

Motion No. M2020-23

A motion of the Board of the Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority temporarily suspending the Board's rules to (a) require all public comment be submitted remotely via email ~~or US mail~~, and (b) remove the requirement that meetings be held at the regular location, which will allow meetings to be held virtually while the state of emergency related to COVID-19 remains. This motion is to become effective immediately and remain in place until the state of emergency related to COVID-19 is lifted.

Background

On February 29, 2020, Governor Jay Inslee issued a proclamation that a State of Emergency exists in all counties in the state of Washington due to COVID-19. King County also issued an emergency declaration on March 2, 2020. In addition, the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Washington State Department of Health have warned the public to take precautions due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Chief among the recommended precautions is to limit person to person interactions.

The rules adopted by the Sound Transit Board in 2018 state that the “public comment period is an opportunity for members of the public to address the Board or committee.” The rules also state that “individuals who wish to speak must add their name and the item they wish to speak about to the public comment sign-in sheet before the meeting begins.”

The rules also state that a meeting “may be held by phone or video conference if it is determined by the appropriate chair that it is infeasible to meet in person due to an emergency”, and that “meetings held via phone or video conference take place at the regularly scheduled location and time unless a special meeting has been called.” The rules also require that provisions be made to “allow members of the public to hear all discussion and actions.”

On March 11, 2020, following the expansion of public health measures on COVID-19 limiting large gatherings, the Board has allowed members of the public to submit comments electronically by sending them to emailtheboard@soundtransit.org. Comments received up to one hour before the meeting are provided to Board members electronically during the meeting. Comments received after that deadline are provided to Board members after the meeting.

Since that time, Governor Inslee has barred gatherings larger than 50 people, and the CDC has recommended that people not gather in sizes larger than 10 people. On March 23, 2020 Governor Inslee issued a proclamation, which imposed a Stay Home – Stay Healthy Order requiring all people in Washington State stay in their home or place of residence except to conduct or participate in essential activities and/or for employment in essential business services. On March 24, 2020 Governor Inslee issued a proclamation that prohibits public agencies from holding public meetings unless they can be held virtually.

Temporarily suspending the rules to receive public comments remotely via email or US mail, and removing the requirement that meetings be held at the regular location, which will allow meetings to be held virtually, will encourage adherence to public health advisories, as well as the Governor's Stay Home Stay – Healthy Order, while maintaining the public's ability to hear all discussions and actions and provide comments to the Board while COVID-19 ~~restrictions~~precautions are in effect.

Motion

It is hereby moved by the Board of the Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority that the Board's rules are temporarily suspended to (a) require all public comment to be submitted remotely via email ~~or US mail~~ and (b) remove the requirement that meetings be held at the regular location, which will allow meetings to be held virtually while the state of emergency related to COVID-19 remains. This motion is to become effective immediately and remain in place until the state of emergency related to COVID-19 is lifted.

APPROVED by the Board of the Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority at a regular meeting thereof held on _____.

Kent Keel
Board Chair

Attest:

Kathryn Flores
Board Administrator