzell and seconded by Boardmember Roscoe.

Boardmember Roscoe noted that she has not seen data indicating a \$0.50 reduction in fare would produce a desired outcome. She asked what the fiscal impacts would be, how \$0.50 was chosen, what outlining concerns that King County Metro (KCM) had around this reduction, and if it was determined that the \$0.50 reduction wouldn't have the desired impact for there to include a marketing campaign.

Ms. Avila-Mooney shared that outreach from several communities voiced that \$1.50 was still an obstruction to ride. Since the beginning of the ORCA lift program, there was debate on the best fare

price. There had been rounds of engagement in communities by ST and partners around the region to figure out best options for reducing barriers to the program. It was consistently heard that even if a rider was eligible and signed up for the program, \$1.50 was still a financial barrier. Because the analysis and engagement had yet to start, the motion requested for a six month period and the fare revenue estimated its expected reduction in ST fare revenue at \$100,000 for six month period, which was a relatively small financial impact.

Boardmember Roscoe asked if this was anecdotal information regarding the reduced fare. Ms. Avila-Mooney responded that input was anecdotal from partner agencies and staff. There were engagement results available but it was anecdotal feedback gathered over the last 7 years. Boardmember Roscoe voiced that she was not ready to support this action due to lack of clear data on what would improve the ORCA lift program target. CEO Rogoff noted the challenge of having actions spread over committees and reminded this committee that the Executive committee discussed the importance of carefully monitoring the impacts of the suite of recommendations. It was built into the policy that was adopted that there would be quarterly reports to see what the impacts of these approaches means, what the equity impacts were, reviewing impacts of lower fines and citations. It was built into the program with ongoing assessments because staff was unable to distinguish if a \$0.50 adjustment was the right amount. The agency would not see the impact until it's in motion and reviewed.

Boardmember Roscoe welcomed the data and thought there were too many simultaneous efforts and spending \$1.3 million to continue the fare ambassador program was the best choice.

Boardmember Frizzell asked about the comparison to how many reduced fare program cards are obtained and number of ridership. Ms. Avila-Mooney said of eligible ORCA lift riders, 39 percent eligible were signed up for ORCA lift and the reduced fare program. The established goal was to get 80 percent signed up to the program.

Boardmember Upthegrove voiced concern with this action and noted he would vote no and hoped it would get deferred. King County was responsible for managing implementation for ST and couldn't implement change for the next 6-12 months due to the concentration on ORCA and subsidized youth fares. He noted that King County hadn't revealed data on rates being too high. He also voiced his disinterest of implementing the fare and then doing an equity report and thought it should take place prior to the implementation. He noted KCM was opposed to taking this action today. CEO Rogoff spoke to the timing issue. The agency thought it was important to simultaneously restore potential to fines and citations and address the poverty aspect and is why the suite of actions came together.

Chair Walker asked if the action was passed today and the full Board passes at it's April 2022 Board meeting, then when would the implementation with lower rate access take place. CEO Rogoff replied no later than September 17, 2022. The challenge was to work with KCM and simultaneously move forward with the ORCA nextgen. The agency did not have identical fare structures with partner agencies at the moment. CEO Rogoff noted that regionalism takes time but the Board had asked the agency to respond within this timeframe and this was the response.

Chair Walker thanked staff and appreciated that the motion had built in outreach and supported moving this to the Board.

Chair Walker called for a roll call vote.

Ayes

David Baker
Christine Frizzell
Kristina Walker

Nays

Kim Roscoe
Dave Upthegrove

It was carried by majority vote of three out of five committee members present that Motion No. M2022-27 be forwarded to the Board with a do-pass recommendation.

Resolution No. R2022-09: Amending the Adopted 2022 Annual Budget to increase the Agency Administrative Operating project budget by \$400,000 from \$124,128,011 to \$124,528,011 to account for the establishment and delivery of reduced fare program promotion in 2022 and support the goal to enroll eighty percent of the likely ORCA LIFT market.

Chair Walker noted the presentation was given with the previous action item.

Resolution No. R2022-09 was moved by Boardmember Roscoe and seconded by Boardmember Frizzell.

Boardmember Roscoe asked what the risks around staff and consultant capacity to implement work in 2022 meant. She also asked what does reduced fare community support project meant. Ms. Avila-Mooney responded that it was standard protocol to state what risks come with the motion. The identified risk for the remainder of 2022 highlighted that more staff and consultants would be required for implementation. To answer Boardmember Roscoe's second question, it referred to case studies that were presented about doing more events throughout the region and working directly with organizations and communities to support eligible and likely riders to join the program. One key feature of timing and the program was to continue this work as Tacoma link fares were being discussed with the Board.

Boardmember Roscoe asked about potential technology upgrades. Ms. Avila-Mooney answered that a barrier was ensuring technology was compatible with one another and making sure the integration with new upgrades ran smoothly. Boardmember Roscoe, asked if that should be included in the ORCA upgrade and asked why it was included in this motion. Mr. Arnold responded that ORCA nextgen had its initial phase for launch and the second phase was for enhancements. The phase 2 roll out included the integration phase and that's what the motion was referencing.

Chair Walker called for a roll call vote.

Ayes

David Baker
Christine Frizzell
Kim Roscoe
Dave Upthegrove
Kristina Walker

Nays

It was carried by unanimous vote of five committee members present that Resolution No. R2022-09 be forwarded to the Board with a do-pass recommendation.

Motion No. M2022-28: Authorizing the chief executive officer to (1) modify an agreement with King County to extend Sound Transit's participation in a reduced fare program managed and administered by King County to support no to low-income riders in King, Snohomish and Pierce counties until the end of 2024, or until a permanent program is approved, and (2) execute further modifications to the agreement with King County that do not change the term or the original amount of the agreement.

Chair Walker noted the presentation was given with the previous action item.

Motion No. M2022-28 was moved by Boardmember Roscoe and seconded by Chair Walker.

Boardmember Frizzell was concerned with other items being extended until end of 2022 but this program was requesting an extension until 2024. She was concerned about committing this length of time when dealing with related items that are going until 2022. CEO Rogoff noted the program was partnered with King County and was in sync in relation to the extension. Ms. Avila-Mooney responded that the agency had kicked off this program at the beginning of the pandemic. But because of COVID-19, there was sufficient information, enrollment, and participation to decide on a more permanent program.

Chair Walker asked if there was financial impact with this motion. Ms. Avila-Mooney replied that there was no impact. When it was originally authorized, monies were set aside and staff does not think it would be spent throughout 2024.

Chair Walker called for a roll call vote.

Ayes

David Baker
Christine Frizzell
Kim Roscoe
Dave Upthegrove
Kristina Walker

Nays

It was carried by unanimous vote of five committee members present that Motion No. M2022-28 be forwarded to the Board with a do-pass recommendation.

Reports to the Committee

REO Metrics Performance Report

Emily Nutsch, Deputy Director of the Business Intelligence Program, provided the report. Ms. Nutsch reminded the committee that certain metrics were available on the Sound Transit website. Those metrics were: system performance tracker, dependability, safety, availability, and ridership.

Russ Arnold, Chief Passenger Experience and Innovation Officer, introduced the newest metric to launch, the Customer Service Data Tool. Marcus Clark, Deputy Director of Passenger Services, informed that the data came from passengers in the form of phone calls, emails, or web vouchers. He reviewed the complaints by mode: 120 out of 186 complaints were for Link, 59 for ST Express and 7 for Sounder. He mentioned briefly that the Tacoma Link historically receives fewer complaints due to the free ride service. Mr. Clark reviewed the different categories of complaints which included operator attitude, mask compliance, operator departure times, and more. One metric that had been charted was the speed in which rider alerts were sent once the passenger team was notified. He noted staff was working on ways to be alerted of events sooner.

Chair Walker asked if rider alerts meant they were delivered via email, social media, or other venue. Mr. Clark answered that the passenger information team would send messages that riders could subscribe to in order to see alerts, which would be delivered via text, email, the ST webpage, or Twitter, a social media platform. Kimberly Farley, Deputy CEO, noted there was an abundance of data on complaints that had been tracked for years and now the agency has the ability to analyze that data and present it to the Committee to make data informed decisions.

Review 2022 Rider Experience and Operations Committee work plan

Chair Walker mentioned the draft committee work plan was given to the committee over the past week and asked for any additional feedback from members on topics they would like to have presented in 2022.

No additional comments were received.

Executive session – None.

Other business – None.

Next meeting

Thursday, May 5, 2022
1:00 to 3:00 p.m.
Virtual meeting held via WebEx

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 2:59 p.m.

Kristina Walker
Rider Experience and Operations Committee Chair

APPROVED on _____, JG.

ATTEST:

Kathryn Flores
Board Administrator