



Summary Minutes

Rider Experience and Operations Committee Meeting August 4, 2022

Call to order

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

The meeting was available in person and streamed on:

<https://soundtransit.webex.com/soundtransit/j.php?MTID=md83a2b1f65cb39761713715fc77f1ab9>

Roll call of members

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

Board Members	
(A) 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

Monthly Contract Report

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

CEO Report

Interim CEO Brooke Belman gave the CEO Report.

Update on Future Ready

She reported that phase one of the Columbia City Tile Replacement ended 4 days earlier than planned, which meant the return to normal Link service was able to take place sooner. The planning stage was now in process for the next phase kick off on August 19, 2022. Trains would again be running every 10 minutes between Northgate and Stadium stations and every 20 minutes between Stadium and Angle Lake stations. This work would finish by September 1, 2022, before the Seahawks and Huskies seasons begin.

Coordination continued and Sound Transit was exploring all options for increased efficiency regarding Downtown Seattle Transit Tunnel overhead catenary system sectioning, in November, and Tukwila overhead catenary system repairs, tentative for Fall.

Link riders were previously informed that preparation was needed for intermittent periods of less frequent service and replacement bus service moving forward while a series of "Future Ready"

construction and maintenance activities prepared 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 was ready for the major expansions ahead. These projects would impact far fewer riders now than if the delayed was after further expansions opened.

Throughout this work, intensive focus would be on passenger communications to ensure they were aware of the changes and could plan their trips accordingly. While the disruptions that this work would cause were unavoidable, the agency would work hard to minimize the impact on service to riders. The result would be a safe and improved system ready for the next phase of growth. Updates would be provided on these projects in the weeks and months to come.

Tacoma Link Crossover

Starting August 1, 2022, Sound Transit suspended all T-Line service for approximately 45 days to complete the final major construction item for the Hilltop Tacoma Link Extension. During this time, Walsh will perform the 9th and Commerce cutover, connecting the existing line to the new extension. The work during this service suspension includes utility relocation, track and pole/wiring installation, ADA curb ramps, roadway restoration, and testing and commissioning. The work will also relocate the current Theater District Station to what was now Commerce Street Station. Commerce Street Station will be renamed to Theater District once service resumes.

During the shutdown, traffic detours will be in place, with crosswalk and pedestrian access impacted as well. For the duration of the closure, there will be a bus shuttle providing service to the corridor – similar to what occurred for during Summer of 2021 T-Line closure.

Tacoma Link staff will be out in the corridor answering riders' questions and helping people access the bus shuttle service. Sound Transit conducted outreach to inform riders, businesses and stakeholders Downtown. This included press releases, website updates, rider alerts, signage on trains and at stations, as well as traditional in-person engagement with businesses/residents.

While disruptive, this is one of the last major pieces of construction and is necessary for trains to eventually start testing on the new extension.

Public comment

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

There were no written, in-person, or virtual public comments submitted.

Business Items

For Committee final action

July 15, 2022, Rider Experience and Operations Committee meeting minutes

It was moved by Committee Vice Chair Prince, seconded by Boardmember Roscoe and carried by unanimous consent that the minutes of the July 15, 2022 Rider Experience and Operations Committee meeting be approved as presented.

For Recommendation to the Board

Motion No. M2022-65: Approving the submittal of the Transit Development Plan 2022-2027 and 2021 Annual Report to the Washington State Department of Transportation.

Committee Vice Chair Prince stated no comments were received at the August 4, 2022 public hearing on this item.

Michael Couvrette, Deputy Director of Service Planning, provided the staff report.

Motion No. M2022-65 was moved by Committee Vice Chair Prince and seconded by Boardmember Roscoe.

Chair Walker called for a roll call vote.

Ayes

Christine Frizzell
Ed Prince
Kim Roscoe
Dave Upthegrove
Kristina Walker

Nays

It was carried by unanimous vote of five committee members present that Motion No. M2022-65 be forwarded to the Board with a do-pass recommendation.

Motion No. M2022-66: Approving the Title VI service monitoring results prior to the submittal of Sound Transit's 2022 Title VI Program to the Federal Transit Administration.

Nicole Hill, Deputy Director of Equity and Social Responsibility, provided the presentation.

Boardmember Frizzell voiced concerns about Pierce County's lack of operators and asked if the county was offering incentive bonuses that were on par with King and Snohomish Counties. Dave Turissini, Deputy Director of Bus and Paratransit, responded that all three partner agencies were offering various levels of sign-on bonuses.

Boardmember Roscoe commented on the benefit of the pandemic's impacts to highlight areas of improvement within the agency.

Chair Walker asked if a prior motion, that took place in March 2022, related to updating bike parking systems was implemented using this analysis and if there were guidelines on when to use this analysis or if it was handled on a case-by-case basis. Alex Krieg, Director of Access and Integration, replied that these findings would be used to inform the distribution of future lockers, for example, the lockers located in the Downtown Seattle Transit Tunnel.

Motion No. M2022-66 was moved by Committee Vice Chair Prince and seconded by Boardmember Roscoe.

Chair Walker called for a roll call vote.

Ayes

Christine Frizzell
Ed Prince
Kim Roscoe
Dave Upthegrove
Kristina Walker

Nays

It was carried by unanimous vote of five committee members present that Motion No. M2022-66 be forwarded to the Board with a do-pass recommendation.

Motion No. M2022-67: Approving the submittal of Sound Transit's Title VI Program to the Federal Transit Administration.

Nicole Hill, Deputy Director of Equity and Social Responsibility, provided the presentation.

Boardmember Roscoe wanted to clarify if the vertical conveyance issues were considered a finding that would be reported and if any immediate action was planned or if that didn't carry urgency for remedy under this Title VI submission. Ms. Hill confirmed the vertical conveyances were part of the findings and plans for action in the near term were scheduled and staff would be report back to the full Board on mitigation strategies. Boardmember Roscoe asked if the Board had access to the planned engagement with other agencies. Deputy CEO Farley responded two issues were potentially being muddled. Ms. Farley explained the vertical conveyances were currently being upgraded and that was a remedy to a finding and the policy spoke to how amenities could be similar across the stations. Boardmember Roscoe appreciated the clarification.

Chair Walker asked if there was an update on vertical conveyances planned. Deputy CEO Farley and John Carini, Deputy Director of Vertical Conveyances, replied an update was scheduled for the Committee in the following months.

Motion No. M2022-67 was moved by Committee Vice Chair Prince and seconded by Boardmember Roscoe.

Chair Walker called for a roll call vote.

Ayes

Christine Frizzell
Ed Prince
Kim Roscoe
Dave Upthegrove
Kristina Walker

Nays

It was carried by unanimous vote of five committee members present that Motion No. M2022-67 be forwarded to the Board with a do-pass recommendation.

Resolution No. R2022-22: (1) Confirming the inspection rate and staffing level for the permanent Fare Ambassador program based on the pilot program initiated in August 2021, (2) updating the financial plan assumption through 2046 to match current staffing assumptions, and (3) directing staff to provide information on the effectiveness of the program by July 2023.

Sandee Ditt, Fare Engagement Manager, and Emily Walton Percival, Manager of Financial Planning, Analysis and Budget, provided the presentation.

Boardmember Roscoe asked when the next budget, or financial action, would come to the Committee and full Board. Ryan Fisher, Deputy Executive Director of Financial Planning, Analysis and Budget, responded the proposed budget would be presented to the Finance and Audit Committee first in October 2022, followed by subsequent committees then full board in November 2022 and approval of the budget would take place in December 2022. Boardmember Roscoe requested the presentation be updated with visuals of the fare zone changes and ambassador uniforms.

Chair Walker commented on how the fare ambassador team was seen more as transit ambassadors. Ms. Ditt agreed and noted the teams attributes outside of checking fares.

Chair Walker asked about potential challenges in employing this team given the current employment market and if staff had a plan of action. Ms. Ditt answered the next cohort of teams were currently being staffed and had accomplished the first mark, starting with 28 employees. She noted they would work with the agency's HR department to look for other venues to encourage applications.

Chair Walker wanted to clarify what the committee was voting for. Interim CEO Belman explained the action would confirm the compliance rate of the program, update financial projections for resourcing the program, and commit to the next data point presented to the Board. Chair Walker asked if reports would

be provided in writing moving forward. Ms. Ditt responded the team would return with program updates on a quarterly basis whereas staffing assumptions and inspection rates would be reported in July 2023.

Resolution No. R2022-22 was moved by Committee Vice Chair Prince and seconded by Boardmember Roscoe.

Chair Walker called for a roll call vote.

Ayes

Christine Frizzell
Ed Prince
Kim Roscoe
Dave Upthegrove
Kristina Walker

Nays

It was carried by unanimous vote of five committee members present that Resolution No. R2022-22 be forwarded to the Board with a do-pass recommendation.

Reports to the Committee

REO Metrics Performance Report

Raj Cheriell, Director of Essential Data and Analytics, and John Carini, Director of Vertical Conveyance, provided the report.

Mr. Cheriell reviewed ridership and noted the inclusion of additional data for monthly boardings by mode. The new information provided average weekday boardings and the change in average weekday ridership from the previous month and also versus 2019 data. He reviewed data from June 2022 versus June 2019. Ridership in June 2022 reached 2.18 million boardings, June 2019 had 2.12 million boardings. This was the first instance exceeding pre-covid ridership from the corresponding month. The Northgate Link opening played a large role in these boardings. Mr. Cheriell noted that Sound Transit has automated passenger counters (APCs) installed in a portion of its vehicles. Some APCs were new and in the testing period for accuracy. Ridership was estimated using data taken from APCs which was based on a sample of vehicle trips. Over a period, these samples were large enough to create an accurate measure of ridership with low margin of error. However, basing ridership on estimates on a small sample of vehicle trips on a single day result in a margin of error that was significantly larger. Day to day data could vary significantly based on that. Staff added the ability to look into granular data, such as daily data, to offer deeper insight that monthly data does not provide. Observing daily data showed growth in weekend ridership.

Mr. Cheriell noted another added feature to the dashboard was the Passenger Survey results for each metric. A presentation on these results would be provided to the Committee within the coming months. He also reviewed the National Transit Data (NTD) Peer Comparison Tool that compares metrics across services in the nation. Station, capital expenses, and employees were a recent addition to data points for the NTD tool.

Boardmember Roscoe was appreciative to the ridership data that was being collected.

Mr. Carini reviewed the data informed decisions regarding vertical conveyances. He noted the vertical conveyances team used the gathered data on outages to categorize them. An example being environmental outages which could equate to debris, such as ice melting in the winter or leaves in the fall. The Northgate Station escalators were experiencing trends in environmental outages and was found to specifically be due to rocks. There was an increase in outages from November to December 2021 which lead staff to question where the rocks were being sourced. The team inspected the station and saw the front area of the bus station had tree wells that were filled with gravel. Due to the tree wells being in the line of travel, passengers were picking up rocks in their shoes then depositing them into the

escalators. The vertical conveyances team reached out to the agency’s landscaping team and they quickly deployed staff to mitigate situation by removing rocks and wells. The long-term solution was a water permeable surface that couldn’t be chipped and caught in the vertical conveyances. After those mitigations were implemented, there was significant decreases in environmental outages at the Northgate Station. Mr. Carini noted the collaborative efforts and usage of the data to reduce these events.

Executive session – None.

Other business – None.

Next meeting

Thursday, September 1, 2022
1:00 to 3:00 p.m.
Ruth Fisher Boardroom and Virtually via WebEx

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 2:26 p.m.

ATTEST:

Kristina Walker
Rider Experience and Operations Committee Chair

Kathryn Flores
Board Administrator

APPROVED on _____, JG.