

**Regional Transit Authority
Minutes of Board Meeting
May 20, 1994**

The meeting was called to order at 1:04 p.m. by Chairman Laing in the 17th floor conference room of the Pacific Building. The Clerk called the roll and the following members were present:

Bruce Laing, King County Councilmember
Bill Stoner, Vice Chair, Pierce County Councilmember

Representing Pierce County:

Sharon Boekelman, Bonney Lake Councilmember
Ken Madsen, Pierce County Councilmember

Representing King County:

Martha Choe, Seattle Councilmember
Don Davidson, Bellevue Mayor
Greg Nickels, King County Councilmember
Jim White, Kent Mayor

Representing Snohomish County:

Dave Earling, Edmonds Councilmember
Karen Miller, Snohomish County Councilmember

The following Board members arrived after roll call:

Representing King County:

Mayor Gates, Federal Way Mayor

Representing Snohomish County:

Ed Hansen, Everett Mayor

Public Comment:

Mr. Laing asked for public comment at this time, and he asked that individuals limit their remarks to three minutes.

Mr. Richard Tate, Bellevue, made the following remarks:

I am speaking today as Vice President of the Washington Association of Rail Passengers (WARP). The WARP adopted, on May 14, 1994, some comments on the Regional Transit Authority's (RTA) Phase I discussion options which were circulated last month. I would like to read a brief summary of that paper, and I have copies available (copy on file). The WARP favors the following in Phase I:

- A. A seamless, intermodal trunk transit network that ties together all the activity centers of the region.
- B. A regional fare structure that would allow passengers to travel throughout the region on a variety of modes and between transit agencies on a single ticket. The RTA should take the responsibility for implementing such a program.
- C. Commuter rail between Everett and Tacoma, with extension to Olympia as soon as practical and inclusion of Renton in the system.
- D. The initial segment of a new electric rail system connecting the Seattle CBD to the University District, with extensions to the north end and/or south according to the greatest public need.
- E. A cautious approach to shared right-of-way and signal preemption, with particular regard to local community acceptance, and long term viability as a regional system.
- F. Trunkline express bus service, with supporting TSM improvements, on routes not served by Phase I rail, for three reasons: 1) useful equity for all voters; 2) speed and frequency that offers a valid alternative to the automobile; and 3) trunkline service similar in nature to rail.

I would like to read a brief summary from a paper I have recently written. This is something I have discussed with the Executive Director and the Secretary of Transportation. It relates to rail service to SeaTac Airport, including the use of diesel multiple units (DMU) with automatic disconnection capabilities in lieu of commuter rail and of intercity rail equipment that would make possible a new concept for passenger rail service in Puget Sound. This, together with construction of a short rail link from Tukwila to the airport, which is already covered by the Regional Transit Project (RTP) environmental impact statement (EIS), would make it possible to give all major Puget Sound cities fast, direct access to SeaTac Airport while solving the need for intercity and commuter rail service.

It is suggested that this concept offers enough useful service to gain the public support needed while replacing intercity and commuter rail services for which financing has not yet been established. This may make it easier to address problems with local speed restrictions that exist today.

I would be willing to discuss this proposal in further detail. Thank you for the opportunity to speak today.

Mr. Dale Menchhofer made the following statements:

I understand the Board has received copies of my correspondence with the RTA staff (copy on file). I have additional copies available today. It concerns a concept for a north corridor alignment using the best elements of the Capitol Hill/First Hill tunnel alignment

with the best of the Eastlake/Fairview at-grade alignment. Maps are also available (copy on file).

My bias has been to serve the Capital Hill/First Hill area because I think it is a better regional approach. It is faster and it serves the greater density neighborhoods. This is perhaps even better. It uses the Joint Regional Policy Committee (JRPC) alignment from Convention Station via First Hill to Capital Hill and north to Seattle Central Community College (SCCC). From SCCC, the tunnel would exit as quickly and conveniently as possible to Eastlake Avenue, somewhere near Ward Street (Fred Hutchinson Center), possibly as far south as Mercer Street (McCaw Cellular), or as far north as Fairview Avenue (steam plant). From there, the alignment would proceed at-grade to and along the recently revived Eastlake alignment. This proposal assumes that a tunnel under the Ship Canal will be used.

The advantages of this proposal are that it uses approximately a third less tunneling mileage than the JRPC-recommended alignment, while adding only about .25 mile to the total mileage. The savings is 1.5 miles, not counting .5 miles in the University District.

I use the bus in the city, and Route 7 is extremely slow serving Capital Hill from the University of Washington (UW) and the central business district (CBD). The proposed alignment provides the most benefit over what exists today. It also avoids a critical problem with the Fairview portion, which is traffic back-ups on Fairview. It avoids cross-traffic at Valley Street, Mercer Street, Denny Way and Stewart Street. It avoids cars blocking intersections before and after Seattle Center events, which alone makes at-grade travel on Fairview unworkable. It uses the portion of the Eastlake/Fairview alignment with the least cross-traffic, and with the best chance of success with signal priority techniques. For those interested in the Fairview alignment for benefiting the Seattle Commons, this could have a station at South Lake Union and it could have one in the Eastlake neighborhood. As for South Lake Union, the location described could be only four blocks from where the committee recommended a regional transit stop. It is at the convergence of several traffic patterns due to traffic avoiding the lake, particularly to Seattle Center.

For the north this proposal would facilitate links between Seattle urban villages that no other alignment offers. While this is good for Seattle, I think it is also good for the region. It is as fast and maybe faster than anything using at-grade right-of-way on Fairview.

I feel this is a good approach for the region as a whole. It provides more benefits at less cost than an all tunnel alternative and it may facilitate consensus on a corridor that has been difficult.

Mr. Robert Whalen, Kent, made the following comments:

I am Co-Chair of the Kent Transit Advisory Board and a member of the Puget Sound Light Rail Transit Society, but I am speaking as an individual today.

I would like to raise two issues. The first issue addresses the type of equipment to be used on existing rail lines. The second issue addresses the need for a near term pilot program to demonstrate and debug the local transit services which will feed the commuter rail.

I am pleased to learn that you will be considering use of DMUs for at least some part of the commuter rail system. These units are quiet, attractive and comfortable. They are used extensively throughout the world. They will be far more acceptable to communities, such as Kent, that are located right on the rail line.

DMUs have greater acceleration than push-pull units. This will allow either faster trips or service to more stations. Fuel savings should be significant for other than peak loads. Their passenger appeal will be an important factor in attracting ridership.

Development of an economical, diesel powered, low floor light rail vehicle in Germany offers an opportunity to provide light rail service on under-utilized freight rail lines at minimum cost. These vehicles make the rail line from Renton through Bellevue a prime candidate for a light rail system that could interface with commuter rail on the south end and electric light rail from Seattle to Bellevue on the north end.

As an added consideration, a potential exists for local manufacture of these DMUs and diesel light rail vehicles if we are the first to use them in North America.

On the issue of a pilot program to demonstrate and debug innovations in suburban transit service, I believe Kent is uniquely situated to be a pilot city. Kent will be a key stop on the commuter rail system. Shuttle bus service will have to provide a major part of the commuter rail ridership. Kent has the highest fraction of multi-family housing in the State of Washington. Most of the multi-family housing in Kent has little or no transit service, thus offering a high potential for increased ridership. Two community colleges are at the Kent borders. One has no transit service from Kent. Both colleges would see significant benefit from increased transit access in Kent. Kent has an administration that is highly supportive of transit initiatives. As a result of these and many other factors, Kent offers a high probability of success in applying new concepts and technology to suburban transit service. The pilot work should be well underway before commuter rail begins.

Thank you for listening.

Mr. Paul W. Locke, Seattle, commented as follows:

Information for today's workshop does not indicate the cost to operate the proposed system. In your discussions today, I hope you concentrate on whatever option to take and start looking at operating costs and the number of riders per hour. The figure currently being used is 25 riders per hour, and the County Executive wants to reduce that to eight per hour; this just won't do it. We cannot afford the present system. I realize the money this system will generate will be used to bail out the three present transit systems as they stand now. I see no reason for this thing. There is no reason to

spend more money on staff for this system. Agreements between the three agencies could operate this system and probably save taxpayers money over the long run. The total failure of the news media to explain how much we are going down the tube with this operation is fantastic. I encourage you to really look at what it will cost to operate this system and look at ways to get users of the system to pay for it. In my roundtable group only five were in favor of the users paying for the cost of the system; 12 were opposed.

Thank you.

Employment Contract - T. Venturato:

Mr. Matoff gave the following presentation:

I am submitting for the Board's approval today, Resolution No. 27, which would authorize an agreement with Mr. Tony Venturato for services as interim Director of Engineering and Construction.

Mr. Venturato has extensive experience in the design and construction of light rail and rail tunnels. As you know, the RTA has little in the way of a formal personnel structure. This would take us through from the election through June 30, 1995, at which time we would organize a formal personnel structure and arrange for permanent staffing. We are preparing to go to the public with an extensive capital program ranging from \$1- to \$3 billion, depending on our studies. It is important to have the best technical and costing information when we do that. I have great faith in Mr. Venturato's capabilities; he has done this twice before and is well worth the investment.

(Boardmember Gates arrived at this time.)

It was moved by Mr. White, seconded by Mr. Earling and carried by the unanimous vote of all Board members present that Resolution No. 27 authorizing an agreement with Tony Venturato for services as interim Director of Engineering and Construction be approved as presented.

Interagency Agreement - B. Lieberman:

Mr. Matoff made the following remarks regarding Resolution No. 29:

There has been a recurrent theme to demonstrate with bus service and future rail lines. We have advocated the need for this. It is widely understood, but today we have undertaken no bus service planning. We have no service planning capability directly on our staff. In order to produce bus and rail integration plans for the options this summer, I have investigated the possibility of borrowing the Planning and Operations Director from San Diego, Mr. William Lieberman.

Mr. Lieberman was a colleague of mine in Portland and he has now worked in San Diego for eight years and is responsible for the integration of bus and rail planning in southwest San Diego County. If we were to follow this route we could obtain him on a sabbatical and basically reimburse the transit development board for their cost to them

of his continuing salary. For 14 weeks the cost would be a maximum of \$30,464 plus expenses, that would certainly not exceed \$9,000. I think this is a very inexpensive way to obtain expert, capable staff who I can hold responsible for putting together bus/rail integration plans.

I think this is a very good way to go. It is not the only way, but it is a quick way to get some experience.

I submit Resolution No. 29 for the Board's information; I will seek approval of this action at the May 27, 1994 meeting.

Ms. Choe said:

I think this is very supportive of the discussions that the Board has had in trying to be sure integration of bus service occurs early. This subject has had the attention of the transit agencies as well. I would suggest we include speaking to the early and immediate need for discussions in a collaborative manner with the transit agencies, and that we encourage that kind of cooperation. We need to work toward establishing a partnership and doing it now in a way that is collaborative as opposed to competitive. I will submit some suggested wording; I think this is an important message to send.

Mr. Early referred to the second page of Exhibit A to Resolution No. 29. The words "Everett Transit" should be added to the end of the first paragraph, he noted.

Recess:

Mr. Laing recessed the business meeting to allow for a workshop by the Board. The meeting was recessed at 1:30 p.m.

(Councilmember Hansen arrived at this time.)

Call to Order:

Mr. Laing called the meeting was back to order at 3:07 p.m.

Resolution No. 28, Adoption of Phase I Study Options:

Mr. Laing said Resolution No. 28 is the vehicle for adoption of the Phase I study options.

Mr. Matoff said Resolution No. 28 is generic.

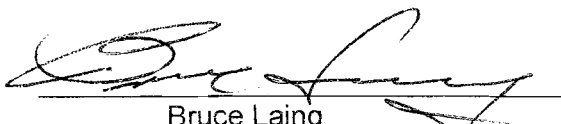
Mr. Madsen asked if the RTA was restricted to considering only three options. Mr. Kirchner said the development of each option requires three to four weeks of staff time. Adding another option would take a month of staff work.

Mr. Laing asked if there were any objections to the decision-making process suggested for next week. As staff responds to questions raised by individual Board members, that information should be distributed to all Board members.

Other Business:

Mr. Laing stated that the meeting next week would be held in Tacoma. Some Board members asked about the possibility of a tour of Union Station. While it wouldn't be practical to provide this tour as part of the meeting, Board members would be contacted about the possibility of this tour before or after the meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:11 p.m.



Bruce Laing
Chairman of the Board

ATTEST:

Delores Grubbs
Clerk of the Board