

## SOUND TRANSIT

### MOTION NO. M98-73

#### Kent Parking Garage Location BACKGROUND AND COMMENTS

Meeting:	Date:	Type of Action:	Staff Contact:	Phone:
Board of Directors	10/22/98	Approval	Val Batey Paul Price	206-684-1591 206-689-4760

#### **ACTION:**

A motion to identify the preferred location for a parking garage to serve the commuter rail station in downtown Kent. Staff recommends identifying Alternative 1 as the preferred site for the reasons described below. Upon direction from the Board, staff will communicate the preferred alternative to the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) as it completes the environmental review and issues its determination. Staff also will proceed to initiate pre-acquisition activities with potentially affected property owners, to the extent permitted by FTA prior to its completion of the environmental review.

#### **BACKGROUND:**

Sound Move and the "Implementation Guide" call for service to begin between Tacoma and Seattle by year-end 1999. The Environmental Assessment for the Tacoma-to-Seattle Commuter Rail Project implementation was completed in May 1998 and received a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) on June 10, 1998 from the Federal Transit Administration. The final decision regarding the Downtown Kent station selection had been postponed until the City of Kent identified funding for a parking garage to accommodate station parking. The City of Kent has approved \$4 million to contribute to the funding of a parking garage structure.

On June 11, 1998 the Board selected the "north" station site for the commuter rail station in Kent. With that the decision, the Board also determined that the Kent commuter rail station should include a parking garage structure for 500 or more parking spaces, pending environmental review and the City of Kent's participation. The environmental review process for four alternative sites for a parking garage is now underway. A Kent Parking Garage Supplement to the Environmental Assessment for the Tacoma to Seattle Commuter Rail Project, with the preferred alternative identified, has been submitted to the Federal Transit Authority for their review and approval.

#### Public Input

A public meeting on the alternative garage locations was held by Sound Transit on September 2, 1998 at Kent City Hall. Over 30 people attended the meeting. Sound Transit staff presented the three alternatives under consideration for the garage location. Questions and comments were

recorded by a court reporter. A copy of the court reporter's transcript is included with this agenda packet. Comment cards were made available and several were submitted at the public meeting. Some comments have been received by e-mail and regular mail as well. All the comments we have received are included in this agenda packet. Of the 8 comment cards we received, 6 were in support of Alternative 1, one in support of Alternative 3, and one declined to state a preference.

The Kent Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), which was formed in agreement with the City of Kent and Sound Transit to represent the community throughout the station design process, met to discuss the parking garage location on September 9, 1998. It is their recommendation to the Sound Transit Board that Alternative 1 be selected for the Kent commuter rail station parking garage.

The Sound Transit Board held a public hearing prior to their regular business meeting on September 24, 1998. Four people testified at that hearing. A transcript prepared by a court reporter is included as an attachment to this document. One of the people testifying at the board's public hearing requested that a fourth alternative location for the parking garage structure be analyzed. The Chair of the Board requested that Sound Transit staff include this alternative, Alternative 4, in its analysis of the parking garage structure sites. In addition, staff was requested to include an analysis of a larger property acquisition at the Alternative 1 site. This is included in this report as Alternative 1A.

#### **RELEVANT BOARD POLICIES AND PREVIOUS ACTIONS TAKEN:**

- ◆ Adoption of *Sound Move* (Resolution No. 72)
- ◆ Adoption of Implementation Guide (May 22, 1997)
- ◆ Sound Transit Board Discussion (October 23, 1997)  
*(Discussion of commuter rail station criteria including station components and budget for commuter rail stations.)*
- ◆ Adoption of Fiscal Year 1998 Budget (December 11, 1997)  
*(The 1998 budget includes \$6.649 million for the Kent Commuter Rail Station.)*
- ◆ Sound Transit Board Workshop/Discussion (March 12, 1998)  
*(Review and discussion of North and South Downtown Kent station locations.)*
- ◆ Approval of EA and preferred station sites, except for Kent, March 12, 1998 (Motion 98-19)  
*(Board decision on Kent station location postponed for a period of 90 days to allow for the City of Kent to provide funding for a parking structure.)*
- ◆ "North" Station alternative selected for Kent station site, pending environmental review of the parking garage, June 11, 1998 (Motion No. M98-43)

## **KEY FEATURES:**

Three alternative sites were analyzed and presented to the City of Kent, the Kent Technical Advisory Committee and the public at the meeting described above. Clear support for Alternative 1 has been received from the city and the community. Since the bus transfer location would be the same with all the alternative parking garage sites considered, King County Metro Transit Department has no preference for garage location. A fourth alternative and a variation on Alternative 1 were added as a result of testimony at the Sound Transit Board Public Hearing on Kent commuter rail station garage location held September 24, 1998.

### **Preferred Alternative (Alternative 1):**

This site is located at the northwest corner of the intersection of 1st Avenue North and Smith Street (west of the BNSF tracks). The site is approximately 2.4 acres. This site is presently occupied by Washington Cedar Supply, a roofing materials business; Entry Systems Inc., an auto door system business; Kent Appliance Parts and Service; Frosty Wholesale, an ice cream novelty business; a residential four-plex and a single family residence. The site would require acquisition of 1.24 acres of the 4.02-acre site occupied by Washington Cedar Supply. Consistent with Sound Transit's acquisition procedures, we would evaluate the costs of both a full and partial take of this property.

The required 810 parking stalls could be provided on 3 floors, depending on the amount of ground floor retail included. The structure would be approximately 36 feet in height; the roof would be used for parking. Access to and from the garage for vehicles would be provided from Smith Street, at the intersection of Smith Street and Second Avenue. Access to and from the garage for pedestrians would be by means of two entryways/stairwells, one on the First Avenue side in the northeast corner, and one on the Smith Street side at Second Avenue. Parking reserved for persons with disabilities would be provided on the ground floor of the garage to allow for barrier-free access to the platforms at the commuter rail station. In addition, if a pedestrian bridge is built connecting the parking garage to the commuter rail platforms, parking for persons with disabilities could be provided near the garage end of the bridge to facilitate a direct connection to and from the northbound platform. This site is across First Avenue from where the southbound commuter rail platforms would be located.

The initial station construction budgets for all of the commuter rail stations did not include pedestrian over crossings for platform access. The original plan was to provide at-grade pedestrian crossings only. The BNSF has stated that they will not permit at-grade pedestrian crossings anywhere but at existing sidewalk crossing locations. A pedestrian over crossing will be designed as part of the garage, taking advantage of the elevators in the garage structure and connecting to the east side of the station (northbound platforms). If savings can be made elsewhere in the station construction budget, this pedestrian over crossing will be constructed.

This site would provide the largest footprint for the garage of the four alternatives. The larger area means that fewer floors are required to accommodate the same amount of parking. This site has the best potential for future expansion should demand warrant. It also has good potential for

street front retail along Smith Street to help in connecting the parking garage and the commuter rail station with downtown Kent. Kent's downtown retail core lies south of Smith Street. This garage site is also located in between the commuter rail station and the potential performing arts center site.

This location for the parking garage would allow for better dispersion of traffic than the other alternatives, especially traffic leaving the garage during the p.m. peak. Drivers would have more options for leaving the station area and heading east (via Smith Street, or via Fourth Avenue to James Street), where the majority of drivers would be headed, than they would from the other alternative locations.

The cost difference between the garage option and the all-surface parking option is within the \$4 million budget authorized by the City of Kent prior to the Sound Transit Board's selection of the north site, including the garage.

Alternative 1 offers the potential for joint use of the parking garage structure. The site is located immediately north of one of the sites under consideration for a future performing arts center. If this site is developed as the performing arts center, the parking garage on Alternative 1 could potentially be used by patrons in the evening and weekend hours when commuter rail parking demand is lower or nonexistent. In addition, to the south and east of Alternative 1 is the facility being developed for the Kent Saturday Market. Customers of the Kent Saturday Market could potentially use the parking garage at Alternative 1 since, at least initially, commuter rail service will not be available on weekends. The City of Kent has identified this area as a focus area for "high quality development" in its downtown strategic action plan.

## **ALTERNATIVES:**

### **Alternative 1A:**

At the Board's September 24 public hearing on the garage location, a proposal was made to increase the amount of property acquisition by 2.77 acres for site one. The proposal was made by a representative of Washington Cedar Supply Company, which owns 4 parcels totaling 4.02 acres in the block north of Smith Street and between First and Fourth Avenues. The proposal for Alternative 1 includes a 1.24-acre parcel of the Washington Cedar Supply Company property. This parcel is the easternmost parcel of the four and is the closest to the commuter rail station. The majority of the Washington Cedar Supply Company business is located on this 1.24-acre parcel; there is some parking and storage on the adjacent parcel. The remainder of the Washington Cedar Supply property is undeveloped. Using the remainder of the property for surface parking and pedestrian connection to the Regional Justice Center on Fourth Avenue would result in walk distances of over 400 to 1050 feet from the closest platform. The site would require acquisition of 1.24 acres of the 4.02-acre site occupied by Washington Cedar Supply. Consistent with Sound Transit's acquisition procedures, we would evaluate the costs of both a full and partial take of this property.

**Alternative 2:**

Alternative 2 is a 1.8-acre area located on the southwest corner of Railroad Avenue and James Street on the east side of the BNSF tracks. This site is presently occupied by SeaKent Cold Storage, a commercial cold storage business and a parking area/outdoor storage area.

The smaller area available at this site compared to Alternative 1 means it will take more floors to accommodate the same number of parking stalls. A four-floor structure, using the entire area available on the site, could accommodate approximately 820 parking spaces, without any retail space on the ground floor. A three-story structure would accommodate approximately 615 parking spaces, placing 195 stalls in surface parking lots. The depth of this site (approximately 106 feet) is less than is typically recommended for parking structures (120 feet minimum). Because of this, the amount of parking spaces per floor may end up being less than estimated above once preliminary engineering design is completed.

This site would place the garage immediately adjacent to the commuter rail platforms on the west and abut the bus transfer area to the south, James Streets to north and Smith Street to the east. The City of Kent has identified a possible grade separation project for James Street, at the Burlington Northern Santa Fe tracks, in their Kent Downtown Strategic Action Plan. The garage design would need to include a set back from James Street to avoid future impacts of an overpass or underpass. This may further reduce the amount of area available for the garage structure, and could result in fewer spaces in the garage, and more parking spaces in surface lots, or more floors being required for the garage. This site has very limited potential for expansion as it is constrained by the railroad tracks on the west, the street right-of-way on the east, a bus transfer area to the south and the potential grade separation project on the north.

Railroad Avenue does not afford the same potential for street front retail as Smith Street does. However locating the garage immediately adjacent to the platform allows the garage structure to support a pedestrian overpass. This site also brings the riders closer to the platform in their cars than the other three alternatives.

**Alternative 3:**

Alternative 3 is a 1.1-acre area located on the southeast corner of Railroad Avenue and James Street east of the BNSF tracks and across the street to the east from Alternative 2. This site is presently vacant and undeveloped. An air quality monitoring station is the only use occurring on the property.

A four-floor structure, using the entire area available on the site, could accommodate approximately 460 parking spaces. A three-floor structure would accommodate approximately 345 spaces. Even fewer spaces would be provided if some of the first level of the garage is dedicated to retail space. This alternative has limited potential for expansion without acquiring additional property. To provide the full 810 parking spaces required would require a seven-story garage. The depth of this site (approximately 102 feet) is less than is typically recommended for parking structures (120 feet minimum). Because of this, the amount of parking spaces per floor may end up being less than estimated above once preliminary engineering design is completed. Sound Transit may wish to pursue vacating the alley that runs along the east side of the property.

The alley is 16 feet wide, so the depth of the site would be 118 feet, which is still less than the minimum recommended but would allow for a more standard floor plan for the parking garage.

This site also requires riders to cross Railroad Avenue from their car to the station and back. Railroad Avenue does not afford the same potential for street front retail as Smith Street does.

The City of Kent has identified a possible grade separation project for James Street, at the Burlington Northern Santa Fe tracks, in their Kent Downtown Strategic Action Plan. The garage design would need to include a set back from James Street to avoid future impacts of an overpass or underpass. Reduction of the site area for such a setback would constrain this site more severely than it would for Alternative 2, and could result in fewer than 550 spaces in the garage, and more parking spaces in surface lots, or more floors being required for the garage. This site is very constrained.

**Alternative 4:**

Alternative 4 is a .9 -acre area located on the northeast corner of Railroad Avenue and Smith Street east of the BNSF tracks. This site is presently occupied by Burdic Feed offices and sales; part of the Tork Lift Welding business, an industrial light manufacturing use; and part of The Doorman, a commercial door business.

At this site the footprint would be same as the one for Alternative 1, as the setback from James Street to allow for the grade separation ends up reducing the buildable area for that site. A four-floor structure, using the entire area available on the site, could accommodate approximately 460 parking spaces. A three-floor structure would accommodate approximately 345 spaces. Even fewer spaces would be provided if some of the first level of the garage is dedicated to retail space. This alternative has limited potential for expansion without acquiring additional property. To provide the full 810 parking spaces required would require a seven-story garage.

This alternative has limited potential for expansion without acquiring additional property. This site also requires riders to cross Railroad Avenue from their car to the station and back.

Alternative 4 offers the potential for joint use of the parking garage structure, to the south and east is the facility being developed for the Kent Saturday Market. Customers of the Kent Saturday Market could potentially use the parking garage at Alternative 4 since, at least initially, commuter rail service will not be available on weekends. The site also has good potential for streetfront retail along Smith Street. However the site is so constrained for parking capacity that decreasing the footprint by adding retail space is not advisable.

**Alternative 4A:**

In order to make a parking structure feasible with Alternative 4 it would probably be advisable to use the entire western half of the block between Pioneer Street and Smith Street. This would provide an area of approximately 1.4 acres. In addition to the businesses/uses listed above this site would also require the relocation of another business and a single-family residence. On a site of this size, given the dimensions of the block, 870 spaces could be provided in a 5-floor structure.

Alternative	1	1A	2	3	4	4 A
Number of Floors	3	3	4	7	7	5
Land Area for Garage	2.4 acres	5.17 acres	1.8 acres*	1.1 acres*	.9 acres	1.4 acres
Number of Garage Stalls**	820	820	830	830	830	870
Number of Businesses Displaced	4	4	1	0	3	4
Number of Residences Displaced	5	5	0	0	0	1

\*The actual buildable area of these sites would be less to allow for future setback from a grade separation project at James Street.

\*\* With ground floor retail fewer parking stalls can be provided on the first floor of the parking garage, reducing the total amount of stalls by approximately 15 to 20, depending on the total amount of area provided for retail.

#### **FUNDING:**

See attached Table for a comparison of costs for the Kent commuter rail station parking garage site alternatives. The Sound Transit adopted 1998 budget includes \$6.649 million for the Kent commuter rail station. Sounder Commuter Rail will be proposing an adjustment of \$2 million to be added to the Kent budget in the upcoming budget process, bringing the Sound Transit budget up to \$8.649. In addition, the City of Kent has made a commitment to provide up to \$4 million towards a parking structure for the commuter rail station, which will bring the total available up to \$12.649 million. The 1998 budget estimated right-of-way costs for the Kent Station would be \$3.3 million.

#### **CONSEQUENCES OF DELAY:**

Delay in identifying a preferred alternative for the parking garage for the Kent commuter rail station will delay initiation of pre-acquisition activities with potentially affected property owners. It would also delay providing information about ST's preferred alternative to the FTA for consideration in its environmental review. Delay of the siting decision for the parking garage for the Kent commuter rail station will delay the design and construction of the parking garage.

#### **LEGAL REVIEW:**

Upon review of the background and comments and the motion, the Legal Department finds both to be legally acceptable.

COST COMPARISON TABLE

Alternative	1	1A	2	3	4	4A
Property	2.4 acres	5.17 acres	1.8 acres	1.1 acres	.9 acres	1.4 acres
Garage Parking Spaces	820	820	830	830	830	830
Estimated Garage Construction Cost*	\$6.56M	\$6.56M	\$6.64M	\$6.64M	\$6.64M	\$6.64M
Assessed Value (Land & Improvements)	\$1.02M	\$1.6M	\$6M	\$2M	\$.65	\$.77
Relocation Costs	\$576,000-864,000	\$576,000-864,000	\$168,000-252,000	-0-	\$624,000-786,000	\$664,000-846,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	\$8,156,000-8,444,000	\$8,736,000-9,024,000	\$7,408,000-7,492,000	\$6,840,000-0	\$7,914,000-8,076,000	\$7,954,000-8,136,000

\*Garage construction costs assumed at \$8,000 per parking stall. Construction costs do not include land and relocation costs, nor do they include providing retail space in garage.



**SOUND TRANSIT**

**MOTION NO. M98-73**

A motion of the Board of the Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority to designate a preferred site for the parking garage for the Kent commuter rail station and direct staff to finalize environmental review of the parking garage.

**Background:**

Sound Move and the "Implementation Guide" call for service to begin between Tacoma and Seattle by year-end 1999. The Environmental Assessment for the Tacoma-to-Seattle Commuter Rail Project implementation was completed in May 1998 and received a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) on June 10, 1998 from the Federal Transit Administration. The final decision regarding the Downtown Kent station selection had been postponed until the City of Kent identified funding for a parking garage to accommodate station parking. The City of Kent has approved \$4 million to contribute to the funding of a parking garage structure.

On June 11, 1998 the Board selected the "north" station site for the commuter rail station in Kent. With that the decision, the Board also determined that the Kent commuter rail station should include a parking garage structure for 500 or more parking spaces, pending environmental review and the City of Kent's participation.


Should the Board designate Alternative 1 as the preferred site, certain property acquisition activities could take place only after the Federal Transit Administration issues a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) on the parking garage structure. Once FTA issues the FONSI, final approval of the site selection will be requested of the Board.

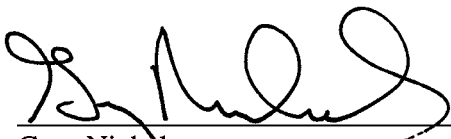
**Motion:**

It is hereby moved by the Board of the Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority that Alternative No. 1A be designated the preferred site for the parking garage location at the commuter rail station in Kent and direct staff to finalize environmental review of the parking garage.

Approved by the Board of the Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority at a regular meeting thereof on the 22<sup>nd</sup> day of October, 1998.

ATTEST:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Marcia Walker  
Board Administrator

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Greg Nickels  
Board Vice-Chair

### COST COMPARISON OF ALTERNATIVE 1 OPTIONS

	<b>All Surface Parking</b>	<b>Alternative 1 - Option A: Two-Floor Garage</b>	<b>Alternative 1 - Option B: Two-Floor Garage</b>	<b>Alternative 1 - Option C: Three-Floor Garage</b>
<b>Property Required</b>	6.55 acres	6.5 acres	5.26 acres	4.41 acres
<b>Garage Parking Spaces</b>	0	440	440	560
<b>Surface Parking Spaces</b>	810	370	370	250
<b>Estimated Parking Construction Cost</b>	\$6.5m	\$8.8m	\$8.8m	\$10.0m
<b>Land &amp; Improvements (Assessed Value)</b>	\$2.3m	\$2.4m	\$2.0m	\$1.8m
<b>Relocation Costs</b>	\$1.5 – 2.2m	\$1.5 - \$2.2m	\$1.3 – 1.9m	\$1.3 - \$1.9m
<b>TOTAL for Land &amp; Relocation only</b>	\$3.8 – 4.5m	\$3.9 - \$4.6m	\$3.3 – 3.9m	\$3.1 - \$3.7m