

REGIONAL TRANSIT AUTHORITY

MOTION NO. 98-2 BACKGROUND AND COMMENTS

Meeting:	Date:	Agenda Item:	Staff Contact:	Phone:
Public & Government Affairs Committee – discussion/action	1/16/98	No. 6	Sheila Dezarn	684-1730
Executive Committee – discussion/action	1/16/98	No. 6-B		
Board of Directors – discussion/action	1/22/98	No. 7C-2		

ACTION:

Approval of a RTA Motion committing to provide a status report to the state legislature on an annual basis and to provide other interim reports as necessary and appropriate.

BACKGROUND:

In 1992, the Washington State legislature empowered the counties of the Central Puget Sound region to create a regional agency for planning and implementing a high capacity transportation system (RCW 81.112). On May 31, 1996, the RTA Board adopted the Ten-Year Regional Transit System Plan – Sound Move – and on November 5, 1996, the voters residing within the RTA District approved the local option taxes to support its implementation.

In 1997, the RTA's Public & Government Affairs Committee undertook an outreach effort to RTA District legislators and to legislative leadership. The purpose was to inform legislators about RTA policies and programs and to develop greater understanding of their concerns and issues.

Some legislators, particularly Senate Majority Leader Dan McDonald, expressed concern that the RTA would be unable to keep its commitments over the course of ten years in the face of unforeseen events or circumstances. Specifically, Senator McDonald raised concerns about subarea equity, provisions for addressing cost overruns and/or revenue shortfalls and whether system completion can be accomplished within ten years.

RTA Boardmembers and staff engaged in discussions with Senator McDonald to review these issues and relay RTA concerns that bonding on a subarea basis could (a) reduce the board's flexibility to respond to future circumstances and (b) increase the RTA's borrowing costs.

Because this outreach effort indicated that (a) legislators want to be apprised of RTA developments on a regular basis; (a) a significant number of legislators do not have a comprehensive understanding of the RTA's principles, commitments and policies; and (c) because of the concerns expressed by Senator McDonald and others, staff believes that providing a regular annual report to the legislature affords an opportunity to keep the legislature informed in a systematic way.

RELEVANT BOARD POLICIES AND PREVIOUS ACTIONS TAKEN:

Resolution No. 72, adopting Sound Move Financial policies

Resolution No. 73, adopting Ten-Year Regional Transit Plan -- Sound Move

Motion 47, adopting the 1998 state legislative program

KEY FEATURES:

This motion directs the RTA to prepare and submit a report to the Washington State legislature on an annual basis, with the initial report to be submitted in January/February 1998. Reports would be based upon -- and consist of -- information developed as part of the RTA's business for the prior year, including:

- The RTA's Progress Reports to the Citizens
- Citizens Oversight Panel reports
- Annual adopted budget summaries
- Performance audit reports
- Annual reports

The report would be distributed to the governor, legislative leadership, transportation committee chairs and membership and RTA District legislators. The RTA would consult with legislative leadership to determine whether they would like the RTA to also provide a briefing.

As necessary and appropriate the RTA would also provide other interim reports to the legislature (e.g., current COP or audits, etc.).

These reports would be in addition to, not instead of, the RTA's ongoing legislative outreach program.

FUNDING:

The information necessary for these reports will be derived from materials developed as part of the RTA's regular business, (i.e., COP, budgets, audits, etc.). No additional funding would be required.

ALTERNATIVES:

Alternatives to this proposal include no action beyond current outreach activities to legislators to keep them informed.

CONSEQUENCES OF DELAY:

Efforts by the RTA to reach out and build trust, accountability and credibility among legislators have been well received. Not responding to concerns that have been raised as a result of these discussions could undermine those efforts or result in legislation being introduced which would restrict the RTA's flexibility to implement its program through a local-decisionmaking process.

**Regional Transit Authority
Motion No. 98-2**

A motion of the Board of the Regional Transit Authority for the Pierce, King and Snohomish Counties region committing to provide the Washington State legislature with an annual status report and other interim reports as necessary and appropriate.

Background:

During 1997, the RTA conducted an outreach program to RTA District legislators and legislative leadership to provide information about the RTA's policies and programs and to identify issues of concern to legislators. Of interest to legislators was more specific information regarding the projects and services that will be implemented in their district. Also, of interest were the principles and commitments incorporated in *Sound Move*, particularly subarea equity, provisions regarding cost overruns and/or revenue shortfalls, measures to ensure public accountability, system integration and completing the system within ten years.

Motion:

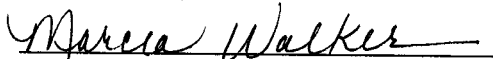
It is hereby moved by the Board of the Regional Transit Authority that, in addition to its ongoing efforts to keep legislators apprised of RTA activities and policies, and to be responsive to legislators' concerns about fulfillment of *Sound Move* principles and commitments, the RTA will deliver a written progress report, to the Washington State legislature on an annual basis with the initial report to be submitted in late January or early February, 1998. Further, the Board commits to providing other intermediate reports as necessary and appropriate and to make members available to brief committees upon request.

Approved by the Board of the Regional Transit Authority for the Pierce, King, and Snohomish Counties region at a regular meeting thereof on the 22nd day of January, 1997.



Bob Drewel
Board Chair

ATTEST:



Marcia Walker
Board Administrator