



Summary Minutes

Rider Experience and Operations Committee Meeting June 2, 2022

Call to order

The meeting was called to order at 1:02 p.m. by Chair Walker.

The meeting was available in person and streamed on:

<https://soundtransit.webex.com/soundtransit/onstage/g.php?MTID=e608f67a0c74e57ffefe5bf09e4162ede>

Roll call of members

Chair	Vice Chair
(P) Kristina Walker, Tacoma Councilmember	(P) 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
(P) 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

Monthly Contract Report

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

CEO Report

Interim Chief executive officer Brooke Belman gave the CEO Report.

Link Service Impacts – This week, the agency informed Link riders on what they would need to prepare for intermittent periods of less frequent service and replacement bus service starting in July 2022 while a series of “Future Ready” construction and maintenance activities prepare Sound Transit to more than double the length of the light rail system within the next three years.

These projects would position the light rail system for a transformative period of growth but would require passengers to monitor which periods would require planning ahead for longer travel times. This work was necessary to ensure that the system would be ready for the major expansions in the future. These projects would impact fewer riders now than if it was delayed until after further expansions open.

Throughout this work, there would be intensive focus on passenger communications to ensure they are aware of the changes and can plan their trips accordingly. While the disruptions that this work would cause are unavoidable, staff would work to minimize the impact on service to riders.

Public comment

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

The following people provided in person public comment:

Alex Tsimerman
Marguerite Richard
Honorable Michael Fuller
Ryan Packer

The following people provided verbal public comment:

Mark Frankel – This person was not present during the verbal public comment period.
Joe Kunzler

Chair Walker asked Interim CEO Belman to address the numerous public comment submissions regarding the upcoming Link outages. Interim CEO Belman explained that updates were necessary for maintenance and tie-ins for future projects. The service changes were methodically planned to have the least amount of disruptions. Rider alerts were available on the ST website, via text messages, and through social media so passengers could be alert of any disruptions that may affect them. Suraj Shetty, Executive Director of Operations, added that passenger focus was at the center of decision making and this was the best decision for single seat riding and shortened headways would continue to be reviewed.

Business Items

For Committee final action

April 7, 2022, Rider Experience and Operations Committee meeting minutes

It was moved by Committee Vice Chair Prince, seconded by Boardmember Baker and carried by unanimous consent that the minutes of the April 7, 2022 Rider Experience and Operations Committee meeting be approved as presented.

Motion No. M2022-37: Authorizing the chief executive officer to execute a three-year contract with two one-year options to extend with WSP USA Inc. to provide ridership forecasting support services in the amount of \$3,436,160, for a total authorized contract amount not to exceed \$3,436,160.

Brant Lyerla, Senior Project Manager – Modeler, provided the staff report.

In response to a question from Boardmember Roscoe, Mr. Lyerla responded that the ridership forecasting estimates were used in various planning efforts including financial planning for long term financial plan, establishing estimates for fare revenues, capacity planning, project development and environmental studies, public communications, and for grant applications. Boardmember Roscoe asked if there would be additional consultant expenses after work was completed or did this include the full scope of work. Mr. Lyerla answered the action would cover all needs for planning efforts in terms of ridership forecasting.

Boardmember Juarez arrived at this time.

Motion No. M2022-37 was moved by Committee Vice Chair Prince and seconded by Boardmember Baker.

Chair Walker called for a roll call vote.

Ayes

Nays

David Baker
Christine Frizzell
Debora Juarez
Ed Prince
Kim Roscoe
Dave Upthegrove
Kristina Walker

It was carried by unanimous vote of seven committee members present that Motion No. M2022-37 be approved as presented.

Motion No. M2022-38: Authorizing the chief executive officer to execute a contract modification with International Electronic Machines Corporation to fund the contract through 2026 for maintenance and support of the Electromagnetic Interference and vibration wheel detection system in the amount of \$3,013,658, for a new total authorized contract amount not to exceed \$12,220,038 to provide for the optional Northgate Link Extension technical field support period of five years.

Matthew Scott, Deputy Director of Operations Technology, provided the staff report.

Boardmember Frizzell asked what kind of equipment the University of Washington (UW) is concerned about and whether the agency had been out of compliance range in the past. Mr. Scott answered that the original agreement was put in place because the tunnels ran underground and underneath lab facilities that held sensitive lab equipment. UW's concerns were towards underground vibrations emanating throughout the structures which could lead to the interruption of equipment. The agency had not been out of compliance since the beginning of the agreement but occasionally there were alarms that notified the Link Control Center (LCC) that, in response, would slow train speeds down. It would also work towards preventability efforts, for example: if there was wheel flat detection, that train would be marked for maintenance, additionally it would detect any needs for rail grinding.

Chair Walker asked for more clarification on the action language that stated, "optional Northgate Link Extension technical field support." Mr. Scott explained that when the original contract began in 2013, it was for the U Link extension with an option to extend to Northgate. This action was the option that was in the original contract.

Boardmember Frizzell asked why this was only done with UW if it was a prevention measure for trains and tracks, and if there was anything similar with other parts of the system. Mr. Scott replied there was vibration monitoring that was part of vehicle systems and alignment. This was a specific agreement with the University to specific tolerances which lead to a separate system being required.

Motion No. M2022-38 was moved by Committee Vice Chair Prince and seconded by Boardmember Frizzell.

Chair Walker called for a roll call vote.

Ayes

Nays

David Baker
Christine Frizzell
Debora Juarez
Ed Prince
Kim Roscoe
Dave Upthegrove
Kristina Walker

It was carried by unanimous vote of seven committee members present that Motion No. M2022-38 be approved as presented.

Motion No. M2022-39: Authorizing the chief executive officer to execute a contract with Western Ventures Construction, Inc. to provide construction services for the Operations and Maintenance Facility Central Link Control Center heating, ventilation, and air conditioning replacement in the amount of \$3,200,000.

Tom McDonald, Deputy Director of Operations Projects and Programs, provided the staff report.

Boardmember Roscoe asked why the other bidder was considered nonresponsive. Mr. McDonald replied that there were details in the submittals that were not complete, and more information would be provided to Boardmember Roscoe following the meeting.

Motion No. M2022-39 was moved by Committee Vice Chair Prince and seconded by Boardmember Baker.

Chair Walker called for a roll call vote.

Ayes

Nays

David Baker
Christine Frizzell
Debora Juarez
Ed Prince
Kim Roscoe
Dave Upthegrove
Kristina Walker

It was carried by unanimous vote of seven committee members present that Motion No. M2022-39 be approved as presented.

Motion No. M2022-40: Authorizing the chief executive officer to execute a contract with Talakai Construction LLC to provide construction services for the Auburn Station Pedestrian Bridge Stairs Repair in the amount of \$319,000 with a 5 percent contingency of \$15,950, for a total authorized contract amount not to exceed \$334,950.

Gita Monghate, Project Manager in Operations, provided the staff report.

Motion No. M2022-40 was moved by Committee Vice Chair Prince and seconded by Boardmember Baker.

Chair Walker called for a roll call vote.

Ayes

Nays

David Baker
Christine Frizzell
Debora Juarez
Ed Prince
Kim Roscoe
Dave Upthegrove
Kristina Walker

It was carried by unanimous vote of seven committee members present that Motion No. M2022-40 be approved as presented.

For Recommendation to the Board

Motion No. M2022-41: Authorizing the chief executive officer to execute an amendment to the Commuter Rail South Service Agreement with BNSF Railway Company for a term of five years to allow the sharing of train location data for service between Lakewood and Seattle in support of Sound

Transit's Passenger Information Management System project in an amount not to exceed \$603,080 plus applicable taxes for a new total authorized amount not to exceed \$132,145,427 plus applicable taxes.

Martin Young, Deputy Director of Commuter Rail Operations, provided the staff presentation for this and the following motion.

Motion No. M2022-41 was moved by Committee Vice Chair Prince and seconded by Boardmember Baker.

Boardmember Roscoe expressed that this was a great item for the committee to forward to the Board. The more information on which side of the track to be on and how far the service was, was critical in making more connections.

Chair Walker called for a roll call vote.

Ayes

David Baker
Christine Frizzell
Debora Juarez
Ed Prince
Kim Roscoe
Dave Upthegrove
Kristina Walker

Nays

It was carried by unanimous vote of seven committee members present that Motion No. M2022-41 be forwarded to the Board with a do-pass recommendation.

Motion No. M2022-42: Authorizing the chief executive officer to execute an amendment to the Commuter Rail North Service Agreement with BNSF Railway Company to allow the sharing of train location data for service from Seattle to Everett in support of Sound Transit's Passenger Information Management System project in an amount not to exceed \$53,870 for a new total authorized amount not to exceed \$87,059,434 plus applicable taxes.

Chair Walker noted the presentation was given with the previous motion.

Motion No. M2022-42 was moved by Committee Vice Chair Prince and seconded by Boardmember Frizzell.

Chair Walker called for a roll call vote.

Ayes

David Baker
Christine Frizzell
Debora Juarez
Ed Prince
Kim Roscoe
Dave Upthegrove
Kristina Walker

Nays

It was carried by unanimous vote seven committee members present that Motion No. M2022-42 be forwarded to the Board with a do-pass recommendation.

Reports to the Committee

November 26th Incident follow-up report

Kimberly Farley, Deputy CEO, provided the report. As a reminder, the incident involved a disabled train leaving Husky Stadium which caused suspended service. Lack of communication caused passengers to

self-evacuate the train into the tunnel. With the finalized audit report, the agency developed a full corrective action plan and there were responses to each audit finding. The agency also continued work with King County Metro (KCM) who operated service and established an executive oversight team with KCM to begin quarterly reporting. Audit findings could be grouped into two categories, which were how to implement fixes and process improvements to avoid train disablements and the improvement of communication processes and procedures.

Russ Arnold, Chief Passenger Experience and Innovation Officer, briefed on maintaining track clearance and communication issues that were addressed in the audit. Several actions were taken for track clearance since the last presentation in February 2022. Those actions included field cutting of all protruding rods along the Northgate segment and raised trainline cables on Series 2 vehicles, adjusted vehicle clearance requirements for testing of new alignments, including East Link and Hilltop, analyzing earlier failures to cut the rods during construction, and verifying that Series 1 and Series 2 vehicles have proper clearance along the trackway. Ongoing work for track clearance will include improving quality assurance and verification processes prior to testing and operations on new alignments, reviewing high-risk and non-standard design elements throughout the operating system, analyzing trainline cable design for Series 2 vehicles and exploring change options for long-term trainline cable support, and in coordination with KCM, improving processes and procedures for the escalation and logging of safety issues.

Mr. Arnold reviewed the completed actions taken to improve communications. Those actions included issuing guidance to train operator to prioritize communications with passengers of disabled trains, reinforced existing protocols for expedited staff dispatch, prompt staging of rescue trains and bus bridge implementation, ensured that Link Control Center (LCC) staff were trained and had working remote access to station intercoms with tests prior to large events, and secured staffing commitments for high-ridership events. Ongoing work included reviewing and reinforcing protocols for verifying intercom functionality before any Link vehicle is put in service, adding train signage promoting subscriptions to agency rider alerts, co-locating Sound Transit passenger communications staff and KCM Rail staff in a new LCC, implementing new Passenger Information Management System to enable better station communications, implementing new passenger alert systems, studying options for improved signage and audio messages at stations and onboard trains, and exploring opportunities to improve the utilization of agency's social media channels for communication during incidents.

David Wright, Chief Safety Officer, reviewed the ongoing work on safety oversight. That included improving and expanding tabletop exercises to better incorporate passenger communications elements, procuring technology and developing protocols for rapid, reliable staff notifications and positive verification that staff were responding, working with KCM to improve and revise staff training program and processes and procedures that would guide emergency responses focusing on clarifying roles and responsibilities, and verifying critical systems work, notably before large events.

Next steps were to continue work on corrective action plan implementation, closing out items with the State Safety Oversight team at WSDOT and reporting back to the committee and fall 2022.

Interim CEO Belman added that staff had been busy working on this report and corrective actions to avoid another incident like this.

Chair Walker asked where the public could find the full report. Deputy CEO Farley responded that it could be found on the ST Website in the reports section.

Boardmember Roscoe showed interest in highlighting alternative ways that had been identified in communicating with passengers when there had been interest in communication via social media. As a region, communications in real time would improve passenger experience which in turn could lead to more passengers.

Boardmember Frizzell echoed Boardmember Roscoe and voiced concern on not only pushing this onto the website but hoped for a media blitz to regain trust with riders.

Chair Walker asked if co-locating staff into a new LCC meant hiring more staff or relocating them. Mr. Arnold answered that the new LCC would be located at the Operations and Maintenance Facility which would operate East Link when it becomes online. When the new set-up is complete, the agency's passenger information coordinators would be hired and trained today then put into the LCC with the operating team so they can be present to hear firsthand of any alerts as they happen and deliver alerts through all channels. Mr. Arnold noted they were testing social media alerts and web page alerts, which was being connected to a multi-lingual capable status signage.

Chair Walker asked if that was specific to Link or if it was available across all modes. Mr. Arnold replied that it was specific to Link, and that Tacoma Link had a separate plan to have the same abilities to deliver communications as it expanded.

Chair Walker noted as new services come online, there were existing safety protocols being tested before opening any systems. Chair Walker asked if any of those protocols changed in response to this incident. Deputy CEO Farley answered that they were being changed and updated around the spacing for the train to move unimpeded. Mr. Wright mentioned that removing the rods and raising the train cables immediately reduced the risk chances of this incident happening again. Staff would ensure a more thorough quality check and would include a dynamic envelope quality check moving forward. Interim CEO Belman added that staff would be highly deliberate with the period with when construction ends, testing, and pre-revenue service. Staff would ensure that tasks take place before that period to fully understand the service to catch any issues that may occur.

Chair Walker revisited Boardmember Frizzell's question on getting information through social media and agreed that action should take place and asked what staff were doing to inform the public. Interim CEO Belman reiterated that information would be available on the ST website and would follow-up with the Communications team to see how they could send out information on a larger scale.

REO Metrics Performance Report

Raj Cheriell, Director of Essential Data and Analytics, provided the report. He mentioned that over the next few months, the team was hopeful in providing improved information. Past presentations reviewed numerical data to showcase what passengers were experiencing over the past several months. Over the next few months, focus would be moved away from previous practices, but rather how the data could be used to become a better transit agency to improve passenger experience. The committee would see a limited amount of metrics in order to receive a more in-depth report on the metrics that were presented and subject matter experts on the specific metric would be the presenter.

Mr. Cheriell reviewed the Ridership metric weekday average boardings that was created a few months ago and had since seen significant growth in ridership. He reviewed key pandemic dates, April 2021 saw the beginning of COVID vaccines being rolled-out, June and July 2021 was the height of the Delta variant, the Northgate Link extension emerged out of the Delta variant in October 2021, then the Omicron variant reached Washington state in December 2021, by March 2022 the severe peak of Omicron had passed and he noted with the exception of Northgate opening, ridership had an inverse relationship with the spread and containment of COVID and its variants. Mr. Cheriell noted that the budget and forecast was developed at the height of the Delta variant and there was no way to predict the future impacts of COVID. This was likely why the agency was outpacing the budgeted forecasted by 40 percent. Ridership was at almost 60 percent of pre-COVID and pre-Connect 2020 levels. Over the past 3 months, there had been growth rates which may reflect return to office policies and noted most commuter-oriented service, Sounder, showed sustained growth since January but had not seen growth and was at 30 percent of pre-COVID ridership. Mr. Cheriell pointed out what that meant for Operations, given that service levels were similar to pre-COVID levels, staff believe there was capacity to meet demand for service at this time.

John Carini, Deputy Director of Vertical Conveyances, reviewed the vertical conveyance metric for the month of May 2022. Overall, availability for Link elevators was at 97 percent which met target, Link escalators was at 95 percent which was under target. Non-revenue elevators were above target at 99 percent. ST Express/Sounder/Garage, Downtown Tunnel escalators, and Downtown Tunnel elevators did not reach target.

Mr. Carini reviewed that King Street Station elevators were below target due to 6.99 percent was due to scheduled outages. Each station could be selected on the dashboard to show a deeper dive into the data. The Kent Station/Garage had an elevator outage due to water intrusion; Issaquah Transit Center had a mechanical issue which took a substantial amount of time due to supply chain issues and inoperable parts that showed on site. UW station had an escalator issue due to glass vandalism and an escalator was out of service for two unplanned events due to misuse and a rock that set off a safety issue. Beacon Hill Station had some mechanical issues with two elevators, as well as tile work taking place in front of the elevators. Capitol Hill Station had several escalators having schedule maintenance, another escalator had an incident after being returned to service recently and was in the process of being inspected for safety reasons. Mount Baker Station escalators had issues with one escalator due to two events of misuse – one event went unreported for approximately 26 hours. Northgate Link Station had two escalators experience misuse with a total of 126 hours going unreported. Roosevelt Station had four underperforming escalators. One escalator experienced misuse and mechanical issues, another escalator experienced four events of misuse. Another escalator experienced five events of misuse and one extended mechanical outage.

Boardmember Baker asked for the term misuse to be explained. Mr. Carini explained that misuse was separated from the term vandalism. Vandalism was categorized if a person purposefully breaks the equipment. Misuse was if a person uses equipment in a way it was not intended to be used. As an example, a passenger could ride along the handrail which would set off a safety switch. There could be other events that could get categorized under misuse that didn't include passengers. An example would be if a custodian was to clean the surrounding area and accidentally hit a power button.

The Downtown Tunnel elevators showed that more equipment was back in service compared to February 2022. Two elevators were currently out of service, but one was expected to receive parts to return back to service. The other elevator, located in Westlake Station, would remain inactive for longer due to a biohazard that fried the operating panel and would take a significant amount of time to receive a replacement part due to supply chain issues. Downtown Tunnel escalators dipped slightly since March 2022 but has continued to slowly increase towards a target availability of 98 percent.

Chair Walker asked about communication with public on these outages; if it was planned, was there signage on when it would be reopened or if it there was a location on the website that addressed long-term outages and when facilities would return to service. Mr. Carini answered that it was located in the rider alert section of the website and updated constantly throughout the day. Chair Walker asked if there was physical signage at the conveyances that lead passengers to the website. Mr. Carini responded that it was dependent on the amount of time the equipment was out of service. Long term outages had stickers placed on the doors.

Boardmember Roscoe asked in situations where outages went unreported for long lengths of time, had there been identified strategies such as security cameras to reduce the time frame of those reports. Mr. Carini answered that it was understood that a human element limits the acknowledgement of outages. He noted the team was piloting a new hardware/software solution that would show live data on rides per day or when equipment was out of service. The pilot would run throughout 2022 and depending on the success, would be implemented into escalators and elevators in 2023.

Boardmember Baker asked if there were other ways to be notified about elevator outages without accessing the internet. Mr. Carini answered that a rider alert would be activated, and alerts would be sent through the internet but also on the trains itself so when passengers get to the destination they

would know when a piece of equipment is out of service. Deputy CEO Farley wanted to acknowledge that the system was imperfect and there was work that still needed to be done.

Marcus Clark, Deputy Director of Passenger Services, provided the report on the Customer Service metric. Customer feedback saw a reduction in complaints from January 2021 to May 2022. He broke down the categories of complaints and the top complaint was on general disturbance followed by general security presence, then operator attitude or demeanor, late operations, then buses that didn't show up. Link mode complaints were led by general disturbance and general security presence, followed by elevators/escalators, then alerts and announcements on board by operators, lastly operations. He noted security was short staffed. There was a pilot project in conjunction with KCM to provide mental health social service referrals to individuals on the system – the goal was to get the pilot and staff started by Q4 2022.

Executive session – None.

Other business – None.

Next meeting

Chair Walker announced staff would work with Committee members to find the date and time for the next meeting.

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 3:02 p.m.

ATTEST:

Kristina Walker
Rider Experience and Operations Committee Chair

Kathryn Flores
Board Administrator

APPROVED on _____, JG.