

## **SOUND TRANSIT MOTION NO. M2002-13**

A motion of the Board of the Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority selecting the route alternatives for inclusion and study in the North Link Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (Draft SEIS) and excluding less promising route alternatives from further study.

### **Background:**

The Central Link light rail project is an element of the Sound Move Ten-Year Regional Transit System Plan adopted by the Sound Transit Board in May 1996. Voters within the Sound Move District authorized local taxes to implement the plan in November 1996. Within this plan is a starter electric light rail system, Central Link, planned to run from SeaTac to NE 45<sup>th</sup> and to extend to Northgate if funding became available. Many route alternatives were studied for Central Link, and in November 1999, a Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) was completed for this starter light rail system. Shortly thereafter the Sound Transit Board selected the route, profiles, station locations, and maintenance base site to be built for the Central Link light rail project from NE 45<sup>th</sup> Street to South 200<sup>th</sup> Street. In July 2000, the Board narrowed from five to two the number of promising alternatives from NE 45<sup>th</sup> Station to Northgate, however final project route and station locations have not yet been identified.

Since then, Sound Transit has re-examined the project and on September 27, 2001 by Motion No. 2001-103, the Sound Transit Board identified a 14-mile preferred initial segment to be constructed and operated for the Central Link light rail project from Convention Place in downtown Seattle to South 154<sup>th</sup> Street. The Board made the final decision on selecting the initial segment on November 29, 2001 by Resolution No. R2001-16.

The Sound Transit Board has expressed a consistent commitment to building the entire Central Link light rail project from SeaTac to Northgate. Therefore, by Motion No. M2001-104, the Board authorized staff to complete an 18- to 24-month supplemental EIS and design effort to analyze alternative routes to the north of the initial segment interim terminus at Convention Place.

Evaluation of route alternatives and stations will be conducted in cooperation with the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). Before committing federal funds to the Central Link project, the FTA is required to undertake environmental review in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). As the public agency proposing the Central Link project, Sound Transit is required to comply with the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA). The FTA, as the federal lead agency under NEPA, and Sound Transit, as the state lead agency under SEPA, have determined that alternative routes and stations in the North Link segment of the project may have probable significant adverse environmental impacts. To satisfy both NEPA and SEPA requirements, the agencies are preparing a combined supplemental EIS for the project extending north of

downtown Seattle to Northgate, which is supplemental to the Central Link Light Rail Final EIS (November 1999).

In April 2001, FTA and Sound Transit had commenced a supplemental EIS to evaluate routes between NE 45<sup>th</sup> Street and Northgate. That supplemental EIS has been terminated and the alternative evaluation in that segment of the project will be incorporated into this new supplemental EIS.

For this new environmental process, a scoping process took place to evaluate the range of proposed actions, alternatives and impacts to be discussed in the Draft SEIS. The scoping comment period for North Link alternatives ended November 9, 2001. The process involved a comment period, two scoping open houses and an agency scoping meeting, where the public had the opportunity to review possible route alternatives and provide comments. Those comments were considered in further defining the route alternatives being brought before the Board for consideration.

On January 24, 2002, staff presented a variety of possible North Link route alternatives to the Board in three categories: routes recommended for study in the Draft SEIS and conceptual engineering, routes to be held for additional review before a final Board decision and routes not recommended for further study. Staff has also provided the Board with information on cost factors, environmental impacts, and transportation service of the various route alternatives. Because several of the routes were still undergoing technical review necessary to determine their feasibility, staff asked the Board to give initial verbal direction on staff's recommendations for routes within these three categories. The Board gave verbal direction to proceed on staff's recommendations. The Board made decisions on all routes, including those that will have completed additional review, at the February 14, 2002, Board Meeting.

**Motion:**

It is hereby moved by the Board of the Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority that route alternatives be selected for inclusion and study in the North Link Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement and associated conceptual engineering. It is further moved that the less promising route alternatives be excluded from further study consistent with Board decision and action.

Route Alternatives Selected for Inclusion

Capitol Hill/South Lake Union Segment:

First Hill/Capitol Hill Route (Route B.1)  
Eastlake Avenue Route (Route B.3.1)  
First Hill Bypass Route – 1 Station (Route B.4.1/B.4.3)

Ship Canal/University District Segment:

Montlake Tunnel Route (Route B.D)  
Portage Bay Tunnel Route (Route B.A)  
West Tunnel Route

Northgate Segment:

12<sup>th</sup> Avenue Tunnel Route (Route 1.1)  
8<sup>th</sup> Avenue Elevated with Design Variation B – West Portal (Route A.2.1b)  
8<sup>th</sup> Avenue Elevated with Design Variation C – East Portal (Route A.2.1c)

Route Alternatives Selected for Exclusion

Capitol Hill/South Lake Union Segment:

Boren Avenue Route (Route B.3.2)  
First Hill Bypass Route – 2 Stations (Route B.4.2)

Ship Canal/University District Segment:

Mid-Level Bridge Route (Route B.B.2)  
Brooklyn Avenue – 1 Station (Route B.F.1)  
Brooklyn Avenue – 2 Stations (Route B.F.2)  
Roanoke Tunnel (Route B.C)  
Campus Parkway (Route B.B.1)  
Interstate 5 – University Bypass (Route B.E)

APPROVED by the Board of the Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority at a regular meeting thereof held on the 14<sup>th</sup> day of February, 2002.

Ron Sims  
Board Chair

ATTEST:

Marcia Walker  
Board Administrator

**SOUND TRANSIT STAFF REPORT MOTION NO. M2002-13 Select light rail routes to be evaluated in a Draft SEIS for North Link**

Meeting:	Date:	Type of Action:	Staff Contact:	Phone:
Board	2/14/02	Discussion/Possible Action	Ron Endlich, Project Manager	206-398-514

### **Objective of Action**

- To narrow down the number of potential routes that will be studied in the Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (Draft SEIS) for North Link.

### **Action**

- Select the route alternatives to be studied in the North Link Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (Draft SEIS) and delete route alternatives from further study.

### **Key Features**

At the January 24, 2002 Board meeting, the Board gave verbal direction to staff to proceed as follows on the following routes, until the February 14, 2002 Board meeting. During that period, staff would continue to complete the technical evaluation of some of the routes, in order to determine their feasibility. On February 14, the Board will make a final decision determining which routes to continue to study in the Draft SEIS and which routes to study no further.

#### **Capitol Hill/South Lake Union Segment:**

No further study:

- Boren Avenue Route
- First Hill By-pass Route: (2 stations)

Advance for Draft SEIS & conceptual engineering:

- Eastlake Avenue Route (Route B.3.1): Eastlake Route crossing of the Ship Canal with stations at Convention Place and Harrison.
- First Hill By-Pass Route (Route B.4.1): Single Capitol Hill station
- First Hill/Capitol Hill (LPA) Route (Route B.1): Stations at First Hill and Capitol Hill (Broadway and Nagle options).

#### **Ship Canal/University District Segment:**

No further study:

- Mid-Level Bridge Route

Advance for Draft SEIS and conceptual engineering:

- Montlake Tunnel Route (Route B.D): Stations at NE 45<sup>th</sup> and South Campus.
- Portage Bay Tunnel (LPA) Route (Route B.A): Stations at NE 45<sup>th</sup> and Pacific.

Hold for additional Board review:

- Roanoke Tunnel Route (Route B.C): Stations at NE 45<sup>th</sup> and West Pacific.
- Campus Parkway Route via High-level Bridge (Route B.B.1): Stations at NE 45<sup>th</sup> and Campus Parkway.
- U. District By-pass Route (Route B.E): Via I-5 high-level bridge with an elevated station just east of I-5 and NE 45<sup>th</sup>.
- Brooklyn Avenue (Route B.F.2): 2 stations
- Brooklyn Avenue (Route B.F.1): 1 station

## **Northgate Segment**

Advance for conceptual engineering:

- 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE Tunnel Route (Route A.1.1): Stations at Northgate and Roosevelt.
- 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue Routes (Route A.2.1): with design variation b: West Portal and with design variation c: East Portal with stations at Northgate and Roosevelt.

Hold for additional Board review:

- U. District By-pass Route (Route A.3): Elevated and retained cut along I-5 with stations at Roosevelt and Northgate.

## **FUNDING**

Funding for the North Link study including the SEIS environmental process and design work was authorized by Motion No. M2001-104, approved by the Board on September 27, 2001.

## **History of Project**

The Central Link light rail project is an element of *the Sound Move Ten-Year Regional Transit System Plan* adopted by the Sound Transit Board in May 1996. Voters within the *Sound Move* District authorized local taxes to implement the plan in November 1996. Within this plan is a starter electric light rail system, Central Link, planned to run from SeaTac to NE 45<sup>th</sup> and to extend to Northgate if funding became available. Many route alternatives were studied for Central Link, and in November 1999, a Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) was completed for this starter light rail system. Shortly thereafter the Sound Transit Board selected the route, profiles, station locations, and maintenance base site to be built for the Central Link light rail project from NE 45<sup>th</sup>

Street to South 200<sup>th</sup> Street. In July 2000, the Board narrowed from five to two the number of promising alternatives from NE 45<sup>th</sup> Street to Northgate, however final project route and station locations have not yet been identified.

Since then, Sound Transit has re-examined the project and on September 27, 2001 by Motion No. M2001-103, the Sound Transit Board identified a 14-mile preferred initial segment to be constructed and operated for the Central Link light rail project from Convention Place in downtown Seattle to South 154<sup>th</sup> Street. The Board made the final decision on selecting the initial segment on November 29, 2001 by Resolution No. R2001-16.

The Sound Transit Board has expressed a consistent commitment to building the entire Central Link light rail project from SeaTac to Northgate. Therefore, by Motion M2001-104, the Board authorized staff to complete an 18- to 24-month supplemental EIS and design effort to analyze alternative routes to the north of the initial segment interim terminus at Convention Place.

Evaluation of alternatives to the project route and stations will be conducted in cooperation with the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). Before committing federal funds to the Central Link project, the FTA is required to undertake environmental review in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). As the public agency proposing the Central Link project, Sound Transit is required to comply with the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA). The FTA, as the federal lead agency under NEPA, and Sound Transit, as the state lead agency under SEPA, have determined that alternative routes and stations in the North Link segment of the project may have probable significant adverse environmental impacts. To satisfy both NEPA and SEPA requirements, the agencies are preparing a combined supplemental EIS for the project extending north of downtown Seattle to Northgate, which is supplemental to the Central Link Light Rail Final EIS (November 1999).

In April 2001, FTA and Sound Transit had commenced a supplemental EIS to evaluate routes between NE 45<sup>th</sup> Street and Northgate. That supplemental EIS has been terminated and the alternative evaluation in that segment of the project will be incorporated into this new supplemental EIS.

For this new environmental process, a scoping process took place to evaluate the range of proposed actions, alternatives and impacts to be discussed in the Draft SEIS. The scoping comment period for North Link alternatives ended November 9, 2001. The process involved a comment period, two scoping open houses and an agency scoping meeting, where the public had the opportunity to review possible route alternatives and provide comments. Those comments were considered in further defining the route alternatives being brought before the Board for consideration.

On January 24, 2002, staff presented a variety of possible North Link route alternatives to the Board in three categories: routes recommended for study in the Draft SEIS and conceptual engineering, routes to be held for additional review before a final Board

decision and routes not recommended for further study. Staff has also provided the Board with information on cost factors, environmental impacts, and transportation service of the various route alternatives. Because several of the routes were still undergoing technical review necessary to determine their feasibility, staff asked the Board to give initial verbal direction on staff's recommendations for routes within these three categories. The Board gave verbal direction to proceed on staff's recommendations. The Board will make final decisions on all routes, including those that will have completed additional review, at the February 14 Board Meeting.

**Prior Board or Committee Actions and Relevant Board Policies**

<b>Motion or Resolution Number</b>	<b>Summary of Action</b>	<b>Date of Action</b>
Motion No. M98-40	Confirmed the promising route alternatives to be included in the Central Link LRT Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) and	5/14/98
Resolution No. M99-34	during conceptual design for 1998	11/18/99
Reso No. M2000-11	Selected the alignment alternatives and profiles, station locations, and	7/27/00
Motion No. M2001-68	vehicle maintenance base site alternative to be built for the Central Link Light Rail line (from South 200 <sup>th</sup> to NE 45 <sup>th</sup> )	6/28/01
Motion No. M2001-103	Selected two (of the five) route alternatives in the Northgate segment for further study and analyses, identified a preferred Northgate station location, and authorized preliminary engineering on both remaining options.	9/27/01
Motion No. M2001-104	Adopted a work plan for Central Link that included putting the SEIS underway for route alternatives to Northgate on-hold for later inclusion with reviews from downtown Seattle north.	9/27/01
Reso No. M2001-16	Identified the preferred initial segment to be constructed and operated for Central Link Light Rail	11/29/01
	Directed the Executive Director to evaluate Central Link Light Rail routes and station alternatives between Convention Place and Northgate (North Link Work Program).	1/24/02
	Selected the initial segment of the Central Link Light Rail Project to be constructed and operated by 2009.	
	Board gave verbal direction to proceed with staff interim recommendations for study of North Link routes	

**Consequences of Delay**

- Selection of the most promising alternatives for further study is essential to beginning the Draft SEIS process, which is a necessary milestone in building Link north. The goal is to complete this environmental work for extending Link north by late 2003 to put Sound Transit in position to complete a North Link financing plan and apply for a second full funding grant agreement in the following federal funding cycle starting in January 2004.

### **Regional Partnership and Cooperation**

- A North Link inter-agency work team has been established that has representatives from City of Seattle, King County, Washington State Department of Transportation, the University of Washington and Sound Transit. This work team meets on a regular basis to review technical work in progress relating to North Link.

### **Public Involvement**

- The scoping comment period for North Link alternatives ended November 9, 2001. The process involved a comment period, two scoping open houses and an agency scoping meeting, where the public had the opportunity to review possible route alternatives and provide comments. Those comments were considered in further defining the route alternatives being brought before the Board for consideration. A summary report of all scoping comments has been provided to the Board and all those who commented.
- Sound Transit also held a public meeting in the University District on February 7, 2002 to inform people about new University District routes and solicit public comments.
- Station design workshops are planned for late winter/early spring 2002 to engage affected communities in the station design process and get feedback on station siting and design issues.

### **Description of Policy**

The Sound Move plan included the completion of a light rail line to NE 45<sup>th</sup> Street in the University District and to Northgate if funding was available. In September 2001, when the Board selected the Link initial segment from Convention Place to South 154<sup>th</sup>, they also directed staff to continue work to build Link north to Northgate. The Board directed staff to begin the environmental and design process that would study routes that could be built at a lower cost than the Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) while retaining high ridership.

The North Link study is designed to reconsider alternatives to find a way to do that. The conceptual engineering and SEIS process will evaluate environmental impacts and mitigation as appropriate, and will also provide an ability to develop realistic cost



estimates and a financing plan to build it, so that Link can be built north as envisioned in Sound Move.

### **Factors to Consider**

- The following criteria were used to evaluate different routes for further study. These criteria will help to distinguish between the relative differences between the routes and are consistent with the criteria that were used to identify the Central Link LPA. Related Board Briefing Books and evaluation matrices further detail the results of the criteria used to evaluate different route alternatives. The criteria include:
  - **Cost Factors:** Capital cost, construction risk, construction impacts, right of way and displacement impacts and rail operation impacts.
  - **Environmental Impacts:** Land use and neighborhoods, visual, noise, vibration, ecosystems, historic resources, archaeology, parklands, hazardous materials, environmental justice and major utility impacts.
  - **Transportation Service:** Segment travel time, daily systemwide rail ridership in 2020, urban center accessibility and permanent impacts to surface streets.
- The recommended routes were evaluated by segment in order to compare issues based on the evaluation criteria. Yet, how specific routes within a segment are linked with routes in adjoining segments may affect overall ratings in areas such as ridership and construction cost for North Link. Additional briefing materials have been prepared and provided to the Board to illustrate segment combinations.
- The number of routes selected for further study in a North Link Draft SEIS will determine both the overall time and cost of the environmental process and associated engineering. Completing the selection process of routes for study now will ensure the most timely delivery of results. As the SEIS process progresses it will become more difficult to add additional routes for study without substantially impacting schedule and budget.

### **Alternatives**

The Board may select any alternatives for further study.

### **Internal and External Consultations**

- Staff briefed the C-Link Task Force on October 19, 2001 on the routes under consideration, the environmental process and agency coordination efforts.
- Staff provided a brief update on North Link activities to the Board at its November 29, 2001 meeting.

- Staff also briefed the C-Link Task Force on North Link on December 7, 2001. That briefing covered the environmental scoping process results, status of further defining of the routes and a preview of the route comparison work.
- The Sound Transit Board was briefed at the January 10, 2002 board meeting on the North Link route alternatives currently under consideration for study in the Draft SEIS.
- The North Link inter-agency work team met on December 12, January 3, January 17 and February 7 to review technical work completed and advise ST staff on other agency perspectives.
- Screening criteria was reviewed with Sound Transit directors and Sound Transit Communications staff has worked with Link staff to review documents and develop the public outreach process.
- Staff has provided brief updates to the Federal Transit Administration in December and January on the process and alternatives being considered for review.
- Staff briefed the Board on January 24, 2002 on the status of North Link routes and received initial verbal direction from the Board to proceed on some routes following staff recommendations.

## **LEGAL REVIEW**

BN 2/5/02

## **SOUND TRANSIT**

### **MOTION NO. M2002-13**

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#### **Background:**

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Ship Canal/University District Segment:

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- Portage Bay Tunnel Route (Route B.A)
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- 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue Elevated with Design Variation C – East Portal (Route A.2.1c)

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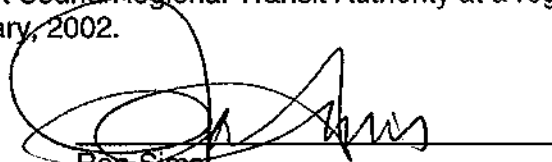
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APPROVED by the Board of the Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority at a regular meeting thereof held on the 14<sup>th</sup> day of February, 2002.



Ron Sims  
Board Chair

ATTEST:



Marcia Walker  
Board Administrator