

STAFF REPORT

SOUND TRANSIT MOTION NO. M2000-110

2001 State Legislative Program

Meeting:	Date:	Type of Action:	Staff Contact:	Phone:
Government Affairs Task Force	11/3/00	Meeting Cancelled	Sheila Dezarn, Government Affairs Manager	(206) 398-5071
Executive Committee	12/1/00	Discussion/Possible Action to Recommend	Patrice Hardy, Government Relations Specialist	(206) 689-4928
Board of Directors	12/14/00	Board Approval Action		

PROPOSED ACTION

Adopting the Sound Transit 2001 State Legislative Program, and directing staff to (1) further evaluate issues for inclusion in the adopted legislative program; and (2) regularly report status of and seek policy guidance on issues as they develop.

KEY FEATURES

Highlights of Proposed Action:

Issues that Sound Transit would advocate:

- ◆ **State Financial Partnership:** Seek a long-term financial partnership with the State of Washington for funding the expansion of the region's high capacity transit system.
- ◆ **Unlawful Public Transportation Conduct:** Seek amendments to add rail vehicles to the definition of municipal transit vehicles (RCW 35.58.272) on which certain activities are prohibited.

Issues that Sound Transit would monitor for support or opposition:

- ◆ **Blue Ribbon Commission on Transportation:** Monitor recommendations to the Legislature from the Blue Ribbon Commission on Transportation.
- ◆ **Signal and Track Improvements for Commuter Rail North Segment:** Support the Department of Transportation in seeking their portion of the signal and track improvements for the north Sounder segment.
- ◆ **Washington State Transit Association:** Support the Washington State Transit Association agenda in protecting local and regional transit funding, seeking additional funding sources for transit systems statewide and exempting public transit from GMA concurrency requirements.
- ◆ **Sound Transit Enabling Statutes:** Oppose legislation that amends Sound Transit enabling legislation without the Board's consent.

Discussion of Proposed Action:

On July 7, 2000 staff presented six issues to the Sound Transit Government Affairs Task Force (GATF) for possible inclusion in the 2001 State Legislative Program. The GATF directed staff to further research and analyze four of these issues – financial partnership with the state of Washington, unlawful conduct on public transportation, exempting public transportation from concurrency requirements, and providing more flexible annexation policies.

Over the past four months staff has met with stakeholders, legislators and state legislative committee staff regarding these issues. Based upon our discussions with these groups and the research we have conducted, staff is recommending that Sound Transit adopt two issues for priority legislation during the 2001 state session. Staff will continue to research annexation issues during the upcoming weeks and may recommend this issue to the Board for the state session at a later date.

In addition to Sound Transit priority legislation staff has also identified several issues the agency will need to monitor for support or opposition during the upcoming session. Staff will continue to advise the Board of emerging issues prior to and during the state session and seek their advice and guidance.

Issues that Sound Transit would advocate:

1. **State Financial Partnership:** Seek a long-term financial partnership with the State of Washington for funding the expansion of the high capacity transit system.
 - A key component of the Sound Move plan includes construction of a light rail program with service from SeaTac to Northgate. The 1996 voter-approved plan clearly stated that light rail from SeaTac to the University District would be funded through voter-approved local taxes, federal funding, bonding and farebox recovery. Sound Move did not assume State funding for the initial segment – SeaTac to University.
 - Sound Move did identify the Northgate segment as a high priority segment for the light rail system and committed that the agency would aggressively seek additional funding for the Northgate segment of the light rail project during phase one of the project.
 - In 1999, the Board reaffirmed its commitment to seek funding for Northgate. During the 2000 State Legislative session Sound Transit sought and secured a \$15 million “down payment” from the State of Washington as part of their financial contribution to the light rail program.
 - Over the interim the Sound Transit Board and staff have met with state legislators, committee staff, and financial experts to analyze an array of funding options which would secure a long term financial partnership. The array of funding options that will continue to be evaluated and explored include, but are not limited to:
 - a. Referral of Sound Transit taxes to an account for high capacity transportation funding (similar to the Washington State Convention Center and the Centennial Clean Water Account).
 - b. Direct appropriations.

2. Unlawful Public Transportation Conduct: Seek amendments to add rail vehicles to the definition of municipal transit vehicles (RCW 35.58.272) on which certain activities are prohibited.
 - State law specifically details activities that are considered “unlawful” when traveling on municipal transit vehicles.
 - Prohibited activities include: smoking, littering, spitting, carrying explosive or dangerous materials, impeding other passengers, destroying or damaging property, harassing others, and playing radios.
 - When the legislature authorized the “Unlawful Bus Conduct Act,” it did not envision the operation of a commuter rail or light rail system within the state. Current statutes do not prohibit these specific activities while traveling on rail vehicles. Sound Transit would seek an amendment to the Act which would also prohibit these activities on light rail and commuter rail systems.

ISSUES THAT SOUND TRANSIT WOULD MONITOR FOR SUPPORT OR OPPOSITION:

1. Blue Ribbon Commission on Transportation: During the 1998 State Legislative session, the Governor, in conjunction with the legislature, authorized the formation of the Blue Ribbon Commission on Transportation (BRCT). The BRCT was charged with reviewing current transportation funding practices and making recommendations for long range funding solutions. Late this fall the BRCT will make a recommendation to the Legislature on transportation funding solutions statewide. The recommendations will include several components that improve efficiencies and delivery of transportation systems statewide as well as alternatives for funding. Sound Transit will monitor these recommendations to insure funding for high capacity transit systems is part of the package.
2. Signal and Track Improvements for Commuter Rail North Segment: Implementation of Sounder Commuter Rail service relies, in part, on signal and track improvements along the existing rail corridor. The track and signal improvements are designed to improve the flow of commuter rail and freight trains through the central Puget Sound. In accordance with Sound Move, Sound Transit, in conjunction with the state Department of Transportation, is responsible for providing monies for track improvements. However, Initiative 695 repealed the state’s funding source for its investment in the rail line. Sound Transit will need to support the state Department of Transportation efforts in recapturing their portion of the signal and track improvements - \$46 million - in the North segment of the Sounder commuter rail line.
3. Washington State Transit Association. The Washington State Transit Association (WSTA) has recently completed work on its 2001 State Legislative Program. WSTA’s legislative program advocates protection of transit funding sources as well as additional state resources to expand transit service statewide. In addition, WSTA will be pursuing amendments to the state Growth Management Act (GMA) which would exempt public transit facilities such as multimodal centers and park and ride facilities from state concurrency requirements. As members of WSTA, Sound Transit supports the association’s agenda and will work with all transit systems statewide to secure its passage.
4. Sound Transit Enabling Statutes. Sound Transit will also oppose any legislation amends Sound Transit’s enabling legislation without the consent of the Sound Transit Board and further opposes any legislation which preempts the authority of the Board to exercise its authority under its enabling legislation.

BUDGET

N/A

ALTERNATIVES

- ◆ Board members may have amendments or revisions to the proposed program.
- ◆ Staff or Board members may recommend changes to the program prior to the date that Legislature convenes (January 8, 2001).

CONSEQUENCES OF DELAY

Sound Transit must begin final preparations for the upcoming session to adequately represent the interests of the agency the Washington State Legislature. Delaying action may minimize our success at achieving the priority legislation.

REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP AND COOPERATION

Sound Transit's ability to achieve the proposed 2001 Legislative Program is strengthened by our partner's participation. To that end, we will continue our weekly coordination efforts with the cities and counties, labor, environmental interests, the region's transit agencies and the various central Puget Sound chambers of commerce. In the past year, as with the upcoming session we will work in concert and cooperation with our partner agencies to advocate on behalf of the agency.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

N/A

LEGAL REVIEW

MBL 10/20/00

SOUND TRANSIT

MOTION NO. M2000-110

A motion of the Board of the Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority adopting the 2001 State Legislative Program.

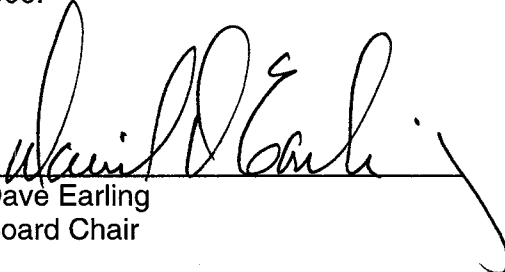
Background:

To provide policy guidance to Sound Transit staff in Olympia, the Board annually adopts a State Legislative Program and directs staff to regularly report on activities affecting the agency prior to and during the legislative session.

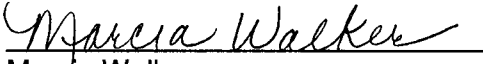
Motion:

It is hereby moved by the Board of the Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority that the attached 2001 State Legislative Program be adopted, and directing staff to (1) further evaluate issues for inclusion in the adopted legislative program; and (2) regularly report status of, and seek policy guidance on, issues as they develop.

APPROVED by the Board of the Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority at a regular meeting thereof held on the 14th day of December, 2000.


Dave Earling
Board Chair

ATTEST:


Marcia Walker
Board Administrator

Attachment

Sound Transit 2001 Legislative Program

I. Priority Legislation

- Seek a State financial partnership that provides for high capacity system expansion and supplements Sound Transit's local and federal revenues. Several examples Sound Transit may pursue include: Re-referral of taxes, or direct appropriation.
- Amend "Unlawful Bus Conduct" legislation to prohibit certain activities on rail vehicles.

II. Monitor for potential support or opposition

- Monitor recommendations from Blue Ribbon Commission on Transportation.
- Support the Department of Transportation in seeking their portion of signal and track improvements for the North Sounder segment.
- Support the Washington Transit Association (WSTA) in securing additional funds for transit systems statewide and adopting amendments to the Growth Management Act exempting transit systems from concurrency requirements.
- Oppose Legislation that amends Sound Transit's enabling legislation without Board consent.