

Regional Transit Authority

**September 23, 1994
Puget Sound Regional Council, 6th Floor Board Room
1011 Western Avenue, Seattle**

Meeting Minutes

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 1:43 p.m. by Chairman Laing. The Board Administrator called the roll and the following members were present:

Chair:

Bruce Laing, King County Councilmember

Vice Chairs:

Dave Earling, Edmonds Councilmember

Paul Miller, Tacoma Deputy Mayor

King County:

Martha Choe, Seattle Councilmember

Don Davidson, Bellevue Mayor

Mary Gates, Federal Way Mayor

Cynthia Sullivan, King County Councilmember

Jim White, Kent Mayor

Pierce County:

Sharon Boekelman, Bonney Lake Councilmember

Snohomish County:

Ed Hansen, Everett Mayor

The Board Administrator indicated that a quorum of the Board was present.

The following Board members arrived after roll call:

Gary Locke, King County Executive

Greg Nickels, King County Councilmember

Mr. Laing:

All those present wishing to address the Board should utilize the speaker sign-in sheets provided at the entrance to this room.

Mr. Miller:

I would like to make some comments to the individuals of the Rhododendron Lines. These are my own individual opinions.

I received a FAX from the Rhododendron Lines that I found very rude and unconscionable. It is a waste of resources and paper. After receiving 28 pages of this document, I turned off my FAX machine. Some of we RTA Board members are in private business; these are our own personal resources being wasted. And for those in the public sector, this is an absolute waste of public resources. I did not appreciate receiving this document. If you would like to get my attention, send me a letter. I have not read this document and I will not read it. This is not the way to get my attention.

Mr. Laing:

Mr. Hutchins will be allowed to respond to this situation during the public comment period of today's meeting.

Minutes of August 26, 1994 RTA Board Meeting

It as moved by Mr. White, seconded by Mr. Hansen and carried by the unanimous vote of all RTA Board members present that the minutes of August 26, 1994 be approved as presented.

Report of the Chair

Mr. Laing:

I have asked Mr. Gunter to give a status report on the work being done, at the request of the Board through the Rules Committee, to develop a Minority and Women's Business Enterprise (MWBE) program.

Mr. Gunter:

At your seat is a brief memorandum (copy on file) describing where we are in developing a MWBE program. We have completed our research, surveyed other local programs, attended meetings of experts, and have concluded it is feasible for the RTA to have such a program. The major problem is we don't have any factual basis for a full program without a disparity study. The region is about to undertake a disparity study in which King County will be involved. The Rules Committee has suggested the RTA cooperate in this study.

(Board member Locke arrived at this time.)

What should we do in the interim? Our recommendation is to create an interim program premised on the federal DBE regulations. We believe this can be created to deal with the consultant contracts that will be issued in early 1995.

We also believe the RTA staff should actively work with local governments in this disparity study and then recommend a more complete program to the Board for review and adoption.

(Board member Nickels arrived at this time.)

Ms. Choe:

Would the RTA's consultant contracts be covered by any MWBE requirements before an interim program can be adopted?

Mr. Gunter:

The RTA has a current MWBE policy in its procurement resolution. As agreements have been issued, we have been monitoring them to include MWBEs. We will build from that language.

Ms. Choe:

Could we get a sense of how we are doing? Many people have expressed concern and confusion about to what extent we are meeting our MWBE goals.

Mr. Matoff:

Staff would be happy to provide this information to the Board.

Ms. Sullivan:

I don't think there is a government in this area that does not have an aggressive MWBE program in place. I have a hard time understanding why the RTA is moving so slowly.

Mr. Gunter:

One of the reasons for this slowness is the fact that the RTA is comprised of three counties. The United States Supreme Court says you have to have evidentiary background of discrimination in your own district. In California a federal court said you have to study what happens within your own jurisdiction when an agency covers several counties. There is no other local agency that stretches over a three county area. To put together a complete program we need to have disparity information for all three counties involved.

Ms. Sullivan:

What about the PSRC?

Mr. Gunter:

The PSRC is made up of four counties, rather than three. The law also makes you look at the types of contracts in your program. It is a fairly sophisticated analysis.

Ms. Sullivan:

Will we hire consultants to advise us in this matter?

Mr. Gunter:

I think the RTA would hire consultants.

Mr. Laing:

We need to reemphasize that we are talking about having an interim MWBE program. We already have, in our procurement resolution, language promoting MWBE participation.

Mr. Gunter:

We should have an interim progress report available for the Board's review by November.

Mr. Laing:

For any contracts that utilize federal funds, won't the RTA utilize the federal MWBE requirements?

Mr. Gunter:

That is true. Nearly all RTA contracts will utilize federal funds. We have talked with the Federal Transportation Administration (FTA) office; they begin with 10%. We will be looking at the appropriate percentage for the RTA's interim program.

Public Comment

Mr. Frank Hutchins, Puget Sound Light Rail Transit Society (PSLRTS) (Rhododendron Lines):

I knew nothing about the FAX sent to RTA Board members. It did not go through the PSLRTS Board; it did not come to the Chair or any Board member.

This document was distributed by Kim Silver. This is not the first time we have had a problem with Mr. Silver. He is an artist and he has an artist's temperament. We felt victimized by this. Mr. Silver wrote letter and we did not see it. We repudiated it. We caused Mr. Silver to resign as Chair of the PSLRTS at that time; I have served as the Chair since that time.

We have expressed our support for the RTA work being done. We will take whatever action we can to repair this damage to our own reputation. I wish you could have communicated these concerns to me before today's meeting. I want to get that across today. Mr. Matoff can tell you we are loyal with our cooperation. We want to foster the RTA plan as it is being formed at this time.

I am embarrassed and I will communicate this situation to the rest of our society.

I had planned to comment on the report from the Expert Review Panel (ERP), but I will hold those comments until their report has been provided. I would like to address agenda item 8b, the resolution fixing the RTA boundaries.

We have been actively involved in trying to persuade Marysville and Arlington to change their minds with regard to the north boundary. I have a hand-out for distribution to Board members (copy on file). It is a copy of a resolution we suggested to the City of Marysville. We would like to see the boundary reconsidered because of the single track line to Arlington. A good rail system could relieve pressure on airport expansion. This could be a defense mechanism for the people up there. It could also tie together the north county cities. They are part of what could be a contiguous activity area. The reasons for our recommendations are included in the materials distributed.

Mr. Richard Hayes, Bellevue:

I have been looking at the RTA's study options results report. I am concerned about the mechanism for distributing the transit fund. The report states that one-third of the fund shall be distributed among the five subregions based on population. The remainder shall be distributed based on projected capital and operating costs and local revenues. Two-thirds will be distributed to the five subregions in a manner reflecting the cumulative equity of revenues and total expenditures. This confuses me.

One interpretation would be that one subregion that generates revenues but does not receive or has lower capital expenditures will receive less money than a low revenue, high capital subregion. My concern is that Bellevue generates a lot of revenue but if it does not choose or is not selected for large capital expenditures, it may be subsidizing another subregion with large capital and very little revenue. This language does not make it clear. If you are going to the public, you should provide some examples. I have the feeling the Eastside subregion would be subsidizing the Seattle subregion. I realize that Eastsiders are quite generous, but they should understand if they will subsidize the Seattle subregion.

I hope for more clarification of this language.

Mr. Laing:

Some people have arrived after my initial announcement regarding public comment. If there are others who wish to address the Board, they should submit a written form.

Executive Director Report

Mr. Matoff:

I would like to introduce the RTA's new Director of Finance, Ms. Jan Hendrickson. Ms. Hendrickson was previously employed by the Port of Seattle in charge of finance and budget for the marine operation division. We are pleased to have her on board.

Report from the Expert Review Panel

Mr. Matoff:

On Monday the RTA staff spent the day with the Expert Review Panel to review the status of our work, particularly the result of a study conducted over the summer. The results report is our intended direction from here on. Numerous questions were raised since we began meeting earlier this year and regarding the evaluation system and development of recommended options next month. I think it was a very productive meeting. We have several ERP members here today to present some views on the results.

Mr. Aubrey Davis, ERP Chairman:

First, I have a summary report of the survey done by the Seattle Post-Intelligencer regarding the transportation crisis. They printed a questionnaire and received 1,420 responses. Eleven hundred responses were from King County, 135 from Snohomish County, 26 from Pierce County and 18 from elsewhere in western Washington. The questionnaire was non-traditional and was not limited to one choice. One of the questions was, "Should the state support a high capacity regional transit system?" This was the most popular entry in the area of choice; 1,030 people voted for this. The next highest choice was 844 people in favor of intercity passenger rail. With funds limited to the gas tax, a majority supported the proposal to finish the HOV system.

Respondents would prefer to pay for those projects with a combination of gas tax or tax on fuel at the refinery, sales tax on gas and an increase in the MVET.

The ERP and staff met not only all day on Monday, but 11 hours on Monday. It was a long, tiring day. We usually hold our meetings over two days.

Our effort was to identify things we are satisfied with. We have done some of that. We have identified those areas that need additional work. We will have to have another meeting. Mary Jo hasn't had time to summarize the meeting in writing. We are glad to have the opportunity to speak to the Board today.

I want to open by explaining the direction we are in. People who are well acquainted with transit operations in the country recognize there is an oddity that Seattle has ridership per capita comparable with much bigger cities. It is unequaled anywhere except San Francisco, and we are above many rail cities in terms of ridership. This is not because we are special, but because of our special geography. Seattle is laid out over a long, narrow corridor, and this concentrates people in transit ridership zones. This is unlike the situation in Denver, Phoenix and many other cities. We have a unique geography which has produced higher transit ridership of any other city our size, and comparable with Atlanta, which has a rail system. It is not as high as Vancouver but it is much higher than other United States cities our size.

Because of that fact, the legislature authorized a process for developing a high capacity transit (HCT) system in the central Puget Sound region. I want to refresh your memory. The legislature assigns our mission to us and to you, and it is a our minor role in the technical work. The HCT system means the system of public transportation within the urbanized region operating principally on exclusive rights-of-way to provide a higher level of passenger capacity, speed and service frequency than traditional systems. Your job is to establish a high capacity transit system operating principally on exclusive rights-of-way.

Your master plan didn't state that clearly. We suggested that it should, and the staff agreed. We asked that they define what that means when you apply it to the ground here. No one questions that you can run such a system in tunnels or aerially, but what about on the surface? We asked staff how they would operate a high capacity system principally on exclusive rights-of-way on the surface. We were told you can do it in the streets, protected by curbs. Then you block off the side streets so you don't have cross traffic and use signals for those left open. Cross major arterials, where signals would be difficult, may require grade separation. We asked that that be better articulated in the master plan; I think we had agreement on this.

The question of whether or not you can do that in this area is not an ERP question. This is a question for the RTA Board. We asked to be told of places that have systems like this. There are some. Parts of the MAX system in Portland operate in this manner. East Burnside has substantial distances before any signalization and those signals are controlled by the vehicles. They have an average speed of 23 miles per hour (mph). This is at the low end.

What we are suggesting is that when your master plan defines what "high capacity" would mean, you have to decide whether various parts of the proposal meet that test. We think some of your alternatives probably do not. We think in some parts of the town you cannot do that; in others you can. That is an issue you need to think seriously about. Your responsibility is to operate a high capacity system and that is related to carrying out the vision of 2020. If we have a third runway, we will have more airport service so we will need more high capacity transit service. I hope we are able to clarify that and point out that the remaining decisions are yours and not ours.

Mr. Scott Rutherford:

I was asked to cover several items. One of the things was ridership forecasting, which has been reviewed carefully over the last five years. We used previous forecasting material over the summer because of the short time frame involved. We feel the ridership numbers have been conservative, and that that is probably still the case.

There is a relatively undeveloped segment. We felt that given the nature of the task and things in the evaluation that the staff should outline some of the more important things so they wouldn't get lost and include all state legislative requirements as appropriate.

The legislature has called for three planning efforts: 1) regional, which is done by the PSRC; 2) high capacity system planning, which resulted from the JRPC plan; and 3) project planning, which is detailed planning to be undertaken after a successful vote.

The second step requires following the steps outlined in the RCW. Specific measures are identified, such as patronage, cost per rider, cost per new rider and travel time. Several require comparison of build versus non-build options. There is not a TSM option in Phase I; however, we believe it is required by state law before the system is submitted to the voters. This does not require the information be available to the decision makers, but obviously that was certainly the intent. The same process applies to commuter rail as well as high capacity rail.

One final issue that concerns us is the lack of context for considering the Phase I ultimate build-out. With the old JRPC plan we knew where we were going because we could see it. With just Phase I, we are not sure what happens when we build it out. Will it be adequate? Will it provide adequate services to outlying communities? We have struggled with those questions over the last five to six months.

Mr. Davis:

The ERP members were initially appointed by the legislative leadership, the governor and the Department of Transportation. Mr. Scott Rutherford is an engineering person and is an expert in planning and estimating. Mr. John Basic is a technology specialist. Mr. Edward McLean is a cost estimator. Mr. Gerrit Moore is our environmental expert. Our financial person was unable to attend today.

Mr. Basic:

I have an interest in technology. Being involved in this program, the technology has been predigested for us. The system is based on a light rail vehicle. That technology has potential for flexibility and offers growth as the technology is applied when it has right-of-way that offers exclusive capability where you can get high speeds without interference from automobiles or pedestrians. The benefits that the region will receive from the light rail vehicle will depend on its right-of-way and guideways. With a good system it will get faster, cheaper and safer. If we have people crossing the line with cars, we will have collisions, as has been the case in San Diego. The original intent was to keep the right-of-way exclusive.

In conclusion, as far as technology is concerned, light rail vehicles offer potential. A guideway would perform better operationally and safety-wise.

Mr. McLean:

One thing about estimating is that it is not an exact science. It depends on the individual involved and his experience. In this particular job, working with PB/KE, they have many of the RTA's records. I had some production rates on the different types of rail, such as at grade, aerial or tunnels. We took concrete excavation and put a price per yard on it. We then said that for every 100 feet, it will cost so much. We also developed a cost per mile. Then when you lay out the plan you use those multipliers to get estimated costs.

After coming up with a cost in 1995 dollars they add a valid contingency cost, depending on the risk involved with the work. The purchase of trains had a small contingency as there is a low risk. With tunnels and things that you don't know about you

use a higher contingency cost. They came up with a cost and I reviewed it. I think the figures are reasonable and that the system can be built for that amount, including contingencies.

Mr. Moore:

There is a compelling environmental issue that we in the northwest must take into account, and that is air quality. We are on the border of being unacceptable, based on Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) standards. As traffic increases in the future, the screws will be tightened and the highway system will be limited. We have an economy that moved from added value to a service based economy. We are dependent on the area of job opportunity and areas of employment. When we build a transportation system, we must think of an integrated system with rail and highway and TSM measures. When this inevitable problem occurs with the highways and their use is limited, we cannot afford a problem with these qualities of life elements of being able to earn a living and to move from one part of the region to another. For that reason, we should look at the rail system as stepping in and taking part of that burden. For that reason we must be able to maintain speeds and the same commute possibilities. That is our challenge for the future.

Mr. Davis:

The ERP's financial expert is Maude Smith Daudon, Director of the Port of Seattle. She has worked with Ms. Fina of the RTA staff. We asked that a report be produced for your use showing various ranges of financial capabilities, showing how much revenue you would produce and could use as a template if you start to mix and match the elements of the system. Then you could decide what you could do with that amount of money. You have that report. Ms. Smith reports she believes that financial work is of high quality and it is appropriate for your use.

I believe that concludes what we are prepared to comment on at this time. We have taken some things off the table and there are some things we need to focus on. Our interest is in helping you make program choices and making decisions to move this along. We can answer any questions.

Mr. Davidson:

With regard to the financial report, did you deal with revenue assumptions?

Mr. Davis:

Yes.

Mr. Davidson:

What assumptions were used?

Mr. Davis:

The low assumption was \$40 million for state and federal funding, \$70 for the mid-range assumption and \$100 million for the high assumption. This is offset against a .03, .04 and .05 equivalent on the gas tax. There were bonding assumptions as well.

Mr. Davidson:

Did the ERP feel an assumption of \$100 million in state and federal funding was reasonable?

Mr. Davis:

I personally believe that is a high level assumption. I believe it is unrealistic.

Mr. Davidson:

Do you believe the \$70 million in state and federal funding is a closer assumption?

Mr. Davis:

Yes; this is just a judgment.

Mr. Davidson:

It seems like grade separation is important. Would suspended light rail technology, as proposed in Oakland, meet those criteria in any part of the system as opposed to the technology we are dealing with?

Mr. Davis:

Some of the suspended portions could do the job. They were analyzed previously by the JRPC and they found it would be to our benefit to stick with one technology, which is the light rail, which allows us to start as a trolley, if necessary, and cross to a high capacity system. There could be opportunities, in various parts of the region, to use things like that. It is not proposed now. We are trying to get the main spine in place first.

Mr. Davidson:

I listen to you and think grade separation is important and the suspended system does provide grade separation.

Mr. Davis:

The exclusive right-of-way does not necessarily mean grade separation.

Mr. Rutherford:

Any way to protect yourself from pedestrian traffic is desirable.

Mr. Davidson:

I understand the cost is relatively reasonable.

Mr. Rutherford:

It was evaluated and there is a document available that contains this information.

Mr. Davidson:

I would like to see that document.

Mr. Davis:

I think it would be economically prudent to have the same technology throughout the system. This seems prudent for a starter system.

Mr. Davidson:

I was thinking of certain areas where it might be harder than others to utilize surface technology.

Ms. Choe:

Has the subject of "Option 2.5" surfaced with the ERP?

Mr. Davis:

I think we should call upon Mr. Rutherford to answer that question.

Mr. Rutherford:

Having spent time in that neighborhood over the last years, it seems it would be difficult to implement something like this. A bus mall was proposed as part of Metro's University planning; nothing actually was built except the HOV lane in front of the hospital. My initial reaction was that it would be very hard to implement this because of neighborhood considerations. We have not had much success implementing very low impact proposals. We once looked at a park and ride lot for transporting nurses to the hospitals in vans, and this was not approved. This is not to say it wouldn't be a good thing if you could do it. The traffic, etc. would be very positive, but the merchants and residents don't see it the same way as planners do.

Mr. Davis:

The hospital complex on Madison includes a lot of relatively low income workers, which would potentially result in a high number of transit riders. Safety is an issue for those workers and they currently require off-site guards to accompany them to the parking lots. The connection of that area to the system is an important element. I am not clear that the Option 2.5 modifications which changed the nature of the service in that end of Capital Hill will accommodate their needs. This is not far from Seattle University. Option 2.5 moved the line away from those important worker points.

Ms. Sullivan:

In the last several days I have had the opportunity to meet with business leaders and community leaders. The reason it is a challenge is because this is the part of the RTA that votes most enthusiastically for taxes and is supportive of a mass transit system. It is equally opposed to surface transportation for that area. I think this is the real sticking point for our decision. We need to make the right decision and be sure we have balanced our objectives.

Ms. Choe:

Have you discussed the definition of a regional system? At what point is it no longer a regional system? This is a very difficult question.

Mr. Davis:

The person on our panel who feels strongest about this question is Mr. David Hodge. He wants to talk about that with the Board; we will schedule him to meet with the RTA Board. He is concerned about the relationship between the RTA and the ability to implement Vision 2020 and what it means to be regional in terms of capacity and speed. He feels the idea of surface street cars is desirable for many services but it will only work regionally if you can obtain speed by doing certain things. If you don't do those things, you are kidding yourself. In the north corridor, we are looking at 12th Avenue and a light at every block or blocking those side streets. It looks like Mission Impossible. Those are one way streets with quite a lot of traffic. Lights at every block would be a problem for the City Engineering Department as well as the residents. The speed of the system, based on exclusive right-of-way, is the key. It doesn't necessarily mean a hole in the ground or a system operating in the air. It can be on the surface. They get 35 to 40 mph in Portland when the system operates alongside the railroad track. When you start operating in streets, speed is impacted.

Ms. Choe:

You mention Mr. Hodge is interested in addressing the Board, but we are running out of time. Perhaps he could forward any written comments to the Board members; this would be most helpful.

Mr. Morrison:

In your deliberations and your experience, we are wrestling with the criteria the state should apply for the purpose of shared funding on capital costs. Does anyone have any comments related to the plans as you see them coming which concern the role the state should play?

Mr. Davis:

I am one of the many authors on that plan and we have not agreed yet. This goes again to the regional nature of the system. It has become clear to the state that it cannot provide the surface transportation it has done for the last 50 to 70 years with more freeways. Our system plan work has made it clear that option is not available now or in the future. Yet population growth tells us we will have to think of ways of replicating facilities such as Interstate 5, I-90, I-405 and State Route 520. I don't think we can consider that, even if we had the money. The question is what alternatives are feasible for moving people around an area as dense as this and how to deal with the demand and state's interest and need to participate in a facility. The state should help pay for the system because it cannot build freeways. It should provide equivalent service. That is one of the criteria that speaks to speed, capacity and exclusivity. There are other things that tie together the regional centers. We feel if the local service is the idea, there are transit systems who have that responsibility. The RTA was organized by the state to serve a regional transportation need which is a high capacity transit system.

Mr. Morrison:

Is exclusive right-of-way a common denominator?

Mr. Davis:

The law defines it as principally exclusive right-of-way with speeds and capacity higher than is possible with regular transit. That is the purpose of this effort.

Mr. Miller:

There is a line between local systems and regional systems as they relate to bus service. One of the things to wrestle with is where do we draw the line where we are funding feeder bus service to feed the rail spine and where that crosses into localized service which is the responsibility of the existing transit agencies.

Mr. Davis:

Mr. Rutherford helped write this legislation.

Mr. Rutherford:

I served on the Washington State Rail Commission under Mr. Laing. There was a lot of concern by the legislature when drafting this legislation that the dollars the state was designating not be diverted to local services. One version didn't allow any state money except for exclusive lane transit options. It was a struggle to have buses on HOV lanes considered high capacity transit. Eventually more flexibility was allowed. How far you take that is up to the Board. Regional buses can be argued either way.

Mr. Laing:

You are suggesting the legislature requires a TSM comparison under Phase I. Are you suggesting that would be available prior to a decision?

Mr. Rutherford:

This would probably not be available before a vote. This is probably not possible. We feel the cost per new rider cannot be determined without a required TSM alternative.

Mr. Davis:

If we were going to start with where we were before, that was done. When you make any substantial change you don't know where the baseline is. I think the assumption staff is supporting is that the old baseline is still valid. At least the comparisons have not been made.

Mr. Rutherford:

I understand that comparison will be made but it has not been made yet.

Mr. Laing:

What about Phase I versus build out?

Mr. Rutherford:

We are looking at three Phase I options. You pick Option 2 and you develop it into a regional system; what does that mean? What would the service levels be in Everett? Tacoma? We don't know.

Mr. Laing:

This is the capacity of the ultimate system?

Mr. Rutherford:

Right. Decisions in Phase I influence how the rest of the system will be built. With the JRPC option you could see what the future was. There is not an equivalent build-out for Options 2 or 3.

Mr. Laing:

You have probably talked about the prospect of regional high capacity transit not within the immediate limits of the legislation. When the JRPC plan and its costs were taken out by the members of the county councils of the three counties to the public, they got a strong message about price tags. I think there was a real push for accomplishing high capacity transit at less cost. In my thinking, the amount of grade separation and not necessarily exclusive right-of-way, is a factor there. I have the sense from the ERP there is some indication that for the long haul, the higher capacity system, such as the JRPC plan, is what you would prefer. I am trying to equate that with the price tag.

Mr. Davis:

As you know, part of the concern was that explaining a 20 to 25 year system at a cost of \$10- to \$13 billion was going to be very difficult. Part of that is the voters never have to vote on such a long-term plan. They are never asked to face that kind of issue for most governmental programs. The RTA changed the law with full legislative support. The public is not required to vote on the full system plan. A lot of programs that people don't concern themselves with cost a lot of money. What you build now will be here for the next 50 to 100 years. No one is saying it ought to be exclusively underground or aerial all the way through the system. The problem is starting with a core system as an element of a high capacity system to serve the whole region. You have some alternatives that deal with that. What people are questioning is whether some elements of the plan meet your statutory definition to get state support at all. The question is will you build a core system which is suitable for this community and well into the future or decide it should be done cheaper in order to get something started and then replace it later. You can

run on the surface along the freeway as fast as you can underground; where you have those kinds of options, they should be used. You don't need grade separation for the entire system.

Mr. Davidson:

This raises a question. You are demanding high capacity, which is enhanced with grade separation, which costs money. Then I am hearing we are limited and it doesn't matter what we do or how much money is involved. It seems the systems I have visited, which are light rail, have had better state and federal support than this system. It seems this system needs to be more expensive and yet the ERP says we won't get the same state and federal support.

Mr. Davis:

I don't see many systems receiving \$70 million in state and federal funding.

Mr. Davidson:

Is that because this proposed system is larger than the others?

Mr. Davis:

Seattle Metro has been able to get more federal funding because it has higher ridership than most other systems.

Mr. Laing:

Please express the Board's appreciation to all members of the ERP.

Finance Committee Report

October 1, 1994 Finance Committee Workshop

Mr. Nickels:

There will be a Finance Committee workshop on October 1, 1994. The workshop will be shorter than previous workshops because there is a major university event taking place that day. All Board members are invited to participate.

Ms. Sullivan:

Are the finance reviewers for the various counties participating in these workshops?

Mr. Nickels:

We have had good staff participation and review by the various jurisdictions.

Resolution No. 33—Authorizing Additional Commuter Rail Project Program Elements; Amending CY 1994 Budget; and Adopting CY 1995 Budget

Mr. Nickels:

Resolution No. 33 was reviewed by the Finance Committee and recommended to the Board for approval.

It was moved by Mr. Nickels and seconded by Mr. Miller that Resolution No. 33 be approved as presented.

Mr. Nickels:

As you recall, when adopting the 1994 budget the RTA did not have an Executive Director or its own staff. When we adopted that budget we acknowledged there would be changes to that budget and we encouraged the Executive Director to provide those changes to us as he saw necessary.

Resolution No. 33 adopts a change to the 1994 budget and provides a planning level estimate for the first six months of the 1995 budget.

Changes to the 1994 budget include: reallocations within the commuter rail budget; savings in the feasibility study cost; the cost of interlocal agreements for the station areas are lower than estimated because most of the work is being done under the multi-modal agreements; miscellaneous savings in staff and staff support are reallocated to the environmental support contract for increased costs in the south corridor; covers increased legal costs in developing operating agreements with the railroad and the initial work in pursuing the commuter rail demonstration project.

Secondly, under "other" there is a budget shift. The contingency is shifted to consultants for planning and operation. There should be a correction because the interlocal agreement included some local match funds in error. Both are corrected and reduced to show only the pass-through funds.

Third, we have added budget for increased costs of the project level planning for the south corridor. Additional analysis on traffic, etc. is needed and we want to insure integration with the freight traffic. The added budget and revenue for pass-through HCT funds to Pierce Transit(?) and PSRC is shown. Added budget and revenue for new HCT funds for 1995 for the regional council for integration and coordination of metropolitan planning and the RTP is included. The work was authorized for planning and environmental assessment for commuter rail services between Seattle/Everett and Tacoma/Lakewood. We are authorizing work to implement the commuter rail demonstration. We would also be authorizing work for commuter rail vehicle specifications; a long lead time is required for procurement. We have authorized work to establish criteria for the stations.

This is an outline of the 1994 budget adjustment.

The 1995 budget is a preliminary estimate. The Committee was not entirely comfortable in sending a signal that this constitutes final approval. Based on that fact, there is a new section which requires that in November the Finance Committee and Board review a final budget for 1995 with specific expenditure amounts. With that caveat, we were satisfied this was appropriate.

With that explanation, I invite any questions from Board members.

The motion to approve Resolution No. 33 as presented was carried by the unanimous vote of all Board members present.

Rules Committee Report

Resolution No. 36—Amending Commuter Rail Contracts with Gordon Thomas Honeywell, BRW, and PB/KE

Mr. Bob White:

Resolution No. 36 would authorize amendments to three existing contracts.

The first is for legal assistance in negotiating arrangements with the railroad for the operation of commuter rail. The second is with BRW, Inc., which allows us to complete the environmental analysis on the south corridor commuter rail project and to initiate preliminary right-of-way activity. The third agreement is with PB/KE. It has several elements: completing the work on environmental analysis in the south corridor; vehicle and locomotive specifications and additional state specifications work; and project level planning for the Seattle/Everett and Tacoma/Lakewood segments.

Since the Finance Committee Chair gave a detailed briefing on the revenue side, I will stop here and answer any questions.

Mr. Laing:

Adoption of Resolution No. 36 was recommended by the Rules Committee.

It was moved by Ms. Gates, seconded by Mr. Nickels and carried by the unanimous vote of all Board members present that Resolution No. 36 be approved as presented.

Resolution No. 37—Establishing and Fixing the RTA Boundaries

Mr. Martin Baker:

Resolution No. 37 is designed to establish and fix the RTA boundaries.

The reason this action is before the Board today is to have a definition of the boundaries and a map, in written form, available to the election offices to allow for preparation for the election. In addition, we need a definition of the boundary so it can be marked for future changes that might be made by the RTA. The law required you inherit the district formed by the JRPC. What we have done, as staff and consultants, is to check it for the requirements of the state legislature, which is that major urban areas of each county be included and that the boundary follow the precinct boundaries. It is also required that any city be included in its entirety that is included by virtue of the previous two requirements.

We have double checked this map for precinct boundaries. We have done that by working with the staffs of the three counties in the planning area, the election offices and county council levels. We also took the description to the Regional Council. The Regional Council requested we insert a new area which is the final area. We are providing for further review after adoption and for adjustments to be made if annexation occurs between now and the time the election occurs. With those cautions, the boundary is described and presented here.

Mr. Miller:

I note you cleaned up the lines in several locations. You went from splitting precincts to following precinct lines. There is still one precinct, between SR-512 and Prairie Road just outside South Prairie, where a precinct is split.

Mr. Baker:

This may have been an oversight. The intent is to stay to precinct boundaries.

Mr. Davidson:

Is there a reason this map was not distributed to Board members prior to today's meeting?

Mr. Baker:

The maps are available today. The reason they were not distributed previously was because staff was still checking the boundaries with the staffs of the three counties. We were working with them. The last changes came in too late for the maps to be distributed with today's agenda.

Mr. Laing:

Is this action time sensitive?

Mr. Baker:

The earlier this action is taken, the better for the election offices involved. Further review by elected officials, as well as any future annexation, would require an adjustment to the boundaries.

Mr. Laing:

I suggest the Board could adopt this and submit it to the three election offices. We could address issues raised by Board members at a later date.

Mr. Baker:

This is correct.

It was moved by Mr. Miller and seconded by Ms. Gates that Resolution No. 37 be approved as presented.

Mr. Davidson:

I find it strange to have this action handled in this manner. I would like to be able to explain why the boundary lines are as they are.

Mr. Miller:

In large measure, these boundaries follow the same boundaries proposed and adopted by the JRPC, with minor modifications.

Mr. Baker:

That is correct. During adoption of the JRPC plan, this map was reviewed thoroughly with the public so it has gone through the public process. There have minor changes to conform with precinct boundaries and urban growth areas.

The motion to approve Resolution No. 37 was carried by the unanimous vote of all Board members present.

November and December Meeting Dates

Mr. Laing:

The Rules Committee has adjusted the dates for the November/December RTA Board meetings as they would have fallen on major holidays. The Board will meet the first and third Fridays of the months in November/December, unless there is any dissent.

Ms. Boekelman:

The National League of Cities Conference will be held on the first Friday in December; this could create a problem.

Public Involvement Committee Report

Mr. Earling:

As you know, this past week we began holding roundtables throughout the region. To this point, we have completed three roundtables: one in Snohomish County, one in south King County and a roundtable with environmental leaders. Additionally, we have several roundtables scheduled in the near future. I thought it might be helpful to give the Board an update at each Friday meeting so you can follow the issues being raised. Ms. Barbara Dougherty is prepared to provide a written (copy on file) and oral report today.

Ms. Dougherty:

I would like to discuss two items today. One is the calendar of public meetings and speaking engagements. The second is a memorandum from me to the Board outlining the roundtable highlights to date.

I would like to point out several things about the speaking engagements. There is an increased interest because of the close proximity to the decision date. As we now have the results from the analysis and modifications to alignments, the RTA staff is being sure we connect with specific communities, especially those in the heart of some of the most difficult decisions. You will see this list includes meetings with community and business groups in Capital Hill, Ravenna and up the North Corridor, as well as Rainier Valley in the south. There is a list of the meetings with communities throughout the region. This list is updated every day and copies can be requested by Board members at anytime.

The other item is a memorandum from me. We have held three roundtables to date. One was held with environmental leaders, which is different from the subarea roundtables. Staff met with the environmental leaders of several key organizations and will have a follow-up meeting prior to the final decision. The purpose was not so much to discuss options, but to share analysis and have them help identify areas that felt were lacking information so we could get answers to their questions, which would be helpful to their discussion. We will have a follow-up meeting with them. This was a useful discussion, as you can see.

The other two roundtables were the first of the five subareas. They were held in Snohomish and south King Counties. For those not yet involved, our purpose is to invite in representatives from a broad range of business and community interests and have a format that engages them and gets them to grapple with the same issues the Board is dealing with. They have three hours to do that. Nonetheless we have found the participants are having a good time. They are struggling with some of the same issues as the Board. We hope that as they go through the discussions you and staff are having, they are learning some of the priority interests of the participants. We have invited them to assume the position of a board member. This is a two step process. There is a presentation of basic information about the options before the Board. We then give them a chance to 1) pick a baseline option or philosophical approach and funding level they are most comfortable with; and 2) invite them to modify the baseline and come up with their best shot for a final proposal for the ballot. We also invite a two-thirds vote so they know how hard it is for an 18 member board to reach agreement.

Generally, they are taking a regional approach. Although there are preferences for the lower and higher ends, the tendency has been to select Option 2 and to spend a little more in order to spread more benefits throughout the three counties. There is a desire to serve Snohomish County in Phase I; there has been interest in Option 2.5 as a possibility for being able to do that. People seem to want to use bits and pieces but something that works well from the start. In terms of commuter rail, they seem satisfied with what is being recommended; there has been very little change recommended there. There is recognition that regional bus and the transit development fund are essential to make the whole proposal work. There is interest in protecting funds for those two elements so they don't become discretionary funds. There are still differences of opinions about certain segments of the plan over which the RTA Board is also struggling.

There are three more roundtables to be held, and a special roundtable with planning commissioners, transportation commissioners, and planning directors on October 11.

Mr. Earling:

In Snohomish County we assigned people with different roles. It was fun watching Ms. Liz McLaughlin try to take the position held by King County.

Ms. Gates:

This is a most involved way to get citizens grappling with the issues. I congratulate the creativity of the Public Involvement Committee and staff. This has worked well. I had some hesitation, but the public has been involved and their results have been realistic. It is a real coup. The staff should be proud of this. This is very different from the previous public involvement activities. I was very impressed, and think people were very much involved.

Mr. Earling:

The staff was very creative in developing the format for these roundtables.

Legislative Task Force Report

Resolution No. 38—Authorizing Executive Director to Execute an Interim Employment Contract for Government Relations Work

Mr. Paul Matsuoka:

I will provide some background from 1993. In late 1993 there was a need to hire someone to represent the RTA in Olympia. There was a process to find a consultant. After that was done, Mr. Jim Metcalf was chosen to perform lobbying in Olympia for the RTA.

Mr. Metcalf's contract expired in April 1994. In the spring the task force began discussions about what to do with this contract into 1995. We looked at options including extending Mr. Metcalf's contract and procuring consultant services and hiring an employee. No decision was made in the May meeting. Mr. Metcalf's contract was extended month-to-month until a long-term decision could be made. In June the task force met and recommended that Mr. Metcalf be hired on an employment contract and become an RTA employee. The task force directed staff to draft this contract and to bring it back. That task was hung up over the summer while the RTA developed its social security and retirement alternatives. Now that is finished and the contract has been written.

Resolution No. 38 came to the task force on September 2 and is now presented to the Board for approval. It would hire Mr. Metcalf at 75% of his time. The cost is just a little higher, at \$5,000 per month plus benefits. If you approve this, it would authorize the Executive Director to sign an agreement with Mr. Metcalf, effective October 1 and request the Executive Director to make budgetary changes necessary to reflect this.

It was moved by Ms. Choe and seconded by Mr. Nickels that Resolution No. 38 be approved as presented.

Mr. Locke:

Would the RTA utilize three-fourths of Mr. Metcalf's time?

Mr. Matsuoka:

Yes.

Ms. Choe:

All of us who have worked with Mr. Metcalf are appreciative and impressed. He has been helpful in being sure the Board has been informed.

The motion to approve Resolution No. 38 was carried by the unanimous vote of all Board members present.

Phase I Study Options Results and RTA System Master Plan

Board Member Questions/Comments/Issues

Mr. Laing:

If there are issues Board members would like to place on the table for response by staff, this is the time to do so.

Mr. Earling:

The delegation from Snohomish County and its staff have drafted a series of questions. Rather than take the Board's time today, we will submit them and have staff get back to us.

Mr. Matoff:

These questions will be distributed to the full Board.

Mr. Miller:

Pierce County has asked for a response from staff regarding a combination of south end corridor Options 2 and 3 or light rail from Tacoma to Federal Way to Seatac and north. This information would be helpful.

Mr. Matoff:

This information will be provided.

Ms. Gates:

After the roundtable, someone asked me a question. They asked about the forecasting numbers and what data was being used. I think we perhaps should be aware of where we are getting our original numbers and putting that toward 2010 and 2020. It would be good to be having those discussions. It may be helpful for all Board members.

The other question asked of me had to do with the level of ridership per mile. In some areas that might be a valuable number to have.

Mr. Matoff:

Staff can develop answers to these questions.

Mr. Nickels:

I could not attend the last meeting where the study results were presented. I have gone through the materials and I thank staff for their work on the westside trunk line. I want to confirm that Option 2, with the westside trunk line, has the highest ridership of the options. With Option 3 this is the second highest performing route, and it is within 100 riders of the top. Am I reading this correctly?

Mr. Matoff:

It is my recollection that this is one of the strongest performers of all regional trunk bus lines.

Mr. Nickels:

I think the Board had some concerns about adding that service. I thank the Board for its patience in allowing this to be analyzed because it will be very beneficial.

Mr. Davidson:

One of my concerns is the assumption about state and federal funding. Even in Option 2, I think we are overly optimistic. I heard that it amounted to \$70 million for the 10 year period, which would be an average. Right now in Option 2 we are assuming \$1 billion. We are assuming \$30 million in Option 2. With all the other vigor of ideas coming on the table, I think we need to deal with that issue. If we go above those figure, we need to talk about whether it will require local taxes. I am concerned about coming forward and saying that number is overly optimistic. I think we should deal with this situation in order to preserve our credibility.

Mr. Laing:

I anticipate that the Finance Committee workshop will address the issue raised by Mr. Davidson.

Mr. Davidson:

We have been holding public hearings and telling people we are assuming we will receive \$1.3 billion in state and federal funding. We have indicated this is a viable option.

Mr. Nickels:

I should mention that one of the main items for the October 1 workshop is to talk about those assumptions. We will come back with a recommendation of whether this assumption is realistic.

Mr. Laing:

I am not sure if there is some action Mr. Davidson believes the Board should be taking to better describe the fact that these assumptions are under review.

Mr. Davidson:

I would hate to get into the public process and get to the last night of meetings and then say those federal and state options were not appropriate. I think that would be a problem. I am suggesting that when we go out to these public hearings, we should indicate more than is being indicated. The revenue sources are not on the board.

Ms. Choe:

All of us are going out there and receiving more interest as the decision deadline nears. I personally am happy there is a deadline. I think there is a danger in getting lost in the detail and not trying to explain what we are trying to accomplish. There are legitimate questions about technology and costs but the danger is that at some point the public gets lost. I hope, in our discussions, we remember the big picture. Much is very technical and we can get caught in that level because it is confusing. We have to balance the specifics with being sure we can articulate the vision this will accomplish and its relationship to jobs and economic development in the region.

Mr. Laing:

I think the issues raised by the ERP are issues the staff is addressing.

Mr. Matoff:

I am anticipating a formal letter from the ERP laying out their concerns; staff will respond.

Mr. Miller:

The staff should not presume that a lack of questions today means groups will not have recommendations for corrections on the master plan.

Mr. Matoff:

Yes. We are also hoping that if you have suggestions, particularly on master plan amendments, we would welcome proposed language.

Mr. Laing:

Board meetings are not the only places where Board members are welcome to raise issues.

Next Meeting

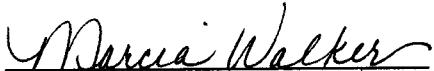
Mr. Laing:

The next RTA Board workshop is scheduled for Friday, September 30 at 1:30 p.m. in this same room. This is a workshop on the Master Plan/Phase I elements.

As there was no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:40 p.m.


Bruce Laing
Chairman of the Board

ATTEST:


Marcia Walker
Board Administrator

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