

SOUND TRANSIT

RESOLUTION NO. R2000-07

A RESOLUTION of the Board of the Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority determining that Link Light Rail project funds will not be spent at this time to acquire property to preserve the opportunity to build the South Graham Street station in the future; and that Sound Transit shall work with the City of Seattle and King County Metro to provide improved pedestrian, bicycle, and bus access from the South Graham Street neighborhood to other nearby light rail stations.

WHEREAS, in 1996, pursuant to state law, the Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority (known as "Sound Transit") proposed, and Central Puget Sound voters approved financing for, a ten-year regional transit system plan known as Sound Move; and

WHEREAS, Sound Move includes the Link electric light rail line connecting the cities of SeaTac, Tukwila and Seattle; and

WHEREAS, on November 18, 1999, the Sound Transit Board adopted Resolution No. R99-34, selecting the alignment and profiles, station locations, and vehicle maintenance base site for the Central Link Light Rail Project, and this Resolution provided that construction of a station at South Graham Street would be deferred except for improvements necessary for system expansion to serve South Graham Street ridership; and

WHEREAS, no funding has been identified to date to build a station at South Graham Street; and

WHEREAS, the Sound Transit Board stated in Resolution No. R99-34 that the extension of light rail from the University District to Northgate has the highest priority for the use of any new funds, and further stated that completion of a tunnel station at Beacon Avenue South near South Lander Street should be a high priority for funding after the Northgate segment; and

WHEREAS, due to budget constraints for Link Light Rail and the Sound Transit Board priorities described above for any new funds, it is not expected that funding will be available for construction of a station at South Graham Street in the foreseeable future; and

WHEREAS, to provide the opportunity at this time to build a light rail station at South Graham Street in the future, Sound Transit would need to purchase private property now to widen the light rail right-of-way to accommodate future station platforms, and this right-of-way would not be used in the interim, but it would increase the overall street width of Martin Luther King, Jr. Way South and the distance and length of time for pedestrians to cross the street; and

WHEREAS, Sound Transit's ridership model shows that without a station at South Graham Street, most of the riders who would have boarded at this station would still ride light rail by boarding at either the South Edmunds Street station to the north, or the South Othello Street station to the south; and

WHEREAS, at the public forum held in southeast Seattle on February 16, 2000, to discuss station area planning and station design, citizens agreed that it would be best not to acquire property now to preserve the opportunity for a future station at South Graham Street; and

WHEREAS, the Rainier Valley Transit Advisory Council (RVTAC) met on February 24, 2000, and participants at that meeting agreed that it would be best not to acquire property now to preserve the opportunity for a future station at South Graham Street; and

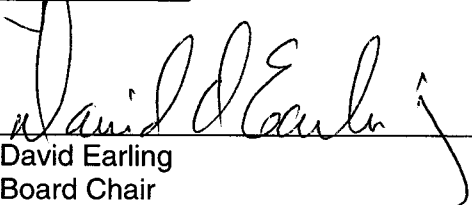
WHEREAS, the benefits of a possible future station are currently outweighed by the near-term costs in terms of property acquisition and widening of the light rail right-of-way; and

WHEREAS, on March 13, 1999, the Seattle City Council adopted a resolution recommending to the Sound Transit Board of Directors that Link Light Rail project funding not be used now to acquire property to preserve the opportunity to build a future station on Martin Luther King, Jr. Way South at South Graham Street, and that Sound Transit work with the City

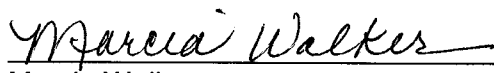
of Seattle and King County Metro to provide improved pedestrian, bicycle, and bus access for the neighborhood near South Graham Street to other nearby light rail stations.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of the Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority that project funding shall not be used to acquire property at this time to preserve the opportunity to build the South Graham Street station in the future; improved pedestrian, bicycle, and bus access shall be provided from the South Graham Street neighborhood to other nearby light rail stations.

ADOPTED by the Board of the Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority at a regular meeting thereof held on the 25th day of May 2000.


David Earling
Board Chair

ATTEST:


Marcia Walker
Board Administrator

STAFF REPORT

SOUND TRANSIT RESOLUTION NO. R2000-07

South Graham Street Station Changes

Meeting:	Date:	Type of Action:	Staff Contact:	Phone:
Executive Committee	5/19/00	Discussion, Recommend	Paul Bay, Director	206-398-5134
Board of Directors	5/25/00	Board Action Action	Mary Jo Porter, Deputy Director	206-398-5210

PROPOSED ACTION

Determines that at this time, the property will not be purchased to accommodate a future South Graham Street Station and directs staff to work with the City of Seattle and King County Metro to improve pedestrian, bicycle, and bus access in the Graham Street neighborhood to other nearby light rail stations.

KEY FEATURES

Highlights of Proposed Action:

- ◆ Determines that no system funding will be used at this time to acquire property to preserve the opportunity to build the South Graham Street station in the future.
- ◆ Directs staff to work with the City of Seattle and King County Metro to improve pedestrian, bicycle, and bus access for the neighborhood near South Graham Street to other nearby light rail stations.

Discussion of Proposed Action:

When the Sound Transit Board chose a final alignment and station locations in Resolution No. R99-34 on November 18, 1999, for the Central Link Light Rail line, some stations were identified as "deferred." These were locations for future stations, deferred until adequate funds were identified to build them. To ensure that the station could be added in the future, staff was directed to perform work necessary to accommodate that. In the case of South Graham Street, this would require purchasing some properties along Martin Luther King, Jr. Way South, and holding them until adequate funds became available for completion.

However, purchasing and holding property now for future development at an unspecified time creates uncertainties that would make development of surrounding properties more difficult. Sound Transit's property purchase would also result in widening Martin Luther King, Jr. Way South to accommodate a future station platform, thereby increasing the distance and length of time for pedestrians to cross the street in a community that has expressed strong concerns about pedestrian safety.

Other nearby stations offer a reasonable alternative to potential riders, who would be served well by stations to be built at Edmunds and Othello, as ridership modeling has shown. Meanwhile, no funding has been identified to date to build the station and Resolution No. R99-34 identifies both the Northgate segment and the Beacon Hill station as highest priorities for additional funds when they are identified.

At this time, the benefits of a possible future station do not appear to outweigh the near-term costs in terms of property acquisition and street widening. Staff recommends that no project funds be used to acquire property now for a future station and to refocus efforts on ways to improve access for people in the South Graham Street neighborhood to get to other nearby stations.

BUDGET

A net cost savings is anticipated. The amount will be determined after the exact scope of the improvements to bus, pedestrian, and bike access is known and Sound Transit's financial responsibility, if any, for these improvements is determined.

ALTERNATIVES

Keep the station in the project as a "deferred" station but direct staff not to acquire any properties to accommodate it at this time.

CONSEQUENCES OF DELAY

- Staff will continue to work on design and other issues related to future construction of a station at South Graham Street, adding to project costs, diverting staff resources away from other station work, and creating uncertainty for affected property owners.
- Property acquisition work will continue.

REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP AND COOPERATION

The City of Seattle has adopted a resolution asking Sound Transit not to spend project funds now on property acquisition to accommodate a future South Graham Street station for the reasons above; and to improve pedestrian, bicycle, and bus access from the neighborhood near South Graham Street to other nearby light rail stations.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

- At the public forum held in southeast Seattle on February 16, 2000, to discuss station area planning and station design, citizens said that a station at South Graham Street would be an amenity, however they also agreed that it would be best not to acquire property and businesses now to preserve the opportunity for a future station at South Graham Street.
- The Rainier Valley Transit Advisory Council (RVTAC) met on February 24, 2000, and participants at that meeting agreed that it would be best not to acquire property now to preserve the opportunity for a future station at South Graham Street.
- At a Rainier Chamber of Commerce meeting on March 2, 2000, attendees said that they preferred not to have a station at South Graham Street because of the additional businesses that would have to be purchased, even though there is no certainty a station will be built in the future.

- The neighbors at Dearborn Park Community Council were interested in the station and were disappointed to see it deferred. They know that the Othello station is in very close proximity, and have not pursued reinstatement of the South Graham Street Station.

LEGAL REVIEW

MBL 05/03/00