

SOUND TRANSIT BOARD WORKSHOP

Summary Minutes
September 19, 2013

CALL TO ORDER

The workshop was called to order at 1:10 p.m. by Chair Pat McCarthy, in the Ruth Fisher Boardroom, 401 South Jackson Street, Seattle, Washington.

ROLL CALL

Chair

(P) Pat McCarthy, Pierce County Executive

Vice Chairs

(A) Julia Patterson, King County Councilmember

(P) Paul Roberts, Everett Councilmember

Boardmembers

(P) Claudia Balducci, Bellevue Councilmember

(A) Fred Butler, Issaquah Council President

(P) Richard Conlin, Seattle Councilmember

(A) Dow Constantine, King County Executive

(P) Dave Earling, City of Edmonds Mayor

(P) David Enslow, City of Sumner Mayor

(P) John Lovick, Snohomish County Executive

(P) John Marchione, City of Redmond Mayor

(A) Joe McDermott, King County Councilmember

(P) Mike McGinn, City of Seattle Mayor

(P) Mary Moss, Lakewood Councilmember

(P) Lynn Peterson, WSDOT Secretary

(A) Larry Phillips, King County Councilmember

(A) Marilyn Strickland, City of Tacoma Mayor

(A) Peter von Reichbauer, King County Councilmember

Ms. Marcia Walker, Board Administrator announced that a quorum of the Board was present at roll call.

CONTEXT AND WORKSHOP GOALS

Board Chair McCarthy thanked Boardmembers for attending. She noted that the Board would not take any actions or public comment at the workshop. The goal of this workshop is to provide Board members with the information they will need to identify a preferred alignment and station locations for the Lynnwood Link project. There will be several opportunities to hear comment as the Board considers a decision on the preferred alternative this fall. Sound Transit staff will use a computer simulation tool to help the Board frame discussion and prompt questions.

Lynnwood Link is an important project for Sound Transit, one of the three major light rail extensions included in the ST2 program, and the one that we hope will attract substantial federal investment under the New Starts grant program. The Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) was published at the end of July following about a year of analysis, and the public comment period closes on September 23, 2013. In August, Sound Transit held four open houses and public hearings in the corridor, attended by over 400 people. Once all of the comments are in, the Board will start considering a preferred alternative to examine in the Final EIS (FEIS). The Board could take formal action to identify a preferred alternative at the November Board meeting.

The Board decision on the preferred alternative is not a final decision about alignments and stations – that will come in 2015 after the FEIS is published and the environmental review is complete. The preferred alternative decision will help focus further design and environmental evaluation. Following identification, the preferred alternative will be advanced to approximately 30% design while the FEIS is prepared. The FEIS will respond to all of the comments made on the DEIS, and evaluate the preferred alternative along with the other alternatives under consideration.

CHOICES AND TRADEOFFS FOR A PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE

Matt Shelden, Light Rail Development Manager, described the bigger choices for the Board in identifying a preferred alternative to examine in the FEIS. Mr. Shelden noted that Boardmember packets include

additional information from the DEIS, maps of the alignment, summary evaluation tables from the DEIS, and a PowerPoint that was presented to the Capital Committee in July. The key questions for the Board include:

- Which stations?
- Which profile in Segment A?
- Which alignment in Segment B?
- How much transit parking and where?

Mr. Sheldon noted that the Lynnwood and Northgate stations have the majority of the ridership for the line. There are 72 different combinations of segments A, B and C. Cost estimates range from \$1.2 billion to \$1.5 billion on the low end of the cost estimation ranges. The DEIS also includes a range for each alternative. As the project moves through the cost estimation and design refinement process, the costs will become more defined. Information on property impacts was included in Boardmember packets. Information on Transit Oriented Development (TOD) potential is included in Boardmember packets; the analysis is based on existing conditions. The virtual tour shows simulations at an early stage of design and cost estimating.

VIRTUAL CORRIDOR TOUR AND DISCUSSION

Nytasha Sowers, Project Manager presented a virtual tour of Segment A of the Lynnwood Link project using a computer simulation showing the segment alternatives. Segment A1 is mostly at grade with stations at N 145th Street and N 155th Street. The light rail train could travel up to 55 miles per hour in this segment. Under the A1 alternative, the 117th Street bridge would need to be rebuilt for \$15 million. The 117th Street bridge dates from the 1950's or 60's and does not meet current design standards; a reconstructed bridge would bring the bridge up to current standards. The other segment A alternatives are elevated and at-grade to the east. Both of these alternatives have property impacts totaling around \$2 million, but do not require rebuilding the bridge. Ms. Sowers noted that all the alternatives use right of way authorized by WSDOT for Sound Transit's use. North of 117th to the east of I-5 is the Latvian Church and community center. Sound Transit has met with the leadership group for the church. Alternatives being considered would require a partial or full acquisition. Elevated alternatives would require a partial acquisition that would affect parking and access to the church. The church will be asked to testify at the October Capital Committee. Boardmembers asked that opportunities be looked at for reducing impacts to the church.

The A1 alternative does not have a station at N 130th Street, and would require rebuilding the 130th bridge and traffic improvements to 5th Avenue NE. The elevated alternative does not impact the N 130th Street bridge. There are two at grade station options. N 130th Street would connect with the Broadview, Bitter Lake, Pinehurst and Lake City neighborhoods. The N 130th Street station would be a center platform station. Pedestrian and bike improvements would be made to encourage station access. Sound Transit has worked with King County Metro on changes that could take place to provide bus service to light rail stations. No final decisions can be made at this time, but coordination is taking place. ST2 included stations at N 145th Street, N 185th Street, and near the Mountlake Terrace and Lynnwood Transit Centers. Through scoping, potential stations at N 130th Street, N 155th Street, and 220th Street were identified. The addition of the at-grade station at N 130th Street would add 400 daily boardings. The station would cost \$30 million, or the station could be completed in the future at a cost of \$10 million when Lynnwood Link is construction to create a foundation, and \$30 million when the station is constructed. The station could also include 100 parking stalls or a lease of 100 parking spaces. An elevated alignment and station at N 130th Street would not require rebuilding the 117th Street Bridge or 5th Avenue. Boardmember McGinn spoke in favor of a station on N 130th Street.

The alignment is elevated just south of N 145th Street in all the alternatives to avoid impacts to Thornton creek. The station at N 145th Street will be located to avoid any impacts to future WSDOT plans. The station would straddle the existing I-5 Northbound ramp and impact the existing parking lot. Boardmember Roberts noted that the Kenmore and northeast Lake Washington community see this as their principal access to light rail and are interested in ensuring access to the station. Lake Forest and Shoreline also support the N 145th Street station. Another station option would locate the station and garage north; this option would require relocating the northbound I-5 on ramp. The City of Shoreline is looking at TOD opportunities at the N 145th Street station.

The alignment would be elevated at N 155th Street. A 500 stall parking garage would impact some residential properties. A station at this location would add approximately 400 boardings and would cost \$60 million. The Ridgecrest neighborhood supports a station at N 155th Street. The alternatives in Segment A could include only a station at N 145th Street, or combine a N 130th Street station with a station at N 145th Street, or a N 130th Street station with a station at N 155th Street. The alignment does have a small impact to Ridgecrest Park.

There are some property impacts in the vicinity of N 175th Street. The alignment passes over the N 175th Street bridge. At N 185th Street, there is an option for an at grade station on the east side of I-5 and a 500 stall parking garage built into the west side of I-5. There is a small impact to a parking area owned by the Shoreline school district. Passengers would use the N 185th Street bridge to travel from the parking garage to the station. The station would be at-grade with I-5 and would require a rebuilding of the N 185th Street bridge. Boardmembers were concerned about pedestrian access between the station and the garage under this option. Another station option is an elevated station that does not require rebuilding the N 185th Street bridge. It has a 500 parking stall garage in the same location as the first option. Community Transit is looking at terminating some of its trips at N 185th Street. The cost to rebuild the bridge is \$12 million. Boardmembers asked about opportunities to partner with WSDOT if Sound Transit needs to rebuild bridges because of the Lynnwood Link alignment. WSDOT Secretary Hammond responded that the bridges are functionally obsolete, but not structurally deficient. Ms. Earl noted that there might be credits through the land bank program with WSDOT if Sound Transit is providing a benefit to WSDOT. For previous projects in WSDOT right-of-way, Sound Transit has been able to get the assessed value of the facilities it constructed credited to its land bank account. Mr. Sheldon noted that when estimating ridership forecasting, Sound Transit uses existing regional planning such as the Puget Sound Regional Council VISION 2040 plan. Another station option would place the station at-grade to the east of the existing N 185th Street bridge with a surface parking lot and leased land from Seattle City Light for a total of 350 stalls near the station. It was noted that attributes of alternatives could be mixed and matched with portions of other alternatives.

Michelle Ginder, Project Manager, presented Segments B and C. The pedestrian bridge on N 195th Street; all alternatives would require a rebuilding of the pedestrian bridge. The alignment is elevated over the freeway interchange near the Snohomish and King County line. The Mountlake Trace Transit Center straddles 236th Street to the north and south. No additional parking is anticipated at this station because the existing parking garage was recently completed. The City of Mountlake Terrace prefers a station at the Mountlake Terrace Transit Center. Another option would place a station at the Mountlake Terrace Freeway Station in the median at I-5. Approval from WSDOT and the Federal Highway Administration would be required for this alignment because of the clearance under the 236th Street bridge. Bus service at the Mountlake Terrace Freeway Station would be discontinued once light rail is constructed at either the Freeway Station or Transit Center. 200 feet of additional station length would be added as well as additional pedestrian access on the north end of the platform. Ridership at the freeway station is 1,000 daily boardings less than the Mountlake Terrace Transit Center. Constructing a station at the Freeway Station would require a three year shut down of the station for bus access while the light rail stations is being constructed. A light rail station at the Freeway Station would cost \$20-30 million less than a new station at the Transit Center.

There are two alignment alternatives north of Mountlake Terrace, in the I-5 median or on the west side of I-5. The median route would cost \$50 million less than the west side, but the west side alignment will allow WSDOT to use the median in the future if it desires. There are additional visual impacts for the west side alignment, but it allows a station at 220th Street SW. The station would be on the west side of I-5 within WSDOT right of way. Construction of a station at this location would require the relocation of the on and off-ramps. The station could include 200 parking spaces and would cost \$50 million. If the station were constructed in the future, upfront costs would still total \$25 million. The station would add around 200 daily boardings.

Segment C is within the City of Lynnwood. There are three alignment alternatives. Alternative C1 has a station at 200th Street SW, Alternative C2 has a station at the Lynnwood Transit Center, and Alternative C3 has a station at the Lynnwood Park and Ride. All three alignments are elevated and include an addition of 500 parking spaces at the Lynnwood Transit Center. An 800-foot tail track would extend beyond the station to allow trains to change directions. There is some opposition to Alternative C1 because of impacts to Scriber Lake Park. The C2 alignment passes an Edmonds school district property and transitions to the east over the

south end of Scriber Lake Park. Alternative C3 crosses the interurban trail and utility corridor to a station on the South East corner of the Lynnwood Park and Ride. Another station option would move the existing bus transit center to be next to the light rail station. The City of Lynnwood is concerned about how the C3 alignment crosses 44th Ave W. Boardmember Roberts asked if the City of Lynnwood had responded with any modifications to C3. No formal response has been received, but Sound Transit will evaluate any modification suggested by the City in the FEIS. The City of Lynnwood is scheduled to take action on an alternative preferred by the City on Monday. All three alternatives are oriented to be able to travel back to the I-5 corridor for future extension under a new capital project package.

SUMMARY AND NEXT STEPS

The public comment period for the DEIS closes on September 23, 2013. Next steps include a presentation at the Board meeting in September and a presentation at the Capital Committee on the final comments received. The Capital Committee could begin discussion on the selection of a preferred alternative. The North Corridor Leadership Group plans to meet in October. The selection of the preferred alternative could take place in October or November. Boardmembers thanked staff for all their work preparing today's presentation and the work done to get to this point. Boardmembers asked for additional detail on cost trade-offs at the Capital Committee presentation. Boardmembers also discussed the schedule for selecting a preferred alternative compared with when cities will be able to update their comprehensive plans to include a potential additional station. Mr. Sheldon noted that when city comprehensive plans are updated, Sound Transit would include that information in the FEIS. The application for a full funding grant will not occur until the conclusion of the environmental process in 2015.

NEXT BOARD MEETING

Thursday, September 26, 2013
1:30 to 4:00 p.m.
Ruth Fisher Boardroom

ADJOURN

The workshop was adjourned at 2:59 p.m.



Pat McCarthy
Board Chair

ATTEST:


Marcia Walker
Board Administrator

APPROVED on October 24, 2013, KWF