

Regional Transit Authority
Board Workshop
September 30, 1994

The workshop was called to order at 3:25 p.m. by Chairman Laing in the Puget Sound Regional Council Board Room, 1011 Western Avenue, Seattle, Washington. The following members were present:

Bruce Laing, RTA Chair,
Paul Miller, RTA Vice Chair

Pierce County:

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

King County:

Martha Choe, Seattle Councilmember
Don Davidson, Bellevue Mayor
Mary Gates, Federal Way Mayor
Greg Nickels, King County Councilmember
Norm Rice, Seattle Mayor
Cynthia Sullivan, King County Councilmember
Jim White, Kent Mayor

Snohomish County:

Ed Hansen, Everett Mayor

Washington State Department of Transportation:

Renee Montgelas, representing Sid Morrison, Secretary

Mr. Laing:

The Board Administrator advises us that next week's Board meeting will be held in the King County Council Chambers rather than in this room.

Included in the materials distributed today is a summary of the Eastside Roundtable (copy on file).

If you have new concepts on Phase I or the Master Plan that require generation of information by staff, you have to submit them as early as possible. I hope to have a discussion on the substance of Phase I options at the October 7 meeting. This is the week for staff to develop information. If there is, in effect, a new idea that hasn't been analyzed, presenting it in a concept paper so that staff can analyze it is probably the best way to do so. Staff is available to Board members for the purposes of analysis or to act as a sounding board for these concepts.

I asked for a short period for the full Board to hold a workshop today. We originally scheduled this for Board members to bring any issues, questions or requests for data to staff. We are open to that now. I would like to point out there is a memo from the Executive Director that responds to written requests for information. This is an opportunity to raise additional issues or any subject that a Board member feels need discussion or requests for staff.

There is a question about the boundary resolution the Board has adopted. Mr. Davidson pointed out there were some errors and staff has started to respond. I want Board members to know so they know there is a discrepancy. There were discrepancies between the urban growth boundary in King County and what was utilized as the urban growth boundary as the basis for the description and the map. That is being corrected. I think it is important for those of us who have associations with jurisdictions to be sure we were looking at the boundaries and can make corrections.

The second point is the setting of the boundary in King County is intended to reflect the urban growth boundary as closely as possible, including all or any of a city inside the boundary. It is based on precinct boundaries. My understanding is that this is not necessarily the same basis for establishing the boundaries in Pierce County; I don't know about Snohomish County. I want to get those differences out on the table so Board members now if there is a fundamental difference.

Mr. Davidson:

This boundary determines who gets to vote, where tax collection is done, who will feel the MVET impacts and who will not. There are three things involved. My concern is that I thought the use of the urban growth boundary was reasonable. I then figured out Pierce County may not have those boundaries established. I think they used the Pierce Transit service area as a possible boundary to work from. I thought it was important for the Board to understand how the boundary was established. I don't know about Snohomish County.

Mr. Laing:

Is there staff who can respond to this situation?

Mr. Matoff:

We can ask Mr. Baker to respond, but staff will have to come back with additional information.

Mr. White:

This may be a wake up call to look at those maps.

Mr. Laing:

Is there a difference in the fundamental basis for the service boundaries in the three counties. In King County the boundary was made close to the urban growth boundary. That is being checked. Was that the same basis used in both Pierce County and Snohomish County?

Mr. Baker:

I think it is fair to say that is the case. Both Pierce and Snohomish Counties attempted to check their growth boundaries and to be sure the RTA followed it fairly closely, recognizing where it was a choice they had to follow precinct boundaries. In Pierce County they attempted to be sure it was also consistent with the PTBA boundary of Pierce Transit.

Mr. Laing:

Is the PTBA boundary significantly different from the urban growth boundary? If the answer is yes, does it cause inequity within the RTA for the purposes of taxing?

Mr. Baker:

I would like to have Mr. George Locke respond.

Mr. Locke:

The Board members of Pierce County spent time going over maps. The statute is worded so that the RTA boundary must include the largest urban growth area within the county. What we had to work with was an interim line put together by the PCRC. That was considered. We wanted to stay with precinct lines. We looked at the Pierce Transit lines and used a gut feeling on where growth is likely to happen. Lines are fairly close with the exception of precinct lines. Those were the main factors looked at in making the recommendation.

Mr. Davidson:

I guess I can accept that as close to the urban growth boundary. The other concern is the corridors and how they are identified. When you get into the equity question, it gets really vague. My first opinion was let's get out of equity and worry about that. The answer is yes, they are consistent. We have to be careful.

Mr. Miller:

The urban growth boundary line is not as definitive in Pierce County. The line was intended to follow the interim line as much as possible. Fort Lewis was included in that so service could be provided at some future point.

Mr. Laing:

An action will be taken to correct the boundary in King County to reflect the urban growth boundary. Are there other issues?

Mr. Madsen:

I am confused. In the Master Plan I frankly would like to see some strong language saying the RTA will not be a new bus system. The trunk bus system discussion in that Master Plan, I believe, would open the door to this entity starting to get into delivering bus service as an RTA five years from now. It is my feeling that when I was in the legislature and voted for this entity, the RTA would contract with local bus service providers to supply that service. That is what has been said, but this is not reflected in the language in the Master Plan. I have a heart burn over the whole concept that we may end up getting into bus service. I would like to request that we add language clearly stating we will not be in the bus service business. We will rent, lease and contract with service providers, but we will not be in the business of providing bus service. We should only be dealing with rail and nothing else. There are entities we can contract with. I am worried about the language. I have heard this intent stated orally, but I have not seen it in writing.

Mr. Laing:

There is not a problem with providing a regional bus service, but it is the way we provide it. Mr. Madsen is asserting our intent is to provide it through local transit agencies.

Mr. Madsen:

That is correct.

Mr. Matoff:

We can prepare such clarifying language in the revised draft; if Mr. Madsen has proposed language, staff would like to see it.

Mr. Madsen:

I would like the staff to develop the appropriate language.

Mr. Madsen:

We will do so. We have a memo with the modifications to the first draft we sent out. The intent is to incorporate this and anything else, including the additional language proposed by Mr. Madsen, into a new complete draft of the plan, which will be mailed to Board members on October 7.

Mr. Hansen:

I have a request for information on pending issues. I guess it relates to Option 2.5 and Lynnwood. I had a discussion this morning with people from Lynnwood. There have been some station siting studies done over the past several years. I think the staff should get that information; Lynnwood residents have some definite ideas about where that station should be. I don't know if that has been incorporated into the RTA planning.

Mr. Matoff:

The site that was included in the north alignment document distributed two weeks ago gave one alternate site.

Mr. Hansen:

It suggests the 44th Street site; the preferred site is at 164th Street.

Mr. Laing:

We will have staff make contact with the City of Lynnwood. If we are recommending a site that the City is not recommending, it will come to the Board as an issue. I am asking staff to report if there is a difference in perspectives.

Ms. Choe:

In discussions of the last few weeks and today we have talked around the Master Plan. I thought we were to discuss it today. Given there are options and issues you want to get flushed out, I would like to know when and how the Master Plan will be discussed. My concern is if we leave it until October 28 there may be issues we need to discuss before the final discussion. When and how will it be discussed?

Mr. Matoff:

If the revised copy of the Master Plan is mailed out October 7, it could be discussed at the October 14 Board meeting.

Ms. Choe:

Will the Master Plan be discussed on October 14?

Mr. Matoff:

This will be done if this is the Board's wish.

Ms. Choe:

I think it is important to have a certain date for the discussion of the Master Plan.

Mr. Laing:

This discussion could be scheduled for October 14, and could be continued on October 15 if necessary.

Mr. Miller:

What is the latest date by which Board members may submit changes to the Master Plan?

Mr. Matoff:

We can make changes after the draft is mailed out. Staff would like to receive proposed changes by Tuesday, October 4.

Ms. Sullivan:

I have been working with the community in the North Corridor with respect to the new Option 2.5. Where did Option 2.5 originate?

Mr. Laing:

It was generated by our staff as a response to issues that have been raised as a proposal to look at differences between Options 2 and 3 and the handling of the extent of tunneling and resources involved and offering an alternative engineering solution.

Mr. Matoff:

Option 2 had a combination of tunneling and surface between downtown and Northgate, with surface on the south end and tunneling to the north. One cause of concern was the fact we could not service the Capital Hill neighborhood. This is a major concern of the city and others.

One way to respond is to reverse the tunneling and surface portions of the route. You still have a combination of technology and you have a lower cost, but you do accommodate the Capital Hill neighborhood.

Mr. Laing:

There has been a about the staff having the thought and wanting to ask Board members to respond to it. They contacted me and then there was a question about when was the appropriate time. Last week staff continued to work on it. I asked the Executive Director to submit the information so that all Board members would have it.

Mr. Matoff:

Staff is still pulling it together.

Ms. Sullivan:

Are there any other surprises in the North Corridor that I should know about?

Mr. Davidson:

I have some concern that the Master Plan is viewed as an accumulation of staff's listening to the Board and coming back to us. I understand there are certain amendments and suggestions but I am concerned that if we do that before October 7, it may not make sense because we may not all agree. I am suggesting that if a proposed change makes sense to staff, they include it in the draft Master Plan. On the other hand, we should be prepared to amend it and accept it as a staff recommendation.

Mr. Matoff:

The original draft consisted of the JRPC plan with an interlining of proposed new language. Those are the proposed modifications staff has received to date. These will appear in the draft. If there are some sections where there are competing proposals, staff can show both suggestions so the Board can make a decision.

Mr. Laing:

The Board must adopt the Master Plan. There will be a time on October 28 that we will have to look at it as a legislative document and we will have to amend it to get to the final document. If it differs from the JRPC plan, it will require a two-thirds majority vote of the Board. I am assuming this requirement applies to the adoption of the document and not each amendment.

Mr. Gunter:

That is correct.

Mr. White:

I would like to go back to Mr. Madsen's proposed language and look for clarifications. I am assuming everything we are doing is based upon cooperation of the transit authorities in the various areas. What happens if there isn't bus service needed to access the rail system?

Mr. Madsen:

I guess I would find it difficult for any of the transit systems not to respond to the RTA's request to provide feeder service. I wouldn't think they would like to face the legislature. I think the fundamental assumption is they would provide feeder service. It is hard to believe they might jerk us around. It is hard to believe they would not respond.

Mr. White:

I think, personally, that 10 to 20 years from now the three counties will be served by one transit provider.

Mr. Madsen:

I think that would require a legislative enactment.

Mr. Davidson:

If this is a Master Plan for the next 20 to 30 years, we may want to word it so we have the flexibility to have a truly seamless public transit system. That, in the long haul, may contemplate having one entity.

Mr. Laing:

From the standpoint of the number of issues we will have to debate and bring to the county councils and the public, it might be the better part of valor to consider the implementing nature of the Master Plan instead of the policy.

Ms. Montgelas:

Assumptions regarding the use of state owned right-of-way and existing freeway right-of-way should be clarified. We should make sure the WSDOT is aware where assumptions are being made that state right-of-way will be used for rail. This is obviously the case in the center roadway of I-90. We will have comments. I understand there is also right-of-way in the north corridor. I am not sure what the assumptions area. I understand we can't get to the level of detail that might change during engineering.

Mr. Laing:

I can't remember to what extent the JRPC made this identification for the state and whether you are asking for something beyond that. Ms. Montgelas is correct; this information should be on the table.

Ms. Montgelas:

I think there is a check that needs to be made. Is this right-of-way truly available? Maybe that has been done, but I don't know that.

Mr. Miller:

I have talked to Mr. Matoff about this. As Pierce County puts Phase I together, it is not just the capital investments, rail lines and transit development, but also the capital investments in

operations yards, storage yards and maintenance facilities that must be determined. Possibly their location should be part of the Phase I decision we will make. I believe Mr. Matoff will have recommendations on this subject as well.

Ms. Gates:

I agree with Ms. Montgelas. I think there would be a major comfort level for people to be able to see that that right-of-way is available. This points also to the issues of where we would have to have individual cooperation and where we have land available in the public domain which would make the timing something the public could count on.

Mr. Laing:

In the written material, I asked staff to identify for us what staff is suggesting after we have identified our preferences on Phase I, how many additional phases we are talking about and what they consist of. There will be those not served by Phase I who will want to know about the subsequent phases. I am assuming that is part of what we are ultimately identifying to the voters.

Mr. Matoff:

The state requires us to say something about that. So much work has been done on identifying the specifics of Phase I but I don't think we can identify how the subsequent phases could be done. Until we have the full estimate of Phase I, this will be difficult.

Mr. Laing:

I think in Phase 2 there may be some understandings that would be pretty concrete in order to get agreement on Phase 1.

Mr. Madsen:

I would like to ask Mr. Matoff a question. I am looking at the proposed amendments on page three. There is a specific head count given; this was suggested by the Expert Review Panel. I thought the Master Plan was a general policy statement. Now you have a body count included in the plan. I don't know how that equates to reality. Why are we going to a measure rather than a policy statement?

Mr. Matoff:

This is illustrative of the kind of service that would be provided, and should be considered that way. The ERP felt a distinction also should be made between the ultimate possible capacity of some parts of the overall facilities. The recommendation was to make a distinction between service capacity and facilities' capacity. This is a language that would respect that recommendation. The Board may not wish to incorporate something this specific.

Mr. Madsen:

The concern is that by introducing this body count, does it direct where finances will go first?

Mr. Matoff:

No. This is not a formula for allocating investments. It indicates you could have some facilities built that did not reach ultimate capacity. Maybe we need to revisit this.

Mr. Madsen:

You might find in a certain appropriation bill that any state funds will go to where you can generate 22,000 people per hour. That is why I pose the question.

Mr. Matoff:

There wasn't a measurement in the original plan. We reduced it to something actually required by the forecasts. That was felt to be inadequate descriptive number by the ERP. They made contrary recommendations. This would respond to that but it does have the potential difficulties Mr. Madsen mentions. We will fashion some additional language to get around this.

Mr. Madsen:

This might dictate certain types of technology.

Ms. Choe:

The pie charts shown earlier today contained a segment for "the fund." I would like to see if we could break that out to see what is assumed for regional bus and transit development.

Mr. Matoff:

It is a question of where the Board wishes to direct those funds. It is a policy decision about how much regional bus service to provide out of that fund. We could develop some examples.

Ms. Choe:

In some options there were assumptions about regional bus.

Mr. Matoff:

We could illustrate that.

There have been written requests for information from the Board. Staff received some verbal requests last week. We have taken a step to respond to those. We will take another round on that. If we are not on the mark, please let us know as soon as possible.

Mr. Laing:

Is there any other business or questions?

As there was no other business, the workshop was adjourned at 4:05 p.m.

dam