

**Sound Transit  
Board Meeting Summary Minutes  
January 11, 2001**

**Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order by Chair Dave Earling at 2:37 p.m. in the Board Room of Union Station, 401 South Jackson Street, Seattle, Washington.

**Roll Call**

Chair

(P) Dave Earling, City of Edmonds Council President

Vice Chairs

(P) David Enslow, City of Sumner Councilmember  
(P) Greg Nickels, King County Councilmember

Board Members

(P) Jack Crawford, City of Kenmore Deputy Mayor	(P) Rob McKenna, King County Councilmember
(A) Ann Davis, City of Lakewood Councilmember	(P) Sid Morrison, WSDOT Secretary of Transportation
(P) Bob Drewel, Snohomish County Executive	(P) Kevin Phelps, City of Tacoma Deputy Mayor
(P) Mary Gates, City of Federal Way Councilmember	(P) Paul Schell, City of Seattle Mayor
(A) Jane Hague, King County Councilmember	(P) Ron Sims, King County Executive
(A) Ed Hansen, City of Everett Mayor	(P) Cynthia Sullivan, King County Councilmember
(P) John Ladenburg, Pierce County Executive	(P) Jim White, City of Kent Mayor
(P) Richard McIver, City of Seattle Councilmember	

Ms. Marcia Walker, Board Administrator, indicated a quorum of the Board was present.

The following Board members arrived after roll call:

Bob Drewel, Snohomish County Executive  
Mary Gates, City of Federal Way Councilmember  
Rob McKenna, King County Councilmember  
Ron Sims, King County Executive

**Report of the Chair**

Mr. Earling welcomed Mr. John Ladenburg, Pierce County Executive, to his first Sound Transit Board meeting.

He advised that the Board would be making a very important decision today. He stated that the first part of the meeting would be a staff presentation on Central Link, followed by public comment, and concluding with the consideration of three action items.

**Executive Director Report**

Mr. Bob White, Executive Director, stated that the night before he had the honor of presenting a Certification of Appreciation to the 100,000<sup>th</sup> rider of the Sounder Commuter Rail system. He added that in the 3-1/2 months since service began, ridership had grown to over 1,300 daily riders. Utilization had already reached a point equal to or greater than a number of West Coast commuter rail systems that have been operating for years.

## **Presentation on "Moving Forward with Central Link" Briefing Book**

Mr. White stated that the presentation on Moving Forward with Central Link would summarize the briefing book which had been provided to Board members (copy on file). The presentation would outline the six-month work program, including steps the Board and staff can take to move forward with this project. It also would outline the action taken or planned to rebuild public and Board confidence in Sound Transit staff's ability to manage such a significant project.

He complimented the Sound Transit staff and consultants on the work they had accomplished in a short period of time. He added that the staff had provided information to the public and gave them the opportunity to comment on the issues before the Board at open houses which were held Monday and Tuesday.

Mr. White acknowledged the recommended budget for Central Link from NE 45th to SeaTac would be \$3.6 billion in year of expenditure dollars and the recommended schedule would open the system in November 2009. He added that the scope had not changed and would continue to be the same as approved by the Board in November 1999.

He mentioned that the Board had been provided with information about the financial strategies to cover additional costs. Mr. White stated that as a result of several years of successful efforts by the Board, staff, and the Congressional delegation, Sound Transit was now eligible to receive \$500 million in federal funds to build the first segment of the system described to voters in 1996.

Mr. White advised that based on the work done in the last several months, the foundation for success had been laid; steps had been outlined that will need to be taken over the next six months to be sure that foundation would be robust enough to complete the project successfully. He went on to say that staff was recommending the Board move forward with Central Link and the Full Funding Grant Agreement (FFGA).

He reviewed what was different and why he was supporting this recommendation.

- Mr. Tuck Wilson, Interim Director of Link Light Rail, has reviewed the costs and the schedule from top to bottom. Mr. Wilson brought new knowledge to the team already in place and allowed the development of new cost information based on significantly more engineering than ever before available.
- The Financing Plan (copy on file) includes unallocated reserves for North King County and that commitments with Seattle, King County, and the University of Washington had been reviewed as well as the agency's costs and those of construction management. Mr. White said there was now a realistic budget and schedule, but modifications could result in savings. Those would be identified and brought forward in the next six months. He mentioned the need to have the budget and schedule undergo careful independent review before the public could have confidence in those numbers.
- Steps have been taken to avoid the mistakes experienced in the past and additional steps would be taken to increase the agency's accountability and openness.
- All external communications will now be handled by a single department reporting to the Chief Operating Officer. Mr. White said this would provide stronger leadership and greater coordination, and it should make the agency's outreach efforts more proactive and effective.
- The Board Administrator will work with staff to develop an advance decision-making calendar.

- A Central Link Advisory Committee will be formed to assess ongoing ways to reduce costs and improve the schedule. The committee will provide monthly briefings.

Mr. Wilson advised that until the Board designates otherwise, the Central Link lines will be referred to in the following segments: Northgate Link, University Link, and Airport Link. He stated that in year of expenditure dollars, the cost of Central Link was \$3.6 billion. He added that the project reserve is the Board's firewall and was not to be spent unless there were extraordinary circumstances.

He stated that a detailed report of the estimated cost of completion had been done and that he had confidence in the adequacy of the budgets. (Complete details are in the Board Briefing Book on file.)

Mr. Hugh Simpson, Director of Finance and Administration, went over financial affordability options, detailed federal funding, and subarea equity, and Mr. Peter Peyser, consultant for federal government relations, discussed federal funding strategies.

Ms. Joni Earl, Chief Operating Officer (COO), discussed Motion No. M2000-129. She stated that the motion was focused on two specific areas. She said the first area was project control—the budget of process, procedures, and reporting necessary to monitor, manage, and control the budget, cost, and schedule goals for the project. Ms. Earl advised that to date, the existing structure, systems, and practices had not served Sound Transit well. She recognized that actions had been taken toward change. Specifically, the centralized project control staff currently within the Finance and Administration Department would begin reporting to the COO; and a scope of work for independent consulting was being outlined to evaluate the existing management information systems, including the status of the integration of the financial system with the contract management system.

She advised that the second area of the motion focused on communications. The Sound Move work program, including Link light rail, has multiple projects involving three separate lines of business, which requires a great deal of public involvement and communication with neighborhoods; business organizations; property owners; community groups; local, state, and federal governments; and education institutions. She mentioned the constant challenge to have consistent, timely, and proactive communication with so many stakeholders simultaneously on projects that are on different schedules and in different stages of planning, design, construction, and operations. She said that to help with this concern, one department would be created to bring together an integration of all external communication functions reporting to a Director of Government and Public Affairs. She stated that the reorganization would include federal, state, and local government relations programs; community relations; communications; and media to develop more effective strategies to coordinate work within the various communities and with the local media.

(Board member Sims arrived at this time.)

Ms. Earl advised that a summary report had been distributed detailing what was heard between the November 16 Board meeting and the conclusion of Sound Transit's second open house on Tuesday, January 9. The report included information and comments received in the form of e-mails, letters, and phone calls from individuals; official position statements from business, government, and labor organizations; public opinion surveys, two of which were done for Sound Transit and two independently of Sound Transit; interviews with local government officials and community leaders, one of which was done for Sound Transit and one independently of Sound Transit; and two open house events on January 8 and 9, 2001.

(Board member Drewel arrived at this time.)

She summarized that from all of the sources, the major themes were:

- There is a wide range of opinion about the current light rail issues and about what the Board should do.
- There is continued support for light rail as part of the regional transportation system.
- Even among the supporters, however, there are strong concerns about costs, reservations about specifics of the plan and route, and erosion of confidence in Sound Transit to effectively manage the project.
- There continues to be opposition to light rail, with the most frequently mentioned argument being it will cost too much for what the public will get.
- Among both supporters and opponents of light rail, there are concerns about neighborhood impacts, especially related to a surface light rail route in Rainier Valley, the Capitol Hill tunnel, the Portage Bay tunnel, and the Roosevelt alignment.
- Comments about the federal grant reflect different understandings about the implications of accepting or refusing the money. Participants in the open houses were evenly divided on the issue while interviews with government and community leaders were more supportive of accepting the grant.
- Many supporters of elevated - or specifically monorail - argue that it would be cheaper, faster and have limited construction impacts.

(Board member McKenna arrived at this time.)

Ms. Earl added that in the report, staff had attempted to reflect with fairness the public comments received.

Ms. Sheila Dezarn, Government Relations Manager, gave a status report on the FFGA for MOS-1 and reviewed the framework and key elements of the agreement.

### **Public Comment**

The following individuals presented comments to the Board. Comments are on file with the Board Administrator.

Mr. Earling stated that the Board had received a letter from Ms. Connie Niva, Chair of the Washington State Transportation Commission, who was unable to attend the meeting because she was attending the funeral of Representative Pat Scott. He asked Ms. Walker to read the letter into the record. (The letter is on file in the Board Administrator's office.)

Mr. Richard Ford  
Former Governor Booth Gardner  
Former Governor John Spellman  
Mr. Jon Dodd  
Mr. Omari Tahir  
Ms. Patricia Matteson  
Ms. Mona Lee  
Mr. Bob Gale  
Mr. Michael Richmond  
Ms. Ethel Boyer  
Mr. Michael Godfried  
Mr. Folke Nyberg  
Mr. Ed Brighton, Friends of the Monorail  
Mr. Thomas Coad, Former President of the Washington Newspaper Publishers Association

Mr. Emory Bundy  
Mr. Rich Harkness

(Board member Gates arrived at this time.)

Ms. Betty Gully  
Mr. Philip Grega  
Mr. Glover Barnes  
Mr. Ron Lamb  
Mr. Larry Sinnott  
Mr. Tony-Nuoe Pham  
Mr. Gary Powell  
Ms. Maggie Fimia, Chair of Regional Transit Committee  
Mr. Don Gerend, City of Sammamish Councilmember  
Ms. Patricia Emerson  
Mr. Art Lewellan  
Mr. Jeffrey Soth, Washington State Building and Construction Trades Council  
Mr. Reginald Frye  
Mr. David Marshall  
Mr. Peter Sherwin  
Ms. RobinDenburg  
Ms. Colleen Brown  
Mr. Mark Dublin  
Ms. Linda Anderson, read part of a statement from Lance F. Norton, President of ATU Local 587  
Mr. Daniel Linville  
Mr. Gary Salava  
Mr. Dick Nelson  
Mr. Alvin Rutledge  
Ms. Ruth Korkowsky  
Mr. Dick Burkhart  
Mr Roger Belanich  
Ms. Kathy Halliburton  
Mr. Jim Simpkins  
Mr. George Curtis  
Mr. Richard Lang, Chair of the Capital Hill Stewardship Council  
Mr. Norm Winn  
Mr. Alan Deright  
Mr. Dean Claussen  
Ms. Lorelei Herres  
Mr. Ken Howe  
Ms. Wesley Larsen  
Mr. Karl Robinson

### **Action Items**

**Resolution No. R2001-01 - Authorizing the exeuction of a full funding grant agreement with the Federal Transit Administration and to amend the Link Light Rail budget and the Sound Move Ten-Year Regional Transit System Plan**

Mr. Earling expressed his appreciation to everyone that had expressed their different points of view during public comment. He stated that the Board would be making a decision at this meeting that would affect the quality of life in the region for over 100 years. He acknowledged that it had been difficult and mistakes

had been made along the way. He advised that over the past several months staff and the Board had critically reassessed every assumption about the Link Light Rail program. He said Sound Transit still needs to work to rebuild public trust and confidence, but that he was confident it was time to move forward.

Mr. Earling said the region's population is expected to grow by 50% over the next 30 years. This is a 60% increase in the total daily travel over that time. He stated that the major freeways and arterials are gridlocked, and while some have suggested increasing the ability to move people from Everett to Tacoma along the I-5 corridor, it is over capacity and cannot be widened. The Link Light Rail project will provide a new transportation corridor into that core. Mr. Earling stated his gratitude that the majority of local officials support moving forward. He advised that the Link Light Rail is a long term investment to preserve the quality of life for the present and future generations.

**It was moved by Mr. Sims and seconded by Mr. Nickels that Resolution No. R2001-01 be approved as presented.**

Mr. Sims advised that the Board would be voting to take a positive step to alleviate congestion along the I-5 corridor. The action would insure all subareas good construction improvements they have chosen in their areas. He stated that the question was whether to accept the Full Funding Grant Agreement from the federal government and a commitment to \$500 million in funding for light rail construction. He said a light rail system could not be built without assistance from the federal government and that if the funds were not accepted now, they would go to other cities, as they did 30 years ago.

He acknowledged that there are understandable questions. He expressed the need to restore public confidence and credibility. He said he would be voting to move forward.

Mr. Sims advised that the six-month work program will make sure the agency's actions and materials are open and available to all interested parties. New measures will be implemented and citizens will be engaged in discussions.

The region has been debating transportation since 1952. It is discussed and discussed. Because there is always one new alternative that may work, the region continues to defer and debate. The result is congestion. He said it is time to breach the dam of indecision and move forward.

Mr. Schell stated that it was the Board's responsibility not to dwell on the troubles of the past, but to look to the future. People may disagree on the best alternative to solve the area's transportation problems, but no one disagrees there are serious problems we must address. He advised that the vote must be to continue towards creating the best light rail line possible while listening to concerns from citizens, neighborhoods, and the business community.

Mr. Morrison shared with the Board that based on his years of experience, FFGAs are not an exact science: they are political science. He urged the Board not to let this get away. He said that in the State's 20-year plan, Sound Transit is the plan being counted on to provide mobility for the people and products in the I-5 corridor.

Mr. Nickels stated that by saying yes to the FFGA, it would keep important options open. However, he expressed caution that approving the FFGA was not a green light, but more of an amber light flashing with caution. He added that this was a chance to rebuild public confidence and trust that had been badly damaged.

Mr. McIver recognized the difficulty of the decision before the Board. He asked whether the Board's action would move Sound Transit forward to build the entire Phase I system from SeaTac to NE 45th as directed

in 1996. He added that he wanted to be sure, with all the functions on the tunnel, that the segments south of Seattle in Rainier Valley, Tukwila, and SeaTac were not forgotten.

Mr. White confirmed that the budget included the best, adequate estimate for construction between South 200th and NE 45th.

Mr. McKenna stated that the Finance Committee had the chance to review the financing plan, he felt he understood it, but it hadn't increased his confidence. He said the decision being made was contrary to the long range vision. He stated that by tying up all the federal funds for Phase I through 2015 there would not be any funds for Northgate. Mr. McKenna advised that the answer might be to redo the plan so that it doesn't use all of the resources and prevent the line from going beyond the initial 21 mile system. He stated his objection to the fact that the Board was considering waiving the 90-day review period for the FFGA.

Mr. Nickels stated that he shared Mr. McKenna's questions about the financing plan. He added that staff had been asked to convene a peer review of the financing plan to be confident that the plan makes sense. He went on to say that on January 9, 2001, a letter addressed to Ms. Earl and signed by representatives of Seattle, Snohomish County, King County, the Citizen Oversight Panel, and the Port of Seattle stated that after review, they believe the financing plan falls within the range of reasonableness but it is at the high end. He advised that the financing model was well designed, but would continue to be refined.

Mr. Phelps stated that he does have some concerns about moving forward, but added that if nothing is done, the next time Seattle is number one for something it will be for the most congested city in America. He said that if a capital project was stopped every time it was over budget, you could probably count on one hand what had been built. He said that yes, there are cost overruns, but it is important to look toward the goal—a very important goal.

Mr. Earling asked the Board Administrator to take a roll call vote.

Ms. Walker advised that adoption of Resolution No. R2001-01 would require a two-thirds majority of the Board, or 12 votes.

**The roll call vote was taken on the motion to approve Resolution No. R2001-01 with 14 in favor and one opposed.**

<u>Aye</u>	<u>Nay</u>
Mr. Crawford	Mr. McKenna
Mr. Drewel	
Mr. Enslow	
Ms. Gates	
Mr. Ladenburg	
Mr. McIver	
Mr. Morrison	
Mr. Nickels	
Mr. Phelps	
Mr. Schell	
Mr. Sims	
Ms. Sullivan	
Mr. White	
Mr. Earling	

For the record, Mr. Earling advised that Ms. Hague and Ms. Davis had communicated to him that if they had been in attendance, they would have voted to accept Resolution No. R2001-01, and to move forward.

Motion No. M2000-127 - Authorizing the Executive Director to execute an agreement with the City of Tacoma granting Sound Transit the right to use Tacoma public rights of way for the construction, operation and maintenance of the Link Light Rail system

**It was moved by Mr. Phelps, seconded by Mr. Enslow, and carried by the unanimous vote of all Board members present that Motion No. M2000-127 be approved as presented.**

Motion No. M2001-01 - Electing Mr. David Enslow to serve as Vice Chair of the Board, filling the unexpired term of Mr. Doug Sutherland

**It was moved by Mr. McIver, seconded by Mr. Crawford, and carried by the unanimous vote of all Board members present that Motion No. M2001-01 be approved as presented.**

### **Committee Reports**

#### Central Link Task Force

This report was delayed until the next Board meeting.

### **Other Business**

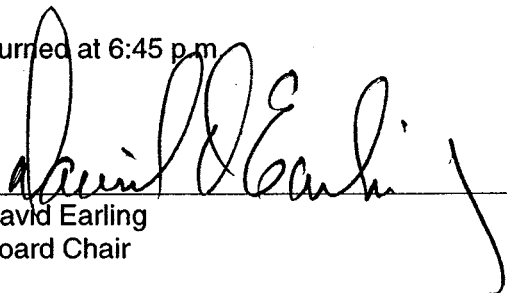
None.

### **Next Meeting**


Thursday, January 25, 2001, 2:30 to 4:30 p.m.  
Tacoma Landmark Convention Center  
47 St. Helens Avenue  
Tacoma, Washington

### **Adjourn**

As there was no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:45 p.m.

  
David Earling  
Board Chair

ATTEST:

  
Marcia Walker  
Board Administrator