SOUND TRANSIT

BACKGROUND AND COMMENTS
MOTION NO. M98-40

Meeting:	Date:	Type of Action:	Staff Contact:	Phone:
PGA Committee	5/1/98	Discussion	Paul Bay	689-4761
Executive Committee	5/1/98	Discussion	Valerie Rosenkrantz	689-3542
Sound Transit Board	5/14/98	Action		

ACTION:

Adopt a motion confirming the most promising route alternatives to be include in the Central Link LRT Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) and during conceptual design for 1998.

BACKGROUND:

The Sound Transit Board approved the general alignment and technology for the central light rail system in May 1996. Financing for the system was approved by on November 5, 1996. Central Link light rail represents 22 miles of the Sound Move regional transportation program connecting SeaTac airport through downtown Seattle to the University of Washington, and if funding is available to Northgate with electric light rail. The May 14th action by the Sound Transit Board will outline the most promising route alternatives and maintenance facility locations for study in the Draft EIS and during conceptual design.

Sound Transit and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) are the lead agencies in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA). The Draft EIS will evaluate impacts of route and maintenance facility alternatives for critical issue areas such as transportation; land use and socio-economics; visual resources; noise and vibration; air quality; ecosystems; historic and parkland resources; etc. Further design analysis will be conducted at the same time and will provide more refined information on project costs, utility relocations, right-of-way needs and relocations, structural designs, conceptual station designs, construction staging, and light rail operations.

The first formal steps in developing the most promising alternatives were one agency and six public Scoping Meetings in December of 1997. The formal scoping comment period extended from November 7, 1997 through February 4, 1998. Over 1,000 separate comments were received from nearly 400 different people and organizations. Community participation was further extended through 10 community workshops in March and April of 1998, over 50 stakeholder presentations and over 75 agency coordination meetings.

The Central Link project has been divided into six segments to allow for more focused discussions on the most promising alternatives with the affected communities. This approach has been very effective in engaging the community and understanding which issues are critical to them. All of these outreach efforts, coupled with initial technical studies, have supported the identification of

two to four most promising alternatives for each segment. These route alternatives are being recommended for further study in the Draft EIS and conceptual design. In addition, three alternative locations for a maintenance and operations facility are being recommended.

RELEVANT BOARD POLICIES AND PREVIOUS ACTIONS TAKEN:

Adoption of Sound Move (5/31/96)
Adoption of Resolution 78-1 (4/9/98)
Adoption of Implementation Guide (5/22/97)
Adoption of First Moves (5/22/97)
Adoption of Fiscal Year 1998 Budget (12/11/97)

KEY FEATURES:

The Central Link project segments and the recommended route alternatives by segment are:

A. Northgate to University District
- Route A1: Tunnel under Roosevelt District
- Route A2: Elevated by I-5 in Roosevelt District

B. University District to Downtown (Westlake)
- Route B1: First Hill/Capitol Hill
- Route B2: Seattle Center/South Lake Union

C. Downtown (Westlake) to So. McClellan
- Route C1: E3 Busway/Beacon Hill Tunnel
- Route C2.3: I-90 Roadway/Rainier Avenue At-grade and Elevated
- Route C2.4: I-90 Roadway/Rainier Avenue Tunnel

D. So. McClellan Street to Boeing Access Road
- Route D1: MLK Jr. Way So. to Boeing Access Road/At-grade
- Route D1.2.1: MLK Jr. Way So. to Boeing Access Road/ Elevated and At-grade
- Route D3.3.1: West of Rainier Avenue South to Columbia City to MLK

E. Tukwila
- Route E1.1 and E1.2: Pacific Highway (both At-grade and Elevated)
- Route E2: Interurban
- Route E3: MLK Jr. Way

F. SeaTac
- Route F1: International Boulevard/At-grade
- Route F2: West of Washington Memorial Park, City Center, 28th/24th Ave. S.
- Route F3.1 and F3.2: West side of International elevated, Airport Terminal, 28th/24th Ave. So.

Operations and Maintenance Facility alternatives to be evaluated:

A. South Lander Street

B. Northeast Boeing Access Road

C. Southwest Boeing Access Road

Attached is a Briefing Book that details the following information by segment:

- Recommended routes for further study in each segment
- Description of segment
- Community outreach and concerns
- Light Rail development factors for project development
- Other routes considered but not recommended
- Evaluation information

FUNDING:

Funding for further study of these most promising alternatives is provided for in Fiscal Year 1998 budget, and consultant efforts previously approved with a civil design contract to the PSTC Team in February 1998 and an environmental contract to the Link EIS Team in February 1998.

ALTERNATIVES:

Other alternatives have been considered over the past nine years and have lead to the adoption of the Sound Move plan in 1996. This proposed approach provides the Sound Transit Board with the two to four alternatives per segment. If new information uncovers any other more promising alternative(s), there remains limited flexibility to address that option during the summer in the course of the environmental analysis.

CONSEQUENCES OF DELAY:

Agreement on the most promising alternatives for further study is essential for completing the EIS process, identifying the Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) and consequently obtaining a Record of Decision from the FTA to allow for federal grant funding for the Central Link Project. Delaying this activity would delay all subsequent major milestones on the project.

SOUND TRANSIT

MOTION NO. M98-40

A motion of the Board of the Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority confirming the promising route alternatives to be include in the Central Link LRT Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) and during conceptual design for 1998.

Background:

Sound Transit is now implementing Link, a light rail transit system serving a central travel corridor from Northgate to SeaTac via downtown Seattle and the Rainer Valley. Over the years, numerous light rail routes serving this corridor have been evaluated. As the Central Link project proceeds into the environmental review and conceptual design process, specific alternatives to be evaluated need to be identified. Extensive public and agency input on alternatives has been received by Sound Transit through public meetings, workshops, stakeholder presentations, and agency coordination meetings. A briefing book summarizing this work and the alternatives evaluated (including alternative locations for a maintenance and operations facility) has been provided to the board for review. This motion selects the alternatives that will be evaluated in the draft environmental impact statement and during conceptual design for the Central Link LRT project. If new information uncovers any other more promising alternatives(s), there remains limited flexibility to address that option during the summer in the course of the environmental analysis.

Motion:

It is hereby moved by the Board of the Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority that the following most promising route alternatives are confirmed for inclusion in the Central Link Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) and conceptual design work in 1998 as outlined below (options noted *"for study only,"* are recent proposals currently undergoing engineering and environmental analysis, for feasibility and may be carried into the DEIS. The final determination on whether these are carried into the DEIS or not will be made by the Board over the next 30 to 60 days):

A. Northgate to University District

Route A1: Tunnel Under Roosevelt District: Starts near Northgate Transit Center (station at Northgate elevated next to I-5 or next to the existing transit center) and travels south in a retained cut on the east side of I-5 in the freeway right-of-way. Near 75th Street, the route enters a tunnel under the Lake City off-ramps and continues underground to a station at 65th Street either along 12th Avenue N.E. (A1.1) or Roosevelt Way (A1.2), then southeast to N.E. 45th Street and 15th Avenue N.E.

Route A2: Elevated by I-5 in Roosevelt District: Starts near Northgate Transit Center (station at Northgate elevated next to I-5 or next to the existing transit center) and travels south in a retained cut on the east side of I-5 in the freeway right-of-way. Near N.E. 75th Street, there are two options. In A2.1, the route tunnels under the Lake City Way ramps,

then emerges south of N.E. 66th Street and ascends to an elevated station adjacent to I-5 at N.E. 65th Street; in A2.2, the route transitions to an elevated structure over the Lake City off-ramps then continues elevated next to I-5 to a station at N.E. 65th Street. The route continues parallel to I-5 and 8th Avenue N.E. to a point near the Ravenna Boulevard I-5 off-ramp where it enters a tunnel and continues southeast in a tunnel to N.E. 45th Street and 15th Avenue N.E.

B. University District to Downtown (Westlake)

Route B1: First Hill/Capitol Hill: This route runs from NE 45th Street and 15th Ave. N.E., under Portage Bay, Capitol Hill, and First Hill, connecting to the existing Downtown Seattle Transit Tunnel at Convention Place. It is underground throughout the whole segment with underground stations near: N.E. 45th Street and 15th Avenue N.E.; N.E. Pacific Street and 15th Avenue N.E.; E. Roy Street or E. Aloha Street and 10th Avenue (potential); E. John Street and Broadway; and Madison Street and Summit Avenue.

Route B2: Seattle Center/South Lake Union: This route combines at-grade, elevated and underground profiles connecting the University District with Eastlake, South Lake Union, Seattle Center and then Convention Place Station downtown. The station locations and basic route would be as follows: underground station near N.E. 45th Street and 15th Avenue N.E.; underground station either at N.E. Pacific Street and 15th Avenue N.E. (to connect to a tunnel crossing of Portage Bay B2.2)) or at Campus Parkway (to emerge to a structure and then a new high level bridge crossing of Portage Bay (B2.1)); then into a tunnel connection to an elevated station near E. Garfield Street and Franklin Avenue; then again into a tunnel and to an elevated station on Mercer Street near Terry Avenue N.; then into a tunnel with an underground station at Seattle Center near 5th Avenue N. and John or Thomas Street; and connecting underground to the Convention Place Station.

C. Westlake Station to South McClellan Street

Route C1: E-3 Busway/Beacon Hill Tunnel: Through the existing downtown tunnel, and then from the International District station, the route is at-grade on the E-3 Busway turning east along the median of Lander Street, then continues in a tunnel under Beacon Hill to S. McClellan Street. Stations would be at: existing downtown tunnel stations (Westlake, University, Pioneer Square, International District); Royal Brougham Way at-grade; South Lander Street at-grade; and underground in Beacon Hill (potential).

Route C2.3: I-90 Roadway/Rainier Avenue At-Grade and Elevated: : Through the existing downtown tunnel (stations at Westlake, University, Pioneer Square, International District), and then from the International District station, the route is at-grade on the I-90 HOV (D2) roadway ramps to the vicinity of S. Dearborn Street and Rainier Avenue S. It turns south and operates at-grade in the median of Rainier Avenue S. to S. Massachusetts Street, with an at-grade station on Rainier Avenue S. under I-90. At S. Massachusetts Street, it transitions to an elevated structure turning west in the vicinity of 23rd Avenue S. The route travels one block west of Rainier Avenue S. to S. McClellan Street.

Route C2.4: I-90 Roadway/Rainier Avenue Tunnel: Through the existing downtown tunnel (stations at Westlake, University, Pioneer Square, International District), and then from the International District station, the route is at-grade on the I-90 HOV (D2) roadway ramps to the vicinity of S. Dearborn Street and Rainier Avenue S. The route then turns south onto Poplar Place, with either an at-grade or open cut station on Poplar, where it transitions to a bored tunnel under I-90 to Rainier Avenue S. to a portal in the public/private right-of-way south of S. McClellan Street.

For Study Only: North Beacon Hill/Massachusetts Street: This alignment is under engineering evaluation based on recent input from a Rainier Chamber workshop and Sound Transit staff investigations. It connects from the International District Station at-grade onto the E-3 Busway with an at-grade station at Royal Brougham Way. The route turns east onto Massachusetts Street, crosses Airport Way and I-5 either underground or on a structure, and tunnels under north Beacon Hill. It transitions onto an elevated structure with a station on the southwest side of I-90 and Rainier Avenue S. Turning south into the center (or onto the westside of Rainier Avenue S.), the route continues on an elevated structure where it transitions to one block west of Rainier Avenue S. approximately between 23rd Avenue S. and S. McClellan Street.

D. So. McClellan Street to Boeing Access Road

Route D1: MLK Jr. Way S. To Boeing Access Road/At-Grade: This route is at-grade from an at-grade or elevated station near S. McClellan Street to the median of MLK Jr. Way S. then continues south to Boeing Access Road with at-grade stations near: S. Alaska Street or S. Edmunds Street; S. Graham Street (potential); S. Othello Street; and S. Henderson Street.

Route D1.2.1: MLK Jr. Way S. To Boeing Access Road/Elevated and At-Grade: This route is elevated from an elevated station near S. McClellan Street to the median of MLK Jr. Way S. then continues south on an elevated structure to south of S. Graham Street where it transitions to at-grade and continues to Boeing Access Road with stations near: S. Alaska Street or S. Edmunds Street (elevated); S. Graham Street (potential elevated station); S. Othello Street (at-grade); and S. Henderson Street (at-grade).

Route D3.3.1: West of Rainier Avenue South to Columbia City to MLK: From an at-grade or elevated station near S. McClellan Street, this route crosses MLK Jr. Way S (either at-grade or elevated) to a route approximately one-half block west of Rainier Ave. S. along an existing alleyway and acquired private right-of-way toward Columbia City. The route transitions west onto S. Alaska Street and then south into the median of MLK Jr. Way S. at-grade. One or two at-grade stations will serve the overall Rainier Valley Square/Genesee/Columbia City area. The route connects to Boeing Access Road with at-grade stations near S. Graham Street (potential), S. Othello Street, and S. Henderson Street.

Route D3.3.2: Columbia City to MLK via 37th Avenue S. Underground. This alignment and profile modification to Route D3.3.1 is under engineering evaluation. If, during engineering evaluation a different underground route appears to better serve the Columbia City area, then the board may decide to replace the underground portion of this route with

another design. From the D3.3.1 route in an existing alleyway and acquired private right-of-way Route 3.3.2 goes underground to a station near Edmunds and S. Angeline in Columbia City. A second potential at-grade station will also be studied to serve the overall Rainier Valley Square/Genesee/Columbia City area. The route transitions underground to MLK Jr. Way S. where it resurfaces to a potential at-grade station near S. Graham Street. The route then connects to Boeing Access Road with at-grade stations near S. Othello Street and near S. Henderson Street.

For Study Only: Columbia City to MLK via Alaska: underground. This profile modification to Route D3.3.1 is under engineering evaluation. If, during engineering evaluation, this profile modification appears better than the underground portion of route D3.3.2 then the board may decide to replace the underground portion of route D3.3.2 with this tunnel under Alaska Street in the draft EIS.

E. Tukwila

Route E.1.1 and E1.2: Pacific Highway (At-grade or Elevated): E.1.1 is elevated on Pacific Highway to about 130th Street. It passes over: Boeing Access Road, I-5, the Burlington Northern Santa Fe and Union Pacific Railways (with an elevated station directly connecting to a commuter rail station below), E. Marginal Way, the Duwamish River, and the SR-599 interchange area. It continues south at-grade in the median of Pacific Highway to SR-518 with an at-grade station near S.144th Street. E1.2 follows the same route as E1.1 but is totally elevated in the median to SR-518. There is a potential second at-grade station north of S. 144th Street for Route E1.1 only.

Route E2: Interurban Avenue: This route is elevated alongside Boeing Access Road, then south (at-grade or in a retained cut) along a right of way corridor parallel to and just east of E. Marginal Way/Interurban Avenue S., crossing the Duwamish River and the Burlington Northern Santa Fe and Union Pacific Railways on a structure to a station near Longacres (connecting with Commuter Rail and Regional Express). It again crosses the Burlington Northern Santa Fe and Union Pacific Railways and the Green River on a structure to provide an elevated station near Southcenter and Tukwila Parkway. It crosses Southcenter Parkway and the I-5 interchange on an elevated structure and continues westward along the south side of SR-518 corridor.

Route E3: Martin Luther King Jr. Way: The Route is elevated across the Boeing Access Road/MLK Jr. Way intersection and continues south along the east side of MLK (structure, retained cut and fill). It crosses 129th Street in an elevated profile and then crosses to the west side of MLK and down the slope to the east side of the Burlington Northern Santa Fe/Union Pacific rights-of-way (combination of tunnel and structure). It connects to a station at Longacres (connection with Commuter Rail and Regional Express). It crosses the Burlington Northern Santa Fe and Union Pacific Railways and the Green River on a structure to connect to Southcenter along Strander Blvd. (elevated station near Strander Blvd.). It swings northwesterly and crosses Southcenter Parkway and the I-5 interchange on an elevated structure and continues westward along the south side of SR-518 corridor.

F. SeaTac

Route F1: International Boulevard/At Grade in the Median: This route would maintain the existing travel lanes and replace the existing landscaping. At-grade stations would be provided near: S. 154th Street or S. 160th Street (potential); the proposed North End Airport Terminal (potential); SeaTac City Center; and S. 200th Street (park-and-ride).

Route F2: West of Washington Memorial Park, City Center, 28th/24th Avenue South: This route is elevated over the SR-518 interchange, then runs somewhere inside the rectangle bounded by the current North Terminal Drives alignment and the west property line of Washington Memorial Park (in a profile to be determined; both elevated and at-grade options will be explored). There is a potential station at the proposed North End Airport Terminal and then it crosses International Boulevard on a structure with an elevated City Center station either adjacent to International Boulevard (F2.1) or behind the office and hotel towers (F2.2). Near Bow Lake, the route turns southwest and again crosses International Boulevard on a structure to the right-of-way of the proposed 28th/24th Avenue improvements to an at-grade station near S. 200th Street (park-and-ride).

Route F3: West side of International Boulevard, Airport Terminal, 28th/24th Avenue South: This route is elevated along the west side of International Boulevard, and would maintain the existing travel lanes and landscaping. A potential future elevated station would be provided near the proposed North End Airport Terminal. The route transitions into the existing airport terminal and provides a station either near the existing parking garage (F3.1) or in the existing airport terminal (F3.2). It continues south on a structure to the right-of-way of the proposed 28th/24th Avenue improvements to an at-grade station near S. 200th Street (park-and-ride).

Operations and Maintenance Facility alternatives to be evaluated:

A. South Lander Street

B. Northeast Boeing Access Road

C. Southwest Boeing Access Road

Approved by the Board of the Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority at a regular meeting thereof on the 14th day of May, 1998.

Bob Drewel
Board Chair

ATTEST:

Marcia Walker
Board Administrator