

SOUND TRANSIT

RESOLUTION NO. R2001-07

A Resolution of the Board of the Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority to revise Sound Move to substitute transit enhancement improvements along ST Express Route 540 for a second direct access ramp in Kirkland and to reallocate \$20,000,000 (YOES) to this project from the Kirkland I-405 HOV Direct Access Project.

WHEREAS, the Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority is a duly organized regional transit authority existing under RCW Chapters 81.104 and 81.112 and has powers necessary to implement a high capacity transportation system; and

WHEREAS, on November 5, 1996, central Puget Sound area voters approved local funding for Sound Move, Sound Transit's ten-year plan for regional high-capacity; and

WHEREAS, the proposed ST Express Route 540 Kirkland Transit Enhancements Project ("Project") would construct improvements to benefit transit operating along the route of the ST Express Route 540 between the Bear Creek Park-and-Ride Lot and SR 520; and

WHEREAS, the proposed Project is consistent with Sound Transit's statutory authority to implement a high capacity transportation system pursuant to Chapters 81.104 and 81.112 RCW; and

WHEREAS, it would be necessary to amend Sound Move to substitute the proposed Project for a second direct access ramp in Kirkland; and

WHEREAS, the board adopted Resolution No. R98-22 establishing criteria for evaluating proposals to amend Sound Move; and

WHEREAS, Sound Move includes \$110,000,000 (YOES) for the construction of "up to two" HOV direct access interchanges along I-405 in the Kirkland area; and

WHEREAS, the project team recommended the design and construction of one new direct access interchange at NE 128th Street in north Kirkland and determined that building a

second direct access ramp in central Kirkland would provide limited benefits to transit riders at significant costs; and

WHEREAS, the proposed package of transit enhancement projects would be further refined in the preliminary design process and the appropriate level of environmental documentation would be completed for this project to comply with the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) and/or the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), as applicable; and

WHEREAS, the funds required for the proposed Project total \$20,000,000 (YOES); and

WHEREAS, the Kirkland project team recommends this project to address transit needs in central Kirkland; and

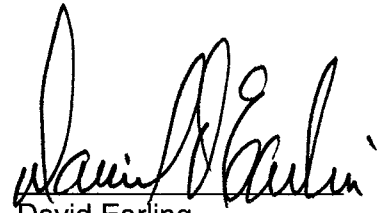
WHEREAS, the Kirkland City Council expressed support for this change at its April 17, 2000, City Council meeting and the Eastside Transportation Partnership passed a resolution in support of this change at its May 11, 2001, meeting; and

WHEREAS, it is in the best interest of Sound Transit to fund the Project to support the development of projects to improve travel speed, reliability, and access for local and regional transit in the Kirkland area; and

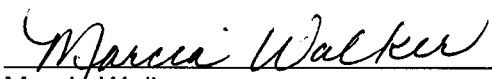
WHEREAS, amending Sound Move requires a two-thirds vote of the entire membership of the Board of Sound Transit.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by a two-thirds vote of the Board of the Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority that: (1) Sound Move be revised to substitute a project called the Kirkland Transit Enhancements Project for a second direct access ramp interchange in Kirkland and (2) funds in the amount of \$20,000,000 be reallocated to this new project from the Kirkland I-405 HOV Direct Access Project.

ADOPTED by the Board of the Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority at a regular meeting thereof held on the 14th day of June, 2001.


David Earling
Board Chair

ATTEST:


Marcia Walker
Board Administrator

STAFF REPORT

SOUND TRANSIT RESOLUTION NO. R2001-07

Change Sound Move to Substitute the Route 540 Kirkland Transit Enhancements Project for a Second Direct Access Interchange in Kirkland

Meeting:	Date:	Type of Action:	Staff Contact:	Phone:
Executive Committee (cancelled)	6/01/01	Discussion/Possible Action to Recommend Board Approval	Agnes Govern, Director, Regional Express	(206) 398-5037
Finance Committee	6/7/01	Discussion/Possible Action to Recommend Board Approval	Jim Edwards, Program Manager, Capital Projects	(206) 398-5436
Board of Directors	6/14/01	Action	Andrea Tull, Project Manager, Capital Projects	(206) 398-5040

PROPOSED ACTION

Approval of Resolution No. R2001-07 will amend Sound Move to substitute the Route 540 Kirkland Transit Enhancements Project for a second direct access interchange in the Kirkland area, which had been included in Sound Move, and will reallocate \$20,000,000 (YOES) to this project from the Kirkland I-405 HOV Direct Access project.

KEY FEATURES

Highlights of Proposed Action:

- ◆ Recommends a change to Sound Move to substitute the Kirkland Route 540 Transit Enhancements Project for a second direct access interchange in the Kirkland area, which had been included in Sound Move.
- ◆ Proposes a reallocation of \$20,000,000 (YOES) to this project from the Kirkland I-405 HOV Direct Access project.

DISCUSSION OF PROPOSED ACTION:

The Sound Transit 2001 Budget includes 21 Regional Express Capital Projects in the East King County subarea totaling \$494,000,000 (YOES). This contains the 14 Community Connections and the six high-occupancy vehicle (HOV) projects listed in Appendix A of Sound Move. It also includes the SR 900 project, which was added to Sound Move by Resolution No. R99-6.

The Regional Express Capital Projects program for the East King County subarea includes \$110,000,000 (YOES) for the Kirkland I-405 HOV Direct Access Project. This project called for up to two HOV direct access ramps along I-405 in the Kirkland area. A Project Management Team was established in 1998 to identify and evaluate projects that best met Kirkland's transportation needs. After conducting an alternative analysis, the project team recommended the design and construction of one new direct access interchange at NE 128th Street in north Kirkland. This project is now in the preliminary engineering and environmental documentation phase and is close to 30% design. The preliminary cost estimate for the NE 128th Direct Access

Ramp project is \$60,000,000 (YOES), including agency administration and an overall project contingency.

The analysis also determined that building a second direct access ramp in central Kirkland would provide limited benefits to transit riders at significant costs. As a result, the project Executive Advisory Committee, which is comprised of Kirkland elected officials, business and community leaders, and management from the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT), King County Metro, the Federal Transit Administration, the Federal Highway Administration, and Sound Transit, recommended that the focus of the central Kirkland improvements be changed to include other projects that would improve transit speed, reliability, and access in the area. The Sound Transit Executive Committee was briefed on this approach in December 1999, but it was determined that action to change Sound Move and create a new project would not be proposed until more analysis was completed to develop and evaluate potential transit enhancement improvements along Redmond Way, NE 85th Street, and 108th Avenue corridors and a more refined cost estimate had been completed for the NE 128th Direct Access Ramp.

The project management team recommends that the Transit Enhancements Project be substituted for a second direct access interchange in Kirkland. The Kirkland Executive Advisory Committee has reviewed the recommended proposal. The proposed projects and the transit enhancement improvements were reviewed with the public in summer 2000 through project newsletters and at a project open house held on November 9, 2000. Support was expressed for projects that would improve transit speed, reliability, and access for ST Express Route 540. The proposed project was reviewed by the Kirkland City Council at their April 17, 2001, meeting, and has their support. The Eastside Transportation Partnership (ETP) reviewed the proposed change to Sound Move at their May 11, 2001, meeting and took action in support of the proposal.

The proposed Kirkland Transit Enhancements Project would provide transit improvements along ST Express Route 540. ST Express Route 540 began operation in September 2000 and connects Redmond and Kirkland with the University District via Redmond Way, NE 85th Street, 108th Avenue NE, and SR 520. This route provides all-day, two-way, limited-stop service, operating seven days a week (6am-10pm on weekdays and Saturdays, 6am-8pm on Sundays). Service frequency is every 30 minutes until 7pm on weekdays, and hourly on nights and weekends.

The Route 540 Transit Enhancements Project evaluated potential transit speed, reliability, and access improvements from Downtown Redmond to the South Kirkland Park-and-Ride Lot and SR 520. Specific improvements that are recommended include transit signal priority (TSP) installations, intersection improvements, transit queue by-pass lanes at specific intersections, and business access and transit (BAT) lanes. The project consultant team has conducted a study of existing deficiencies and has identified potential improvements. Currently, the project team has reviewed the list of potential improvements and has recommended that a package of proposed improvements move forward and be further refined. If this change to Sound Move is approved, staff will return to the Finance Committee with a request for approval of a contract extension for the existing consultant team, to complete preliminary engineering and environmental documentation for the Kirkland Transit Enhancements Project.

EVALUATION OF PROPOSAL:

Resolution No. R98-22 establishes six criteria to evaluate a proposed revision to Sound Move:

- **Consistency with Sound Transit's enabling legislation:**
Pursuant to RCW 81.112.080(2) and RCW 81.104.015(1), Sound Transit is authorized to construct, maintain, operate, and regulate a system of public transportation services and supporting services and facilities necessary to implement a high-capacity transportation system (HCT). The HCT system, as defined by statute, provides a system of public transportation services in an urbanized region operating on exclusive right of ways and the supporting services and facilities necessary to implement such a system, which taken as a whole, provides a higher level of passenger capacity, speed, and service frequency than traditional public transportation. This project based on the anticipated benefits in terms of transit speed, reliability, and access is consistent with Sound Transit's enabling legislation.
- **Consistency with Sound Transit's funding requirements and priorities:**
The proposal would keep the funds within the same subarea as the project whose budget would be reduced. The change will not result in a net change in the subarea expenditures. Benefits to the speed and reliability of ST Express service are directly increased by making the proposed transit enhancements along the ST Express Route 540 between Redmond Way and SR 520.
- **Consistency with the proposition approved by voters in the November 1996 election:**
Sound Move called for the implementation of a system of 14 direct access ramps in the region to improve regional and local bus operations in terms of speed, access, and reliability. HOV access ramps were identified as the preferred investment for improving speed and reliability of regional express buses by eliminating the need to weave across general-purpose lanes of traffic to reach HOV lanes. Sound Move also required that "Before building individual HOV access ramps, the RTA will work with the state Department of Transportation, local transit operators, local jurisdictions, and citizen committees to assess each facility's location and function. This assessment will determine whether there are ways to achieve equivalent transit speed, reliability, and ridership at a lower cost or by making transportation system management improvements instead."

To respond to this requirement, a high-occupancy vehicle/transportation system management (HOV/TSM) Committee was formed in 1998 to evaluate the benefits of the implementation of the HOV direct access program compared with similar investments in TSM and transportation demand management (TDM). Their findings were adopted by the Sound Transit Board in December 1998 (Motion No. M98-87). These findings included a set of guidelines to be applied to individual HOV projects to ensure that maximum benefits are provided through process consistency. As part of these guidelines, a stipulation was included that TSM and TDM alternatives would be considered, and especially in ramp project locations where it is uncertain that regional or local transit operators would use the ramps or the volume of use is forecasted to be low. Highest priority was to be given to Regional Express bus service, with second priority to local transit, and third to carpools and vanpools. In the process of evaluating a direct access ramp in central Kirkland, the TSM/TDM alternative of implementing transit enhancements along the ST Express Route 540 rated higher than the direct access ramp options. This project is therefore being presented at this time as the alternative to proceed through environmental documentation.

Through the analysis of potential direct access projects in Kirkland it was found that a second direct access interchange in central Kirkland would have limited benefits at a high costs. The transit enhancement improvements have now been identified that provide equivalent benefits in terms of transit speed, reliability, and access in the Kirkland area.

- **Consistency with and support of the transportation goals, commitments, project, and corridors served in Sound Move:**

Sound Move creates a comprehensive, regional, high-capacity travel network that offers frequent, convenient, and dependable services. Specific to East King County, the network consists of express bus services operating primarily on HOV lanes in the I-405, SR 520, and I-90 corridors. The HOV Access Program improves the speed, reliability, and access of Regional Express bus service by eliminating the need to for buses to weave through other traffic at transit inline stops and at freeway on and off-ramps. The proposed amendment to Sound Move will result in the construction of one HOV direct access ramp interchange in north Kirkland, as well as the establishment of another project in the Kirkland area that further improves speed and reliability for the ST Express Route 540 as well as King County Metro routes operating on those arterials.

- **Adequacy of environmental review completed under SEPA and/or NEPA, either as part of the 1993 System Plan EIS or otherwise:**

The proposed changes fall within the range of alternatives and impacts analyzed in the 1993 System Plan Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The proposed transit enhancements project will provide equivalent benefits in terms of transit speed, reliability, and access, compared with the second direct access ramp interchange considered for the Kirkland area. In addition, project-level environmental review will be prepared on both the NE 128th Street interchange and the Kirkland Transit Enhancements Project consistent with the 1993 EIS and state and national environmental policy act requirements.

All of the "Build Alternatives" evaluated in the 1993 System Plan EIS include transportation system management strategies that "would increase regional and community transit service to and between Vision 2020...centers, provide better access to freeway HOV lanes, give HOV priority on key arterial links to transit stations and park-and-ride lots...Improvements include passenger facilities and transit centers, intersection by-pass lanes and priority signalization, lighting, landscaping, widened sidewalks, and arterial HOV/transit lane development...Some arterial HOV treatments are on roadways feeding the regional HOV system. Other arterials that support intense all-day transit operations are candidates for a range of TSM improvements."(pp 2-7 and 2-9). The proposed plan changes are consistent with the analysis contained in the 1993 EIS.

- **Extent to which the proposed revision has been reviewed and supported by the subarea(s), local jurisdictions, and community:**

The proposed projects and the transit enhancement improvements were reviewed with the public in summer 2000 through project newsletters and at a project open house on November 9, 2000. Support was expressed for projects that would improve transit speed, reliability, and access for ST Express Route 540.

The proposed revision to Sound Move was reviewed by the Kirkland City Council at their April 17, 2001, meeting. It has been reviewed by the project Executive Advisory Committee, which is made up of local elected officials, community and business leaders, and executives from Sound Transit, WSDOT, the City of Kirkland, and King County Metro. In addition, the proposed revisions were reviewed with the ETP on May 11, 2001. At their meeting, the ETP

took action to support the proposed change to Sound Move which would substitute the transit enhancements project for a second direct access ramp interchange in Kirkland and to reallocate funds from the Kirkland Direct Access Program to this project.

BUDGET

The total budget for the Kirkland Direct Access Project is \$110,000,000 (YOES). The project included “up to two” direct access ramp interchanges in Kirkland. This proposed change to Sound Move would substitute the transit enhancements project for a second direct access ramp interchange in Kirkland. Funds are available within the Kirkland Direct Access Project for the proposed Kirkland Transit Enhancement Project. An allocation of \$20,000,000 from the Kirkland Direct Access Project is requested for this proposed project. With this change, \$90,000,000 would remain in the Kirkland Direct Access Project.

As part of the analysis to identify other projects in central Kirkland that would provide equivalent benefits in terms of transit speed, reliability, and access, that resulted in the identification of the transit enhancement project, a new Downtown Kirkland Transit Center was also identified. Analysis is currently underway to evaluate potential sites and develop conceptual design options. When more information is available, the project management team and Kirkland Executive Advisory Committee will make a recommendation to the ETP and Sound Transit for a second change to Sound Move to include this project in the Kirkland area projects also, using funds from the Kirkland Direct Access Project.

Kirkland Transit Enhancement Project – Sound Move Budget (A)	Expenditures to Date (B)	Amount Requested for Kirkland Transit Enhancement Project (C)	Budget Transfer* (A)-(B)-(C)
\$0	\$0	\$20,000,000	(\$20,000,000)
*Amount of Budget Transfer	Funding Sources		
\$20,000,000	Total budgeted amount for the Kirkland Direct Access project is \$110,000,000. A budget transfer of \$20,000,000 is requested for the proposed Kirkland Route 540 Transit Enhancements Project. The remaining budget amount in the Kirkland Direct Access project would be \$90,000,000.		

All figures shown are in YOES\$ in millions

ALTERNATIVES

1. Request that the project team identify and evaluate other HOV interchange alternatives along I-405 in Kirkland. However, the analysis by the project team has determined that building a second direct access ramp in central Kirkland would provide limited benefits to transit riders, at significant costs. Additionally, the I-405 Study has evaluated adding new interchanges along the I-405 corridor in the 2010-2020 timeframe. A new interchange in central Kirkland is included in the I-405 current project plan.
2. Ask the project team to conduct a more extensive study for the best investment to provide improvements in transit speed, reliability, and access. The current proposal, however, provides benefits for a major transit route on the Eastside. In addition, the City of Kirkland and the ETP both support the proposed change to Sound Move.

CONSEQUENCES OF DELAY

Sound Transit Regional Express Route 540 began operation in September 2000. The proposed enhancements are needed now to improve transit speed, reliability, and access along the Route 540 corridors. A delay in implementing this project would mean that delays would continue to be experienced by Route 540 buses and riders. With approval of the proposed project, some of the transit enhancements can be implemented within two years, with all of the improvements anticipated to be complete by 2005.

REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP AND COOPERATION

A Project Management Team and an Executive Advisory Committee have been established for the Kirkland I-405 HOV Access Improvements Project to assist staff in making project decisions. The Project Management Team is comprised of technical staff from Sound Transit, WSDOT, the City of Kirkland, and King County Metro. The Executive Advisory Committee is comprised of elected officials, key agency management staff, and city business and community leaders, whose responsibility is to advise Sound Transit on the Kirkland projects.

The Project Management Team and the Executive Advisory Committee have reviewed the transit enhancements project and the proposed change to Sound Move. Additionally, the Kirkland City Council and the ETP support the substitution of the transit enhancements project for a second direct access ramp interchange, the reallocation of funds and the proposed change to Sound Move.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

Sound Transit and its project partners (the City of Kirkland, WSDOT, and King County Metro) hosted a public open house held on November 9, 2000. The purpose of this open house was to present ideas about proposed transit improvements in the Kirkland area. Information about the proposed transit enhancement project was presented at this open house. Overall feedback from the open house was positive.

In addition, information about the transit enhancement project has been included in the Kirkland project newsletters, mailed in summer 2000, and is included on the Sound Transit website. The public is encouraged to call or e-mail Sound Transit staff at any stage of the project to request information or provide comments.

Two additional open houses have been held on the Kirkland Sound Transit projects since the projects were initiated in 1998. In addition, three project newsletters have been distributed to the project mailing list.

LEGAL REVIEW

Requires two-thirds favorable vote of entire boardmembers RCW 81.112.040(2).

MBL 5/23/01