Customer Restrooms

Briefing to the Board of Directors

9/26/19
Why we are here

• No action to be taken by the Board today

• Interim briefing to present results to date and obtain Board Member input on any additional information needed in advance of reviewing the policy on customer restrooms
This presentation will cover

• Summary of past Motions
• Current and planned restroom locations
• Current restroom design standards
• Maintenance and security challenges
• Initial customer experience and equity considerations
• Proposed wayfinding improvements
• Summary of presentation
• Next steps
Summary of Board Motion M2019-31

Staff has been asked to:

• Review and propose updates to Motion M98-67
• Present low and no-cost opportunities for customer access to restrooms at future light rail stations
• Evaluate and recommend opportunities including wayfinding, requiring leased retail spaces to provide access, and on-site restrooms.
• Provide suggestions for Board actions to expand restroom access
• Consider budget and proposed implementation plan
Motion M98-67

Restroom locations cited

- Northgate Transit Center, Bellevue
- Transit Center, King/Union Station,
- Everett Sounder Station, Tacoma Dome
- Sounder Station
- On board Sound trains
- Additional restrooms may be provided when funding, staffing and maintenance arrangements can be made that do not affect Sound Transit’s goal to meet budgets and schedules and in coordination with local jurisdictions
11 stations with restrooms

- Decisions have been made on a project by project basis
- In addition to locations cited in M98-67, restrooms are now located at
  - Auburn Sounder Station
  - Sumner Sounder Station
  - Federal Way Transit Center
  - SeaTac Airport Link Station
  - Tukwila Link Station
  - Bellevue Transit Center
Planned locations by 2024

18 stations with restrooms

- Lynnwood Link Extension
- Federal Way Link Extension

- Locations have been determined on a project-by-project basis and in conjunction with local jurisdictions
Current design standards

Design Standards for Public Restrooms at Sound Transit Facilities

• In the Fare Paid Zone where possible
• Two individual unisex ADA restrooms
• Video surveillance outside restroom doors
• Customers must contact Security via remote access
• Highly durable and maintainable fixtures and finishes
• Only open during transit operation hours
• Renovated restrooms follow these standards
Convenience and challenges

A balancing act

• Agency challenges
• Customer benefits
• Finding a balance
Maintenance & repairs

On-Call Maintenance activity

- On-call maintenance falls into three categories
  - Janitorial
  - Vandalism
  - Graffiti removal
- Public restrooms are routinely misused
- In 2017-2018 there were 2,252 incidents at just these 7 stations with public restrooms at a two-year cost of $284,580
Examples of Damages

- Major toilet clogs requiring professional plumbers caused by clothing, drug paraphernalia, alcohol containers, etc
- Access panels, partitions, heaters and hand dryers pulled from walls
- Intentionally set fires
- Discharged fire extinguishers
Security

Security/Police Activities

• Restrooms in transit centers become magnets for criminal activity
• Drug activity, prostitution and vandalism
• 35,216 hours of security staff time (2017-2018)
• 132 security/police incidents (2017-2018)
• Some police jurisdictions have requested we close public restrooms or not design them into projects due to security/police activity
• $530,000 for security post outside the bathroom at Tukwila due to the security/police activity (2017-2018)
## Public Restroom Costs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Station</th>
<th>Maintenance</th>
<th>Security</th>
<th>Total Costs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Auburn</td>
<td>$50,160</td>
<td>$67,211</td>
<td>$117,371</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bellevue</td>
<td>$16,020</td>
<td>$17,440</td>
<td>$33,460</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federal Way</td>
<td>$83,160</td>
<td>$70,305</td>
<td>$153,465</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SeaTac</td>
<td>$17,220</td>
<td>$167,846</td>
<td>$185,066</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sumner</td>
<td>$8,400</td>
<td>$19,078</td>
<td>$27,478</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tukwila</td>
<td>$41,760</td>
<td>$530,532</td>
<td>$572,292</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Union Station</td>
<td>$67,860</td>
<td>$199,511</td>
<td>$267,371</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Costs Est.</strong></td>
<td><strong>$284,580</strong></td>
<td><strong>$1,071,923</strong></td>
<td><strong>$1,356,503</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Avg. Per Facility</strong></td>
<td><strong>$40,654</strong></td>
<td><strong>$153,132</strong></td>
<td><strong>$193,786</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Customer assistance at stations

**Security Officers**

- Trained in customer service to assist all individuals including those with disabilities, seniors and families with young children
- If customers are in need of facilities, Security Officers can help direct them to the nearest restrooms
Balancing cost and convenience

Convenience for people traveling

• Average Link trip time in 2018 was 18 minutes
• SeaTac Airport to downtown Seattle is 38 minutes
• Federal Way to downtown Seattle will be 53 minutes
• Everett to downtown Seattle will be 60 minutes
• Passengers travelling to and from the outlying areas often spend more time traveling especially as light rail expands
• Balance the cost and number of restrooms with access for passengers
Equity considerations

Where restrooms are provided consider:

• Availability to all individuals
• ADA compliant, single occupant, unisex
• Supportive for all ages
• Availability to individuals using any Link payment method
Helping customers find the restrooms

**On-line maps**
- New layer could be added to Sound Transit’s on-line map with public restroom locations so customers can plan their trip

**Printed maps**
- Consider adding public restrooms locations to customer maps
Wayfinding signage

Current Restroom Signage Standards for Link

- Blade signs perpendicular to pedestrian traffic flow (to be updated for unisex signage)
- Signage at restroom doors
Wayfinding proposed

Area Maps

- Station Area Maps on Customer Info Panels to include restroom location
- Can be updated at service change or Northgate opening
Other options

Require leased retail facilities to provide restroom access

• Angle Lake Parking Garage has a retail space which requires the retailer to provide public restroom access and maintenance
• Sound Transit has been unable to lease this space
• Could consider providing customer restrooms in conjunction with leased space
Other options

Charging for restroom use

• In many US states it is against the law to charge for restroom use
• Washington State RCW 70.54.160
  “When coin lock controls are used…at least one-half of the units in any restroom shall be free of charge.”
Summary

A complicated balancing act

• Public restrooms at transit stations require excessive maintenance and security yet provide a convenience to customers using light rail for traveling to their destination

• Formalizing a policy where public restrooms area located based upon balancing cost, minimizing crime, considering customer travel time, and coordination with the local police can be beneficial to our customers, operations and system expansion
Summary

Next steps

• Further consultation on customer experience, equity and inclusion
• Staff to provide information about other agency policies
• Staff to offer options for restroom location policy with cost data
Thank you.