



# Summary Minutes

## Rider Experience and Operations Committee Meeting December 7, 2023

### Call to order

The meeting was called to order at 1:00 p.m. by Chair Walker and was available for viewing in person and online.

The meeting was recorded and can be found at <https://www.soundtransit.org/get-to-know-us/board-directors/livestream-video>.

### Roll call of members

Chair	Vice Chair
(P) Kristina Walker, Tacoma Deputy Mayor	(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 Council Chair
(A) Debora Juarez, Seattle Council President	(A) Peter von Reichbauer, King County Councilmember

Alejandro Monzon, Board Relations Specialist, announced that a quorum of the committee was present at roll call.

### Report of the Chair

#### Monthly Contract Reports

The monthly contract reports were included in members' packets for review.

#### Recognizing departing Committee members

Chair Walker thanked Board members Baker and Juarez for their service on the Rider Experience and Operations Committee. Both were members of the Operations Committee during the entirety of their tenure on the Sound Transit Board.

### CEO Report

CEO Julie Timm provided the CEO Report.

Lynnwood Link Service Planning - The agency continued to work with Community Transit and King County Metro on opportunities to improve transit service in the corridor through added bus service as well as opportunities for more light rail capacity in the 1 Line corridor. This enabled the agency to deliver reliable and expanded services.

Passenger Information Management System (PIMS) signs update - Staff was advancing the next phase of the PIMs project and began replacing the legacy digital signs on the 1 Line with new, modern displays capable of a much-improved passenger information experience. Riders would see the first new signs at Columbia City and Othello stations completed later this month, followed by ongoing work through 2024 and

into 2025. The majority of this work was currently being planned to be completed during non-revenue hours which was causing the extended implementation schedule; however, the team was actively working together to see where this work could be bundled with other required state of good repair service disruptions to accelerate delivery.

ST Express Service Levels - Earlier this fall, the Board adopted a “rail only” service plan for 2024 and noted staff would return to the Board in early 2024 with ST Express recommendations using the latest operator availability data from agency partners.

Each of the three partners who operate service on the agency’s behalf, King County Metro, Community Transit and Pierce Transit, had different financial and operating constraints. Community Transit operated Sound Transit service through a third-party provider and King County Metro made substantial service reductions in September to their service which resulted in performance improvements for Sound Transit performance. Pierce Transit, however, had been challenged primarily by ongoing staffing challenges and had now provided Sound Transit with a service reduction target of approximately 10 percent.

The reductions would be implemented at the March 2024 service change and was anticipated to trigger major service changes, which would require Board authorization of the new service levels to decrease daily missed trips and to increase reliability of service until service could be fully restored in collaboration with the operating partners.

## **Public comment**

Chair Walker announced that public comment would be accepted via email to [emailtheboard@soundtransit.org](mailto:emailtheboard@soundtransit.org), in person, and would also be accepted virtually.

The following people provided written comments:

Stephen Fesler	Prem Subedi
Jacob Tukel	Irving Avila
Marcel Mayer	Dylan Bray
Nick	Tyler Simpson
Steve	Unnamed commenters
Daniel	Bill Hirt
Luke Distelhorst	
Paul Malmsten	

The following people provided virtual comments:

Matthew Sutherland  
Joe Kunzler  
Zakariya Osman  
Stephen Fesler  
Cameron

There were no in-person comments submitted.

## **Business Items**

### **For Committee final action**

November 2, 2023, Rider Experience and Operations Committee meeting minutes

**It was moved by Board member Baker, seconded by Board member Roscoe and carried by the unanimous vote of all committee members present that the minutes of the November 2, 2023, Rider Experience and Operations Committee meeting be approved as presented.**

Motion No. M2023-103: Recommending that the Enhancement, State of Good Repair, Administrative and Transit Operations portions of the Proposed 2024 Budget and Transit Improvement Plan reviewed by the Rider Experience and Operations Committee be forwarded by the Finance and Audit Committee to the Board with a do-pass recommendation.

Ryan Fisher, Deputy Executive Director of Financial Planning, Analysis and Budget, Jenny Stephens, Director of Financial Planning, Analysis and Budget and CFO John Henry provided the staff presentation.

**It was moved by Board member Baker , seconded by Board member Frizzell and carried by the unanimous vote of all committee members present that Motion No. M2023-103 be approved as presented.**

Motion No. M2023-104: Authorizing the chief executive officer to execute a five-year lease agreement with The Rescue Mission with five, one-year options to extend for Sound Transit property located at 405 S Tacoma Way, Tacoma, Washington at no cost.

Faith Roland, Director of Real Property, provided the staff presentation.

Board member Roscoe asked about the property's long-term plans. Ms. Roland explained the parking lot area was not needed currently but if the agency planned to expand for the Sounder service or use it for a temporary purpose then the agency would have the ability to proceed.

**It was moved by Board member Baker , seconded by Board member Frizzell and carried by the unanimous vote of all committee members present that Motion No. M2023-104 be approved as presented.**

#### **For Recommendation to the Board**

Committee Vice Chair Prince joined at this time.

Resolution No. R2023-37: (1) Adopting new rates of fare and fare structure for Link light rail service effective with the opening of 1 Line extension to Lynnwood City Center Station; and (2) superseding the rates of fare established in Resolution No. R2023-05 with the rates of fare established by this action as shown in Attachment A.

Alex Krieg, Director of Access, Integration and Station Area Planning, provided the staff presentation.

Board member Roscoe shared support for staff's recommendations and looked forward to further discussion at the December 2023 Board meeting. Board member Frizzell agreed with the proposal of receiving report outs on fare capping and a fare forum across the region.

Chair Walker noted staff would return in July 2024 to report on fare capping and asked whether that meant fare capping could be rolled out at that time. Mr. Krieg replied that timeline was not feasible, and the intent was to provide the potential timeline given the complexities of decision making amongst the Board members and other stakeholders.

Chair Walker acknowledged that Rider Experience and Operations Committee Vice Chair Prince presided over the public hearing that was held on November 16, 2023, and Chair Walker provided a summary of the comments. Matthew Sutherland shared support towards a flat fare structure while continuing the use of equity analysis before decisions were made and having the agency support regional and publicly accessible spaces where fare policies and structures can be discussed. Rohith asked if the agency had considered zone-based fares, which Mr. Krieg responded stating that the Board interest in flat fares and the regional discussions to move away from zone-based fares were both factors that led to the current fare options under consideration.

**It was moved by Board member Baker , seconded by Committee Vice Chair Prince that Resolution No. R2023-37 be forwarded to the Board as presented.**

Committee Chair Walker called for discussion on which option to include in Resolution No. R2023-37 for the adult passenger fare for Link light rail.

Board member Roscoe voiced interest in having the Committee recommend the \$3.00 flat fare adult rate to the Board.

Board member Frizzell favored \$3.25 with the mindset of equity and the organization's financial security. She recommended forwarding the motion without Committee recommendation to the full Board for further discussion.

Board member Upthegrove voiced his thoughts towards the equity lens of this action and supported making decisions towards current equitable states with the understanding that changes can be made in the future. He noted the Committee should provide recommendation to the full Board given this committee has participated in robust conversations regarding the topic and the full Board was equipped to decide on another option after discussion.

Chair Walker shared support for the \$3.00 flat fare adult rate to the Board. Chair Walker agreed with Board member Upthegrove in that this was the lesser increase to fares for riders and this committee was focused on improving passenger experience. She noted staff would return in six months to discuss the studies of implementing the new fare and would be given another opportunity to consider changes to fares.

**An amendment to insert a \$3.00 flat fare as the adult rate for Link light rail to Resolution No. R2023-37 was moved by Board member Upthegrove, seconded by Board member Baker and carried by the majority vote of all committee members present, with Committee member Frizzell voting in the minority.**

Chair Walker called for a roll call vote on Resolution No. R2023-37 as amended.

**Ayes**

David Baker  
Ed Prince  
Kim Roscoe  
Dave Upthegrove  
Kristina Walker

**Nays**

Christine Frizzell

**It was carried by the majority vote of all committee members present that Resolution No. R2023-37 as amended be forwarded to the Board with a do-pass recommendation.**

Motion No. M2023-105: Authorizing the chief executive officer to execute a three-year labor agreement with the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 46, covering Facilities Specialists, Senior Facilities Specialists and Electricians in the Operations Department beginning January 1, 2024 and expiring on December 31, 2026.

Chris Elwell, Acting Executive Director of Labor Relations, provided the staff presentation.

**It was moved by Board member Baker , seconded by Committee Vice Chair Prince and carried by the unanimous vote of all committee members present that Motion No. M2023-105 be forwarded to the Board with a do-pass recommendation.**

**Reports to the Committee**

REO Metrics Presentation – Operations and Safety

Russ Arnold, Deputy CEO Chief Service Delivery Officer, and David Wright, Chief Safety Officer, provided the presentation. Mr. Arnold provided an update to T Link ridership which current data showed a significant increase, with average weekday ridership increasing about 45 percent.

The operations report covered the month of September 2023. Numerous maintenance and construction projects during August 2023 had a significant negative impact on ridership and staff expected the same results of the schedule reductions from continued single tracking in early September 2023. The schedule reductions showed approximately 20,000 fewer boardings than compared to the later half of September 2023 – which at times saw over 100,000 boardings.

For ST Express, Community Transit achieved 95 percent on-time performance which was well above the 85 percent target. King County Metro was also above target. Pierce Transit continued to fall below target while currently at 72 percent on-time performance. Mr. Arnold reiterated that every Pierce Transit route, except for 594, trended to improve from July to August.

As for Sounder delays and cancelations, they were not near the historical high levels and staff was investigating ways to ensure those numbers do not reach those levels. A majority of delays and cancelations were due to emergency services, however only two of the twelve were incidents. Two of the twelve delayed and canceled trips were due to police activity in Tacoma and the second being a stricken vehicle on Spokane Street. There were nine mechanical delays but only four incidents, such as main engine failure which impacted the five following trains.

Mr. Arnold asked for feedback on which metrics committee members would like to see in a more in-depth presentation. He also shared the system performance tracker would be revamped to add granularity to existing metrics and upgrade visuals to improve user experience.

Mr. Wright reviewed the detailed security call data for ST Express bus, T Link in Tacoma, and the 1 Line from January through October 2023. The top six call types to show an overall picture of the security environment included assault (verbal or physical), biohazard (which described unsanitary acts on transit property), graffiti/vandalism (tagging or destroying property), medical (part of what the safety team does was medical checks on people that may appear to be asleep on Sound Transit property and that could sometimes result in medical assistance being needed), trespass (entering a restricted area such as the tunnel), and unlawful transit conduct (engages in other conduct that was inconsistent with Sound Transit standards of conduct such as loud music, smoking, drinking, etc.).

There was an increase in trespassing in September and October 2023 which was primarily due to individuals attempting to access tunnel bores and stations that had been closed at the end of revenue service day. Staff believe this could possibly be a seasonal trend.

Mr. Wright noted that the overall number of incidents has increased due to the increase in security staffing. More staff equated to more coverage. He shared a visual breakdown of security incidents for ST Express bus, T Line, and 1 Line. The top stations were Tukwila International Boulevard station (TIBS), Westlake, and Northgate. TIBS had the largest number of assaults and had been a station known for issues. Staff performed an analysis and responded that the specific location always saw a concentration of activity around it and the station was a shared facility with King County Metro and the buses that service the station were high-use bus routes.

In response, Sound Transit security would be staffed full time, with an additional officer, which would cause a spike in incidents and events being reported. Trees and vegetation were removed that concealed the west stairwell visibility from security. For years, which had been blocking the exterior lighting which provided an area to loiter and participate in drug activity. Two mobile camera trailers were placed next to the sidewalk which had worked as a deterrent and gave the Police department additional camera coverage. The agency had also worked with Tukwila Police and a fence was assembled in front of the station to deter subjects walking from the nearby gas station to conduct hand to hand drug sales which made it inconvenient for people to cut across the street in the middle of the road and use the sidewalks and crosswalks.

T Link had an overall low recorded incident rate. The Hilltop Link Extension opened in September 2023 and increased the service area and the ridership. While the increases appeared significant through the

visual representation, the difference between June and October 2023 was due to a total of nine unlawful transit conduct calls. The 25th Street station was the highest incident station on the T-Link alignment, which was still a very low incident station with 18 events recorded between January and the end of October 2023 compared to 568 events recorded at Westlake Station during the same period.

The unlawful transit conduct was broken down to highlight system-wide smoking incidents from May through October 2023. Entrance ways and elevators were the prime locations for smoking, with bus platform areas (such as TIBS, Northgate, International District station) also having a high occurrence rate. Mr. Wright shared a table that aligned with how the agency was deploying security resources across the system.

Unlawful transit conduct was an observable violation, meaning that the incident was only reported if security staff was there to report the infraction. Crime activity data provided accurate representation of security presence in the field to report the incidents, but this worked hand in hand as a deterrent, where incidents may have decreased due to security presence.

Chair Walker referenced how T Link ridership had not reached pre-pandemic levels and asked staff to provide pre-pandemic levels. Mr. Arnold replied that the increase in September 2023 was about 32 percent under 2019 ridership levels.

Board member Roscoe appreciated staff's transparency noting the increased security staffing levels would equate to an increase in reported security data and asked whether that information was included in the presentation and reports for passenger awareness, such as in the form of a footnote. Mr. Wright committed on including that information for the public.

Board member Frizzell echoed Board member Roscoe's comments and suggested that information be placed at the forefront of presentations rather than as a footnote.

#### Passenger Impact Portfolio Plan (Future Ready Work)

Pamela Wrenn, Deputy Project Director of Service Delivery, provided the report. The rail replacement and bond box repair work would begin January 13 to February 4, 2024. The bond box repair would fix signal boxes embedded in the tracks that were damaged by joint bus-rail operation. Rail replacement near Westlake station work would replace worn rail, resulting in reduced long-term wear on equipment and better passenger experience. The entire northbound tunnel bore would close to allow contractor access and make the bond boxes electrically safe to work. The southbound bore would also be closed, but during the weekends only and would be a full tunnel closure.

This work was being planned to combine with piggyback projects. Those projects consisted of Passenger Information Management System (PIMS) sign and cable upgrades, PIMS-associated static sign upgrades, International District station bird mitigation, Westlake station ventilation shaft work, Emergency tunnel system maintenance, continued Eastlink plinth repairs, and the cleaning of artwork at Westlake and International District stations.

The rail replacement and bond box repair work would take 23 days and require full tunnel closure from Capitol Hill to SODO stations on four weekends and have single tracking during weekdays. During the weekend closures, trains would run every 10-15 minutes below between Angle Lake to SODO stations and between Capitol Hill to Northgate stations. Link bus shuttles between SODO and Capitol Hill would run every 10-15 minutes. The bus bridge was committed by King County Metro. During the weekday closures, every other trip would require a transfer at UW or Stadium station to continue through single track operation. Northgate to UW station and Stadium to Angle Lake station would experience 13-15 minute headways. There would be a total of 26-30 minute headways through the closure.

The project was communicated by coordinating with partner agencies through a customized passenger care plan. There were blog post series, targeted paid social media ads in multiple languages, and work towards accurate transit data and trip planning during the reduced service. Outreach through

accessibility stakeholders, key jurisdiction and organizational stakeholders, and any impacted business such as those adjacent to Westlake station also occurred.

Other communication and support efforts included having over 700 volunteer staff ambassador shifts at key locations throughout the service disruption. Comprehensive temporary signage was put in place, platform signage, audio/visual messages, etc. played rotating messages about the disruptions, and onboard head-signs and operator announcements conveyed train destination to help riders board the correct train.

The electromagnetic interference (EMI) hanger replacement project would take place over one evening of late-night and early morning single tracking Saturday night to Sunday morning in late February 2024. This work would continue EMI replacement between University District and UW stations and would bundle conduit and cable at the University District station southbound platform. Other piggyback projects were being explored.

The agency kicked off focused work to integrate Passenger Impact Portfolio Plan (PIPP) activity as a regular business function. Their first effort was to focus on disruption timeline expectations and report scalable severity. The aim was to improve processes and procedures during focused, facilitated workshops in the next few months and incorporate lessons learned and ongoing process improvement.

Next steps for the team included finalizing all aspects of planning for the January 13 to February 4, 2024 impact, hold a dress rehearsal for in-event coordination, continue planning other Q1 2024 events, finalize PIPP event levels and timeline associate with each, continue planning East Link systems tie-in for Q3 2024, and continue to deliver monthly reporting on service disruptions to this committee.

Board member Frizzell referenced the I-90 project and asked if the plinth work was on schedule. CEO Timm responded it was on schedule and would typically be reported out at the System Expansion Committee. CEO Timm shared those projects were advancing in construction despite ongoing challenges and the rates of the plinths being replaced was progressing quickly and workers discovered a few more that needed replacing. The project was on time based on staff schedule but behind based on contractor schedule.

**Executive session – None.**

**Other business**

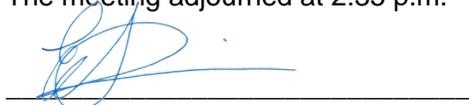
Board member Baker recognized a few vertical conveyance locations that were at 100 percent operations. These were listed in the REO Metrics Report material but not presented during the meeting.

**Next meeting**

Thursday, January 18, 2024  
1:00 to 3:00 p.m.  
Ruth Fisher Boardroom and Virtually via WebEx

**Adjourn**

The meeting adjourned at 2:35 p.m.



Ed Prince  
Rider Experience and Operations Committee Vice Chair

ATTEST:



Kathryn Flores  
Board Administrator

APPROVED on January 18, 2024, JG.