

SOUND TRANSIT

MOTION NO. M2000-05

Selection of Corridor Improvements and Station Locations For the Everett-to-Seattle Commuter Rail Line

BACKGROUND AND COMMENTS

Meeting:	Date:	Type of Action:	Staff Contact:	Phone:
Board	1/13/2000	Action	Paul Price Barry Hennelly	206.398.5111 206.689.4925

PROPOSED ACTION:

The proposed action is the Board's selection of the corridor improvements and station locations for the Everett-to-Seattle commuter rail line.

Previously, on November 18, 1999, in a related action (Motion M99-79), the Board identified a preferred alternative for the project, which was a necessary step to completing the final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS). The Board has also conditionally approved the purchase of rail cars pending the completion of environmental review in a related action (Motion M99-81). The Board is also requested to reconfirm its authorization now that the FEIS has been issued.

The FEIS was issued on December 17, 1999. It was prepared in compliance with both the State and National Environmental Policy Acts (SEPA and NEPA). One the main purposes of the FEIS is to inform Board decision-making, and staff is returning to the Board at this time since the Board now has had the opportunity to review and consider the environmental effects of the project and alternatives to the project. Board action is also necessary for formal transmittal to the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) of the "locally preferred alternative" (LPA). The LPA is necessary in order for FTA to complete the Record of Decision (ROD), which will conclude the NEPA process.

Sound Transit has requested that FTA issue the ROD, as well as authorization to enter final design, by January 24, 2000. These steps must be completed in order to execute the option for purchase of the remaining rail cars from Bombardier by the end January 2000. Failure to execute that option likely will result in a (one-time) retooling charge of \$3-5 million and possible re-negotiation of the rail car contract.

KEY FEATURES:

Highlights of Proposed Action

- ◆ Selects the series of station and corridor improvements the Board wishes to pursue, construct, and put into service on the Everett-to-Seattle commuter rail line.
- ◆ Provides staff with direction for what to transmit to FTA as the LPA for issuance of the ROD and final design authorization.
- ◆ Reconfirm previous Board action for conditional authorization for purchase of the rail cars from Bombardier now that the FEIS has been issued.

Description

The Final Environmental Impact Statement identifies a preferred alternative for the *Everett-to-Seattle Commuter Rail Project Environmental Impact Statement*. The preferred alternative was based upon written and oral testimony collected during the public involvement period for the EIS, comments offered by the various environmental agencies and local governments consulting on the project, Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway's operational requirements, and Sound Transit's schedule and budget constraints.

Staff recommends that the preferred alternative be selected as the project to be built. The specific station locations and corridor improvements are identified below.

Station Alternatives

The following station locations are recommended for Board selection. Alternative 1b....Everett Multimodal Facility (a.k.a. "Everett Station")

- ◆ Alternative 2a....Mukilteo Multimodal Terminal, modified to include fewer parking spaces in the immediate vicinity of the station, while including the possibility of remote parking
- ◆ Alternative 3a....The existing Edmonds Amtrak Facility
- ◆ Alternative 4b....The Point Wells site for a Shoreline/Richmond Beach station
- ◆ No Ballard Alternative is identified as preferred at this time. Ballard is included in *Sound Move* as a provisional station.
- ◆ Alternative 6....Seattle Waterfront Station at Broad Street. Broad Street is neither a funded station, nor was it included in *Sound Move*.

Alternative 1b includes only the Everett Station multi-modal facility, and removes the Bond Street Station from further consideration. Difficulties associated with the Bond Street site included parking constraints, marginal transit access, and traffic impacts to local streets. Patrons who would have used the Bond Street site will be well served by the Everett Station site. The City of Everett has chosen to focus its attention on the Everett Station facility, in an effort to provide one centralized multi-modal facility. Savings from this project could potentially be used for other commuter rail projects in Everett. Removing the Bond Street Station from the project will require a change to *Sound Move*. Sounder staff will prepare the requisite resolution consistent with Board adopted criteria to change *Sound Move* and the budget well in advance of any re-allocation of funds intended for this station.

Alternative 2a includes the Mukilteo commuter rail station and leaves open the possibility of a remote parking facility. The commuter rail station will be sited in a manner that allows for parking expansion at a later date, as required. The parking at the station site will also have to be moved in the future as the Mukilteo multi-modal facility is developed. It also leaves Sound Transit participation in a remote parking facility, in partnership with the City and Community Transit, available as an option.

Alternative 3a, the existing Edmonds Amtrak facility, was chosen as an interim site until the planned Edmonds multimodal facility is constructed. To the extent practicable, improvements at this site will be designed in a manner that allows for future relocation.

The Shoreline and Ballard station locations were included in *Sound Move* as provisional station locations. No funds were allocated to these station locations during the formulation of *Sound Move*, and no funding exists in the Sound Transit budget for these station locations at this time. The City of Shoreline and its citizens were able to narrow the station site alternatives offered in the EIS to two, and of these, Point Wells (Alternative 4b) is identified as the site with the fewest potential impacts by Sound Transit staff. While several agencies and municipalities are vying for use of this site, a Sound Transit commuter rail facility could adapt to any of their proposed uses with few impacts.

The Ballard Station location was the focus of a considerable community discussion. The FEIS is sufficient in every technical detail in analyzing the two potential station sites in Ballard. However, it is likely that both potential sites in Ballard would need to be taken to the 30 % design phase before the community could make a decision that would be satisfactory in the long term.

A station site on the north Seattle waterfront was also considered in the FEIS as the “Seattle Waterfront Station at Broad Street” (Alternative 6). The FEIS assessed the impacts providing a station at this location. While this station location was not included in *Sound Move*, it was included in the EIS at the request of the public and Board members for a station serving Seattle’s north downtown and waterfront areas. If the Board chose to construct a station at this location *Sound Move* would need to be amended and additional funding secured, presumably from the North King County subarea.

Corridor Improvements

The Corridor Improvements (CI’s) considered in the FEIS consist of the track, signal, and switch improvements. Those recommended for selection are CI’s 1 through 13, 15, 16, 18 “a” and “b,” and 20 through 24. This package includes all of the improvements referred to in the FEIS as the Modified Corridor Improvement Alternative (MCIA). The MCIA is a series of track improvements that restore the corridor to its historic double track configuration. The MCIA does not include all passing (third) track sections proposed in the “full build” alternative examined in the EIS. The MCIA is the result of the preliminary engineering and agency coordination effort (“Parallel Process”) the Board funded in December of 1998. As a result of this process cumulative impacts on the Puget Sound *intertidal areas affected by this project have dropped from 35.5 acres to 2.72 acres.*

The recommended CI’s include several universal crossovers, double track segments and signal improvements located throughout the corridor.

In areas where corridor improvements require construction in, or in waters immediately adjacent to, the Puget Sound, a 2:1 side slope fill topped by a concrete block wall will be used to minimize the amount of material required for the improvement. Corridor Improvements impacting the waters of the Puget Sound will be constructed in accordance with the methods and materials established during the “Parallel Process” sanctioned by the Board in December 1998.

IMPORTANCE OF ACTION:

Consequences of Delay

Delay by the Board would delay the FTA issuance of a ROD and authorization to enter final design for the Everett-to-Seattle corridor. These FTA actions are required prior to Sound Transit exercising its contract option (approved as Motion No. M99-81 on December 9, 1999) to purchase the passenger coaches necessary for the operation of Everett-to-Seattle service. Sound Transit must exercise its option to purchase rail cars from Bombardier during January 2000, or possibly be subjected to a (one-time) retooling charge of \$3-5 million and possible re-negotiation of the rail car contract. Staff has already explored and implemented

several strategies to extend the date for exercising the options already extended from July 1999 to January 2000. Sound Transit could delay, with the knowledge that the delay would result in the retooling fee and possible re-negotiation of the purchase price for the rail cars.

Alternatives

The Board could select other alternatives identified in the FEIS.

Public Involvement

Everett-to-Seattle EIS Public Hearings:

- ◆ Ballard – Monday, July 12, 1999 & Thursday, July 29, 1999
- ◆ Mukilteo – Tuesday, July 13, 1999 & Wednesday, August 4, 1999
- ◆ Shoreline – Thursday, July 15, 1999
- ◆ Edmonds – Monday, July 19, 1999
- ◆ Everett – Wednesday, July 21, 1999

City of Woodway Technical Briefing (CI-20) – Monday, August 2, 1999

Meetings with public agencies, community and business organizations:

- ◆ People for Puget Sound – July 13, 1999
- ◆ Snohomish County Tomorrow Group – July 14, 1999 & July 22, 1999
- ◆ City of Shoreline – July 19, 1999
- ◆ Brackett’s Landing – July 22, 1999

Interagency Technical Group: Parallel Process – August 17, 1999 & September 16, 1999

Meeting with representatives of Native American Tribes:

- ◆ Tulalip – July 29, 1999
- ◆ Muckleshoot – August 17, 1999
- ◆ Suquamish – August 17, 1999

BUDGET:

Sound Transit’s funding for the project can be found in the 2000 Budget adopted by the Board on November 18, 1999. That budget is detailed as follows:

Page In Budget	Project Number	Description	Total Available Capital Budget (YOE \$)
79	100	Everett-to-Seattle (Track & Facilities)	74,463,000
83	201	Everett Multimodal Station	15,504,000
84	203	Bond St. Station (Everett)	1,169,000
85	204	Mukilteo Station	7,677,000
86	207	Edmonds Station	7,676,000
TOTAL			\$106,489,000

The station budgets are anticipated to be adequate to fund design, property acquisition, construction and outfitting of the station facilities. (With the adoption of this motion, the budget listed for Bond Street could

be transferred to the Everett Station multi-modal facility. A resolution to change *Sound Move* and the Budget to this effect would be submitted for Board action prior to any such transfer of funds.)

The budget for Everett-to-Seattle Track & Facilities (Project No. 100) is \$74,463,000, or 70% of the overall capital budget for the Everett-to-Seattle project. However, of the \$74,463,000, a maximum of \$37,338,000 (including contingencies) is available for the design and construction of the non-station Corridor Improvements recommended for inclusion in the project. The recommended Corridor Improvements are projected to cost approximately \$110,000,000. (Note that cost estimates for Corridor Improvements are based only on the engineering done to date, which was intended to support EIS process rather than to yield specific, accurate cost estimates. Accordingly, cost estimates are extremely preliminary at this time.)

The difference between the projected cost of engineering and constructing the Corridor Improvements, and the maximum available ST budget, could amount to a \$73,000,000 shortfall. The current (potential) shortfall could be addressed using variety of funding sources. Examples of these sources include the Washington State Department of Transportation rail program, traditional regional and statewide transportation grant sources, the Federal Railroad Administration and the Burlington Northern and Santa Fe Railway.

While the shortfall is large, there is precedent for the assumption that it can be addressed through partnerships and other means. In the Tacoma-to-Seattle commuter rail corridor, for example, \$320,000,000 in track, signal and grade crossing improvements are planned. Of that amount, Sound Transit will contribute \$200,000,000 and WSDOT, prior to the passage of Initiative 695, agreed to contribute \$60,000,000. The remainder was to come from other public and private sources including the railroads, the ports, and various grant sources.

NEXT STEPS:

Staff submitted a Final Design authorization request to the Federal Transit Administration on December 30, 1999. Staff will return to the Board, as required, when undertaking implementing actions, such as contracting for design and construction.

LEGAL REVIEW AND SUPPORTING ACTIONS:

Legal Review

MBL 1/4/00.

Relevant Board Policies and Previous Actions Taken

- ◆ Adoption of Sound Move, the Ten-Year Regional Transit System Plan (May 31, 1996)
- ◆ Adoption of Implementation Guide (May 22, 1997)
- ◆ Contract with Huckell/Weinman Associates for the Everett to Seattle Commuter Rail EIS (April 20, 1998)
- ◆ Contract amendment with Huckell/Weinman Associates for the Everett to Seattle Commuter Rail EIS (December 10, 1998)
- ◆ Contract with Anchor Environmental for permitting of the Everett to Seattle Commuter Rail Project (August 19, 1999)

- ◆ Adoption of Board Motion No. M99-79, Identifying the Preferred Alternative for the Everett to Seattle Commuter Rail Project (November 18, 1999)
- ◆ Adoption of Motion M99-81, authorizing conditional purchase of commuter rail cars from Bombardier for the Everett-to-Seattle rail line (December 9, 1999)

Regional Partnership and Cooperation

Finding a suitable method to construct the improvements contained in the project would not have been possible without the input and assistance of several state and federal resource agencies, Native American tribes, and the FTA. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, National Marine Fisheries Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Environmental Protection Agency; the Tulalip, Suquamish, and Muckleshoot Tribes; and the Washington Departments of Fish and Wildlife, Ecology, Natural Resources, and Transportation all aided Sound Transit in reaching a successful design alternative that minimized impacts to critical wildlife habitat.

SOUND TRANSIT

MOTION NO. M2000-05

A motion of the Board of the Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority selecting the station locations and corridor improvements to be built for the Everett-to-Seattle Commuter Rail Project.

Background:

The environmental process for the proposed Everett-to-Seattle Commuter Rail Line began in February 1998. The Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) identifies a preferred alternative based upon written and oral testimony collected during the public involvement period, comments offered by the various environmental agencies consulting on the project, Sound Transit's understanding of the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad's operational requirements, and Sound Transit's schedule and budget constraints.

The FEIS was issued on December 17, 1999. Staff is returning to the Board at this time since the Board now has had the opportunity to review and consider the environmental effects of the project and alternatives to the project. Board action is also necessary for formal transmittal to the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) of the "locally preferred alternative" (LPA). The Board has also conditionally approved the purchase of rail cars pending the completion of environmental review in a related action (Motion M99-81). The Board is also requested to reconfirm its authorization now that the FEIS has been issued

Staff recommends that the preferred alternative be selected as the project to be built.

Motion:

It is hereby moved by the Board of the Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority that:

1. The following station locations and corridor improvements (as more fully described in the *Everett to Seattle Commuter Rail Project Final Environmental Impact Statement*) be selected for the Everett to Seattle Commuter Rail Project:

Station Locations:

- ◆ Alternative 1b....Everett Multimodal Facility (a.k.a. "Everett Station")
- ◆ Alternative 2a....Mukilteo Multimodal Terminal, modified to include fewer parking spaces in the immediate vicinity of the station, while including the possibility of remote parking
- ◆ Alternative 3a....The existing Edmonds Amtrak Facility
- ◆ No Shoreline station is identified as preferred at this time. Future consideration for a station at this site will be limited to Alternatives 4b and 4c. Shoreline is included in *Sound Move* as a provisional station.

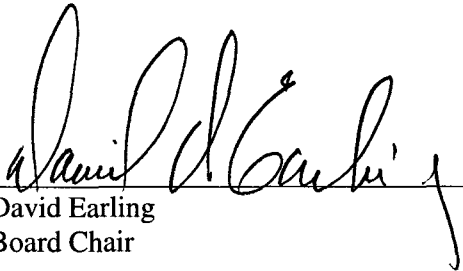
- ◆ No Ballard Alternative is identified as preferred at this time. Ballard is included in *Sound Move* as a provisional station.
- ◆ Alternative 6...Seattle Waterfront Station at Broad Street. Broad Street is neither a funded station, nor was it included in *Sound Move*.

Corridor Improvements:


1 through 13, 15, 16, 18 "a" and "b," and 20 through 24.

2. The Board reconfirms its conditional authorization for purchase of commuter rail cars from Bombardier, pursuant to Motion No. M99-81.

Approved by the Board of the Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority at a regular meeting thereof on the 13th day of January, 2000.


David Earling
Board Chair

ATTEST:


Marcia Walker
Board Administrator