

## SOUND TRANSIT

### MOTION NO. M99-5

#### Identifying the route, station locations and the operations and maintenance facility site for the Tacoma Link light rail line

#### BACKGROUND AND COMMENTS

Meeting:	Date:	Type of Action:	Staff Contact:	Phone:
Executive Committee	2/5/99	Recommend Board Approval	Paul Bay	689-4761
Board of Directors	2/11/99	Board Approval	Sue Comis	689-7430
			Mary Jo Porter	684-2182

#### ACTION:

- ◆ Adopt a motion of the Board of the Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority identifying the route, station locations, and the operations and maintenance facility site for the Tacoma Link light rail line.

#### BACKGROUND:

Tacoma Link light rail is one element of a ten-year, \$3.9 billion (1995\$) regional investment in high capacity transit. It will provide a fast, reliable, cost-effective transportation alternative connecting downtown Tacoma with the Tacoma Dome district and will serve major destinations along the route including the Theater District, the central business district, the Convention Center, the University of Washington's Tacoma Campus, and museums. *Sound Move* includes light rail service connecting downtown Tacoma with the regional transit terminal near the Tacoma Dome.

The light rail project corridor forms an "L" shape, extending west from the Tacoma Dome area and then turning north into downtown Tacoma. To facilitate study and to focus local discussion, the project was divided into two segments: east-west and north-south. Three east-west alternatives and two north-south alternatives were studied in the final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). Variations on these alternatives were also studied in the final EIS. The final EIS was published on January 21, 1999.

The east-west segment extends from the Tacoma Dome Station west to Pacific Avenue, serving the Tacoma Dome Station, Freighthouse Square, the planned Sounder commuter rail station, and the Tacoma Dome district. The east-west route alternatives studied include Puyallup Avenue, East 25<sup>th</sup> Street and in a shared corridor next to the existing railroad tracks parallel to East 25<sup>th</sup> Street. Two light rail stations are planned for the east-west segment, Tacoma Dome station and South 24<sup>th</sup> Street Area station.

The staff recommends a single track on East 25<sup>th</sup> Street for the following reasons:

- Greatest urban design benefits to Tacoma Dome Station Phase II
- Located midway between commuter rail and bus
- Provides visibility to retail businesses at Freighthouse Square
- Most support from businesses including Tacoma Dome District Development Group
- Mitigates freight loading impacts
- Mitigates some on-street parking impacts
- Lower cost than double track

The north-south segment begins at East 25<sup>th</sup> Street and continues north through the commercial core along Pacific Avenue or a combination of Pacific Avenue and Commerce Street. The Pacific Avenue route extends from South 25<sup>th</sup> Street and Pacific Avenue to the north end of downtown Tacoma terminating at a station just north of South 9<sup>th</sup> Street. The Pacific Avenue and Commerce Street route runs north from South 25<sup>th</sup> Street and Pacific Avenue on Pacific to South 17<sup>th</sup> Street where it crosses over to Commerce Street through the existing Chevron service station site. The route terminates at a station on Commerce Street north of South 9<sup>th</sup> Street.

The staff recommends a single track on Pacific from East 25<sup>th</sup> Street to the vicinity of the University/Museum station and further study of the two alternatives from that point north: the Pacific Avenue alternative and the Pacific to Commerce alternative. This will allow time to resolve some outstanding questions related to utility relocations and parking impacts, while proceeding with final design on the rest of the Tacoma Link project.

Four potential operations and maintenance facility sites, all near the Tacoma Dome, were studied in the final EIS. Two of the sites are no longer available. One site will be used by Sounder commuter rail for train storage until its Lakewood storage yard is constructed. The other site has been sold. The two remaining sites are on the south side of East 25<sup>th</sup> Street. One is a block west of Freighthouse Square partially in the I-705 right of way. One, known as the Recycle Facility Alternative, is east of and adjacent to Freighthouse Square between East "G" and "I" Streets. The staff recommends the Recycle Facility Alternative.

A number of projects are planned for the coming 5 years in downtown Tacoma, for example, an expanded convention center and a new art museum. Along with the light rail project, these have the potential to cause disruption if schedules are not coordinated. In addition, they will impact ridership. Therefore, the motion directs staff to coordinate the construction schedule for the Tacoma light rail with other projects planned in downtown.

Attached is a briefing book, which provides the following information for the east-west and the north-south segments and the operations and maintenance base sites:

- ◆ Introduction to Tacoma Link and alternatives description
- ◆ Map of route and station alternatives
- ◆ Major advantages and disadvantages of each alternative
- ◆ Public comments and responses
- ◆ Comparison of capital and operating costs

- ◆ Comparative evaluations of the route and operations and maintenance base site alternatives

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

- ◆ Adoption of *Sound Move*, the Ten-Year Regional Transit System Plan (May 31, 1996)  
*Sound Move* includes light rail service connecting downtown Tacoma with the regional transit terminal near the Tacoma Dome.
- ◆ Motion No. R98-48 (June 25, 1998)

Motion No. R98-48 identified the most promising route alternatives to be studied in the Tacoma Link light rail draft EIS and in conceptual design.

- ◆ Adoption of Fiscal Year 1999 Budget (November 12, 1998)

The 1999 budget includes funds for final design activities and the acquisition of rights of way. Funds for vehicle procurement were also included.

- ◆ Adoption of Implementation Guide (May 22, 1997)

The Implementation Guide calls for Sound Transit to begin service on downtown Tacoma light rail service in the 2001-2003 period.

#### **KEY FEATURES:**

- ◆ Identification of the route, station locations and operations and maintenance facility site allows final design and right-of-way activities to proceed.
- ◆ The procurement of vehicles would be facilitated by the identification of the route.

#### **FUNDING: Please note that all amounts are presented in 1995 dollars.**

*Sound Move* included \$65 million for the development of Tacoma Link and operations of the line from its opening through 2006. The capital cost estimates for the various possible routes range from \$50 to \$60 million. Operating expenses are estimated to average approximately \$3 million per year for each of years from 2002 to and including 2006. Thus, the estimates to develop and operate Tacoma Link total approximately \$65 million to \$75 million.

#### **ALTERNATIVES:**

The alternatives evaluated in the final EIS were those identified as the “most promising” segment alternatives, station locations and operations and maintenance facility sites by the Board on June 25, 1998 in Motion R98-48. Based on public comments, variations to the segment alternatives were studied in the final EIS. A No-Action alternative, which represents the transportation systems and conditions projected to be in place in the 2010 forecast year without Tacoma Link, was also studied in the final EIS. One alternative to the proposed actions would be for the Board

to select the No-Action alternative. Another alternative would be to propose new segments to be studied and to delay the proposed actions until such study is completed.

**CONSEQUENCES OF DELAY:**

Identification of the operations and maintenance facility site at this time is essential if final design, right of way acquisition and vehicle procurement is to proceed and to take advantage of current vehicle procurement opportunities.

**LEGAL REVIEW:**

The Legal Department has reviewed the motions and this Background and Comments.

## **SOUND TRANSIT**

### **MOTION NO. M99-5**

A motion of the Board of the Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority identifying the route, station locations, and the operations and maintenance facility site for the Tacoma Link light rail line.

#### **Background:**

Tacoma Link light rail is one element of a ten-year, \$3.9 billion (1995\$) regional investment in high capacity transit. It will provide a fast, reliable, cost-effective transportation alternative connecting downtown Tacoma with the Tacoma Dome district and will serve major destinations along the route including the Theater District, the central business district, the Convention Center, the University of Washington's Tacoma Campus, and museums. *Sound Move* includes light rail service connecting downtown Tacoma with the regional transit terminal near the Tacoma Dome.

The light rail project corridor forms an "L" shape, extending west from the Tacoma Dome area and then turning north into downtown Tacoma. To facilitate study and to focus local discussion, the project was divided into two segments: east-west and north-south. This motion presents the staff recommendation for the east-west segment and the southern part of the north-south segment. It requests further study of two north-south segment alternatives, one on Pacific and one on Pacific to Commerce. It also presents the staff recommendation for the operations and maintenance base site. Finally, it directs the staff to coordinate the construction schedule of the line with other projects in the City of Tacoma.

This motion is intended to identify (a) the route for the east-west segment and southern part of the north-south segment; (b) the route alternatives requiring further study for the northern part of the north-south segment; (c) the station locations, which depend on the combination of segments; and (d) the location of the operations and maintenance facility site relative to the light rail route, including access to the site from the route identified.

#### **Motion:**

It is hereby moved by the Board of the Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority that the route, station locations, and the operations and maintenance facility site for Tacoma Link will be as described below:

The line will run along a single-track in the east-west direction on East 25<sup>th</sup> Street. The line will begin at the Tacoma Dome Station on the north side of East 25th Street just west of East "E" Street. The line will bend slightly south toward the center of the street and continue west to Pacific Avenue. On Pacific Avenue it will continue as a single-track north to the vicinity of the University of Washington Tacoma/State History Museum, where it would expand to a double track.

The **Tacoma Dome station** will consist of a side platform in the existing sidewalk area on the north side of East 25<sup>th</sup> Street near East "E" Street. At the station, the light rail line will operate on

the north side of East 25<sup>th</sup> Street, vehicular traffic and diagonal parking for Freighthouse Square will continue to operate on the south side of the street. The specific location of the platform will be determined as part of final plans for Phase II of the Tacoma Dome Station parking facility. The station platform will be sited so as not to impede the flow of pedestrians between the Tacoma Dome Station and Freighthouse Square.

The **South 24th Street Area station** will be located at the south curb line on East 25th Street, between East "A" Street and Pacific Avenue.

The **University/Museum station** will be south of the South 19<sup>th</sup> Street pedestrian crossing. The passenger platform will be located in the center of Pacific Avenue between the northbound and southbound tracks.

North of the University/Museum station, the following alternatives require further study with a route decision to be made at a later date:

### **Pacific Avenue Alternative**

From the University/Museum station, the line will operate on Pacific Avenue to the north end of downtown with a terminal station between South 9<sup>th</sup> and South 8<sup>th</sup> streets. The light rail will be double track to South 9<sup>th</sup>, where it would transition to single track at South 9<sup>th</sup> Street.

The **South 13<sup>th</sup> Street Area station** will be located between South 13<sup>th</sup> Street and South 12<sup>th</sup> Street. The passenger platform will be built in the center of Pacific Avenue between the southbound and northbound tracks.

The **Theater District station** will be located between South 9<sup>th</sup> Street and South 8<sup>th</sup> Street. The passenger platform will be built in the center of Pacific Avenue with a single-track on the east side of the platform.

### **Pacific Avenue and Commerce Street Alternative**

From the University/Museum station the line would continue north with a double-track through the crossover at South 17<sup>th</sup> Street and north on Commerce Street.

The **13th Street Area station** will have side passenger platforms between South 15th Street and South 13th Street. The southbound platform will be located just north of South 15th Street on the west sidewalk of Commerce Street. The northbound platform will be located south of South 13th Street on the east sidewalk area of Commerce Street. Sound Transit will construct a sidewalk on the east side of Commerce Street between South 13<sup>th</sup> and South 15<sup>th</sup> Streets.

The **Theater District Station** will be located between South 9<sup>th</sup> Street and South 8<sup>th</sup> Street. The passenger platform will be located on the east side of the single-track light rail within existing Commerce Street right-of-way.

## ***Operations and Maintenance Facility Site***

### **Recycle Facility Alternative**

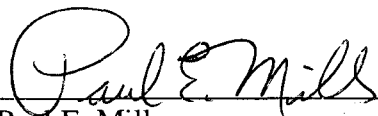
The operations and maintenance facility will be located south of East 25<sup>th</sup> Street between East "G" and East "I" Streets. The light rail line will continue east from the Tacoma Dome station and access the site on a diagonal crossing of East "G" Street.

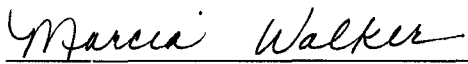
### ***Schedule Coordination***

The Board of Directors hereby directs Sound Transit staff to coordinate with staff of the City of Tacoma to develop the best possible construction schedule for the Tacoma LINK light rail line with the goal of minimizing conflicts with the City and other public and private construction projects in downtown Tacoma.

ADOPTED by the Board of the Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority at a regular meeting thereof held on the 11<sup>th</sup> day of February, 1999.

ATTEST:

  
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Paul E. Miller  
Board Chair

  
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Marcia Walker  
Board Administrator