SOUND TRANSIT TECHNICAL ADVISORY GROUP (TAG)

Improving the Speed of Project Delivery
Today’s presentation

- Meet the TAG
- Recap of previous work
- Recommendations
- Key takeaways
- Next steps
- Q&A
TAG Members

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Recap of previous work

• Reviewed relevant documents, including:
  o System Expansion Implementation Plan
  o Triunity recommendations
  o Eno Center for Transportation’s 2021 report “Saving Time and Making Cents: A Blueprint for Building Transit Better”
  o Associated General Contractors of WA recommendations

• Highlighted key recommendations around:
  o Organizational structure and governance
  o Early action
  o Reporting
Preparing for what’s coming
Overview of recommendations

• Six recommendations identified for priority action
• Some recommendations to be led by the Board, others by staff
• Recommendations should be implemented without delay
• Implementation and outcomes should be monitored, with successes recognized and intervention imposed where needed
Recommendation 1

• **Challenge:** Trust is broken between Board and staff, leading to delayed decision-making.

• **Recommendation:** Rebuild trust and clarify the roles and responsibilities of the Board and staff.

• **Implementation:**
  o Review and revise Board bylaws and procedures to focus on policy and major programmatic decisions
  o Limit the type of actions that require Board input and approval.
  o Include staff recommendations on all actions going to Board.

*Implementation of Recommendation 2 is necessary for the success of this recommendation.*
Recommendation 2

• **Challenge:** Sound Transit 2 projects are behind schedule, and Sound Transit 3 has already experienced delays across multiple projects.

• **Recommendation:** Introduce an experienced megaproject capital program executive team to augment existing staff.

• **Implementation:**
  o Create 3 new executive positions – Executive Director of Capital Programs, ST2 Deputy Director, and ST3 Deputy Director
  o Recruit executives from outside the agency with successful megaprograms transportation experience for the new roles
  o Vest the executive team with the authority to make decisions

Implementation of this recommendation is necessary for the successful implementation of all TAG recommendations.
Recommendation 3

- **Challenge:** Project level decision making is inefficient, commonly taking several months to resolve questions resulting in project delays and increasing fees.

- **Recommendation:** Implement procedures that push decision-making down to the lowest level practical and foster an environment that encourages decision-making in general.

- **Implementation:**
  - Modify procedures to authorize project decisions at lowest level possible
  - Conduct training and coaching program to promote staff-level decisions
Recommendation 4

• **Challenge:** Contractors charge Sound Transit a premium to cover the financial risks of unforeseen delays, slow decision making, and administrative burden.

• **Recommendation:** Align key procedures with industry best practices, eliminating unnecessary steps and associated delays.

• **Implementation:**
  o Establish timeline goals for key procedures, such as invoice and change order processing and contract close-out based on industry best practices
  o Revise procedures to meet the goals by eliminating unnecessary steps and parties
  o Clarify how procedures are measured and ensure consistency across the program
Recommendation 5

- **Challenge:** Agency is facing increasing costs and schedule delays associated with betterments.

- **Recommendation:** Strengthen and enforce an agency betterment policy.

- **Implementation:**
  - Establish ST design standards (e.g., stations and parking structures)
  - Establish protocols to address requests by Authorities Having Jurisdiction, including cost allocation and schedule constraints
  - Take full advantage of agency’s designation as an Essential Public Authority
Recommendation 6

• **Challenge:** FTA permitting review times have grown, causing schedule delays and cost increases.

• **Recommendation:** Engage the FTA as a delivery partner equally invested in delivering transit to the region.

• **Implementation:**
  o Engage with FTA to set reasonable timelines and alternatives to be studied
  o Engage Congressional delegation to press FTA to prioritize and deploy sufficient resources for the ST program
Key takeaways

• Capital program growth has outpaced the agency’s ability to deliver

• Performance will continue to suffer unless immediate and sustained action is taken

• Success will not be possible without organizational and cultural change at all levels
Recommended next steps

- Assign responsibilities and establish schedules
- Immediately initiate executive search for new Capital Program Director and ST2/ST3 Deputy Directors
- Report on progress monthly at SEC meetings
Questions?