

December 15, 2022

Sound Transit Finance and Audit Committee  
The Honorable Nancy Backus, Chair  
401 South Jackson Street  
Seattle, WA, 98104

Re: Community Oversight Panel Comments on 2023 Audit Plan

Dear Chair Backus:

The Community Oversight Panel (COP) welcomes the opportunity to provide feedback to the Finance and Audit Committee (FAC) regarding the 2023 Work Plan. As you know, the COP is charged with monitoring seven major areas of Sound Transit's performance, many of which coincide with the FAC's responsibilities for oversight and review:

- Community engagement activities
- Project planning and alignment decisions
- Budget and financial plan
- Project schedule and budget adherence
- Agency performance audits
- Social justice and equity
- Passenger experience

The COP was briefed on the Audit Division's work plan at its November 9, 2022 meeting. At that meeting, the COP was provided with two options for audit topics:

- Temporary service changes
- System expansion time charging accountability

After discussing the topics, the COP unanimously agreed to adopt Temporary Service Changes as its recommended topic for the 2023 Performance audit topic. This recommendation is based on the impacts that temporary service changes have on riders, especially when these changes are not adequately communicated.

The COP also reached consensus on the desire to communicate its perspective on three additional topics: Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance, West Seattle Link Extension land acquisition, and natural hazards preparedness.

The COP believes that Sound Transit is potentially at risk if it is not in compliance with the ADA in service delivery, including such factors as vertical conveyance (including at the Sea-Tac Airport Light Rail Station) and station and stop access. The COP recommends that Sound Transit elevate the importance of this issue with an ADA compliance audit as soon as practicable. Additionally, such an audit could identify access improvements that would help all riders.

With regards to land acquisition on the West Seattle Link Extension, the COP believes that Sound Transit is at risk due to rising land acquisition costs that could impact its ability to deliver the project within budget. The COP recommends that Sound Transit conduct an audit of West Seattle land acquisition costs to determine impacts on the project.

Sound Transit is also at risk from natural hazards such as earthquakes, floods, landslides, and severe storms, which may disrupt service and may cause exceptional demand if they damage the infrastructure of highways and other modes. Landslide risk is increased on previously stable slopes when unexpected wildfires destroy vegetation. The agency's resilience measures and systems accounting for such hazards would benefit from a performance audit.

Finally, the COP would like to commend and thank the Sound Transit Audit Division for their objective and diligent work, as well as their emphasis on continuous improvements.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "James Peyton". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Community Oversight Panel  
James Peyton  
Community Oversight Panel Chair

Cc: Julie Timm, CEO  
Community Oversight Panel