

STAFF REPORT

SOUND TRANSIT MOTION NO. M2000-56

Determination of Lake Washington Ferry Project

Meeting:	Date:	Type of Action:	Staff Contact:	Phone:
Finance Committee	7/6/00	Discussion/Possible Action to Recommend Board Approval	Tony Fuentes, Project Manager, Systems Integration	206-689-3357
Executive Committee	7/7/00	Discussion/ Possible Action to Recommend Board Approval	Barbara Gilliland, Program Manager, Systems Integration	206-398-5051
Finance Committee	7/20/00	Discussion/ Possible Action to Recommend Board Approval		
Board	7/27/00	Action		

PROPOSED ACTION

Per Board direction, a study analyzing the feasibility of a Trans-Lake Washington passenger ferry pilot project was completed. Based on the findings of that study, staff recommends removing the existing placeholder in the 2000 Budget and Capital Plan for the proposed Lake Washington Ferry Pilot Project and reevaluating the feasibility of such a pilot project as part of Phase II.

KEY FEATURES

Highlights of Proposed Action:

- ◆ Removes the existing placeholder in the 2000 Budget and Capital Plan for the proposed Lake Washington Ferry Pilot Project based on the findings of the feasibility study conducted by Parametrix, Inc.
- ◆ Makes available those revenues for other agency needs in-line with the agency's policy on programming unanticipated subarea revenues.
- ◆ Recognizes that the feasibility study suggests that after the completion of Phase I of Sound Move, the potential for ferry ridership may grow considerably. Further, conclusion of the Trans-Lake Washington Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and other pending initiatives for the SR 520 corridor may also influence potential ridership on the proposed ferry pilot program.
- ◆ Directs staff to reexamine the feasibility of a Trans-Lake Washington ferry service at a future date as a part of Phase II.

Discussion of Proposed Action:

In November 1999 the Sound Transit Board passed an amendment to its 2000 Budget that created a placeholder for a proposed Lake Washington Ferry demonstration project. The amendment identified a funding need of \$5.6 million (YOES) over an envisioned two-year duration of a ferry demonstration program. Unanticipated tax revenues for the East King County subarea were identified as the source of funding for this potential project.

At that time, the Sound Transit Board directed staff to conduct further research and analysis regarding the feasibility of a demonstration ferry project to inform its final determination on the proposed ferry program. The Board authorized \$50,000 from the Research and Technology Fund for consultant support for this effort. Parametrix, Inc. was secured to develop a feasibility study.

Parametrix delivered its final report on June 8, 2000. The report provided a blueprint for implementing ferry service from Kirkland to University of Washington (UW). Among other things, the report outlined capital outlays and timelines associated with fleet acquisition and terminal development:

- **Terminal Development:** Cost estimates for development of terminal facilities at the preferred locations at Kirkland and UW (Marina Park in Kirkland and Sakuma Viewpoint Park at UW) were \$250,000. However, associated environmental review and permitting would be a process of up to 15 months or more.
- **Fleet Needs and Costs:** Depending on the selected route and decisions on maintaining a “standby” vessel, fleet needs are 1 – 3 vessels to maintain a 60 minute headway schedule. Vessel costs depend on selection of 49-passenger or 149-passenger vessels. Capital costs for these vessels are estimated at up to \$1 million for a 49-passenger vessel and \$2.8 million for a 149-passenger vessel. The development of vessels would require 1 - 2 years. Operating costs for the vessel alternatives are estimated at \$325 per hour for a 49-passenger vessel and \$400+ per hour for a 149-passenger vessel.

The report also outlined likely ridership and fare revenue outcomes for the proposed pilot program.

- **Ridership and Farebox Recovery:** Under an optimal service configuration proposed by Parametrix, the farebox recovery rate for the best case ridership scenario range is approximately 15 percent, the related net operating cost per boarding for the service is nearly \$8. If the lower range of estimated ridership is applied to this service, the farebox recovery drops to 3 – 5 percent. The net operating cost per boarding, in turn, increases to approximately \$26 to \$44.

Additionally, an initial estimate of ridership for 2010 (that included full implementation of Sound Move Phase I) was also developed. The results of that estimate suggested a potential increase in total ridership for the Kirkland to UW service of up to 47 percent in 2010 over near term implementation estimates. However, conclusion of the Trans-Lake Washington EIS and other pending initiatives for the SR 520 corridor may also influence potential ridership on the proposed ferry pilot program.

The substantial difference between near term and long term estimates indicate that although further investigation of this service is not advisable at this time, another review of this service's potential is warranted as Sound Move is completed.

BUDGET

This action will release the placeholder on \$5.6 million (YOE\$) in East King County subarea unanticipated revenues and the project will not be pursued. The revenues will be made available for other agency priorities identified by the Board per the agency's policy for programming unanticipated subarea revenues.

ALTERNATIVES

The Board could choose to go forward with the envisioned pilot program utilizing the implementation plan developed by Parametrix.

CONSEQUENCES OF DELAY

To support development of the 2001 budget and ensure that staff resources are utilized in a manner that best serves the agency's needs, the Board had requested that completion of the feasibility occur in June with final determination by the Board to follow as soon as possible thereafter. If action on the disposition of this proposed pilot program is delayed, staff time and other resources will be diverted from other pressing needs to this project in the interim.

REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP AND COOPERATION

Sound Transit Board member Jane Hague created an Advisory Committee for the Lake Washington Ferry Project. This committee included representatives from the University of Washington and the City of Kirkland and provided a critical sounding board for the feasibility study as it developed. The involvement of the committee members enabled Parametrix to conclude the study in a timely fashion.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

Beyond involvement of the public as members of the Advisory Committee, Sound Transit and the Advisory Committee solicited the public for comment via direct mail, email, and at two public outreach meetings held in June.

LEGAL REVIEW

Mandie Barnes Lyle, June 20, 2000

SOUND TRANSIT

MOTION NO. M2000-56

A motion of the Board of the Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority moving the two-year demonstration project for a Trans-Lake Washington ferry service to the 2001 budget and capital plan and directing staff to continue evaluation of the feasibility of this demonstration project in 2001.

Background:

In November 1999 the Sound Transit Board passed an amendment to its 2000 Budget that created a placeholder for a proposed Lake Washington Ferry demonstration project. The amendment identified a funding need of \$5.6 million (YOES) over an envisioned two-year duration of a ferry demonstration program. Unanticipated tax revenues for the East King County subarea were identified as the source of funding for this potential project.

At that time, the Sound Transit Board directed staff to conduct further research and analyses regarding the feasibility of a demonstration ferry project to inform its final determination on the proposed ferry program. The Board authorized \$50,000 from the Research and Technology Fund for consultant support for this effort and Parametrix, Inc. was secured to develop a feasibility study.

Parametrix delivered its final report on June 8, 2000. Among other things, the report outlined capital outlays and timelines associated with fleet acquisition and terminal development; ridership and fare revenue estimates for the proposed pilot program; and an initial estimate of ridership for 2010 that included full implementation of Sound Move Phase I.

The results of the Parametrix study suggested that the farebox recovery associated with near term ridership and revenue estimates for the service, the level of capital outlay required, and the lead time for vessel and facility development are such that initiation of this service is not advisable at this time. However, during the study process a number of other issues were raised, including:

1. Potential public-private partnership for program funding
2. Additional options for vessel and route configuration
3. Environmental and recreational impacts of the potential service
4. Long-term ridership potential for the service

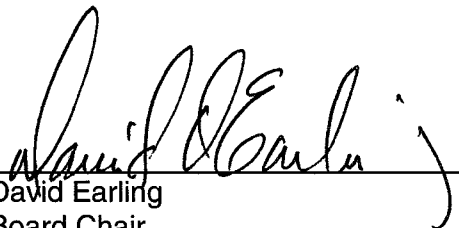
Because of the feasibility study's timeline and resources, these compelling issues have not been fully addressed. These unresolved issues suggest that additional review of this service's potential may be warranted.

Motion:


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

1. The existing placeholder in the FY 2000 Budget and Capital Plan for the proposed Lake Washington Ferry Pilot Project will be removed.
2. In 2001, Sound Transit staff will conduct additional study of the feasibility of a Lake Washington Ferry service. This additional effort will focus on addressing the issues left unappraised by the existing feasibility study.
3. \$50,000 (YOE\$) will be allocated to the additional feasibility study effort. These funds will be programmed from the Research and Technology project.

Approved by the Board of the Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority at a regular meeting thereof on the 27th day of July 2000.


David Earling
Board Chair

ATTEST:


Marcia Walker
Board Administrator