Summary Minutes

Rider Experience and Operations Committee Meeting
June 6, 2024

Call to order

The meeting was called to order at 1:03 p.m. by Committee Chair Walker and was available for viewing in person and online.

The meeting was recorded and can be found at https://www.soundtransit.org/get-to-know-us/board-directors/livestream-video.

Roll call of members

Chair	Vice Chair
(P) Kristina Walker, Tacoma Councilmember	(P) Ed Prince, Renton Council President

Board Members	
(P) Angela Birney, Redmond Mayor	(P) Dave Upthegrove, King County Council Chair
(P) Christine Frizzell, Lynnwood Mayor	(A) Peter von Reichbauer, King County Councilmember
(P) Kim Roscoe, Fife Mayor	(P) Girmay Zahilay, King County Council Vice Chair

Josephine Gamboa, Board Relations Specialist, announced that a quorum of the committee was present at roll call.

Report of the Chair

Removing item 6.E from agenda

Chair Walker stated she would like to revise today's agenda to remove item 6.E., Motion No. M2024-35, to execute a lease agreement with Wiley Family LLC, for the CIS building located in Redmond, WA. She spoke with staff, and they had asked for this item to be removed from the agenda to allow additional time to resolve building use issues with the city.

With no objections, Chair Walker announced this lease agreement would be considered at a future meeting.

CEO Report

Interim CEO Sparrman provided the CEO Report.

Activation Update

On May 20, 2024, the agency entered into pre-revenue operations on the Lynnwood Link Extension. Pre-revenue operations was the period during which the operators become familiar with and trained on operations on the new extension. Passengers would see trains running throughout this training process and during service scenarios until revenue service begins on August 30, 2024.

Sound Transit would host a ribbon cutting at Lynnwood City Center Station the morning of the August 30, 2024, after which trains would begin running. Community celebrations along the alignment would take place throughout the day and would begin in earnest at each of the four new stations later that

afternoon in order to be responsive to community schedules. More details would be provided as the date neared.

2 Line Power Outage and Ridership Update

On May 24, 2024, the 2 Line experienced a power outage that impacted service on the Eastside for approximately 6 hours. The agency's technical team was conducting a structured retrospective on both what caused the outage and the speed and quality of the agency's response. Interim CEO Sparrman would report back to the Board once an outcome of the retrospective was complete. He noted an outage of that magnitude was unacceptable for Sound Transit passengers and the public had reasonable expectation to restore service in a timely manner despite an unplanned outage.

Opening weekend for the 2 Line reached 47,000 boardings. The total monthly ridership in May 2024 totaled 121,000 boardings with average weekday ridership at just under 3,900 and a 4,300 average for Saturdays.

Angle Lake Tie In – Federal Way Link Extension

On May 12,2024, Sound Transit began single tracking between SeaTac and Angle Lake stations for the Federal Way Link Extension Overhead Centenary System (OCS) tie-in. This past weekend marked the halfway point of this effort. This second weekend complete closure at Angle Lake Station allowed the team to safely change the configuration to de-energize the northbound line, and then re-energize the southbound for single tracking to SeaTac. There continued to be an extremely collaborative effort between, King County, Sound Transit, and the design build contractor, Kiewit, to get this work completed with as little impact to passengers as possible. The third and final weekend closure of Angle Lake station was scheduled for June 22, 2024, with completion scheduled for June 23, 2024. This outage would restore Angle Lake Station back to normal train operations. With the work planned to be completed during this final outage, the Federal Way Link Extension would be physically and electrically connected to the 1 Line. Interim CEO Sparrman acknowledged one challenge that was faced over this last weekend. Due to late-breaking resource management challenges during the closure, the plan to direct passengers to King County Metro's Rapid Ride A Line at no charge to continue their journey was not able to be fully implemented, which led to last-minute passenger inconvenience. Interim CEO Sparrman apologized and pledged to do better in close coordination with agency partners for future work.

Public comment

Chair Walker announced that public comment would be accepted via email to emailtheboard@soundtransit.org, in person, and would also be accepted virtually.

The following people provided written comments:

Max Sgro	Phil Bogatyrev
Cliff Olmstead	Stefan Cordova
Mike Rajan	Santiago
J. Johnson	Stephen Fesler
Rebecca Chapman	

There were no in-person or virtual comments submitted.

Business Items

For Committee final action

April 4, 2024, Rider Experience and Operations Committee meeting minutes

It was moved by Board member Roscoe, seconded by Board member Birney and carried by the unanimous vote of all committee members present that the minutes of the April 4, 2024, Rider Experience and Operations Committee meeting be approved as presented.

Motion No. M2024-33: Authorizing the chief executive officer to execute a contract modification with Wabtec Transportation Systems LLC, formally ARINC, for continued services including system integration services and installation work for the Passenger Information Management System in the amount of $12,828,658, for a new total authorized contract amount not to exceed $46,684,453 plus applicable taxes, contingent upon approval of Resolution No. R2024-14.

David Ginsberg, Deputy Director of the Program Management Office, provided the presentation for Motion No. M2024-33 and Resolution No. R2024-14.

It was moved by Board member Roscoe, seconded by Board member Birney and carried by the unanimous vote of all committee members present that Motion No. M2024-33 be approved as presented.

For Recommendation to the Board

Resolution No. R2024-14: Amending the adopted 2024 Budget for the Passenger Information Management System program by (a) increasing the authorized program allocation by $18,825,000 from $49,575,848 to $68,400,848, to accommodate additional scope and related activities and (b) increasing the 2024 annual budget by $8,600,000 from $9,354,058 to $17,954,058.

Staff presented this with the previous Motion.

Board member Roscoe asked if there would be a contractor contract once the program was fully implemented or whether Sound Transit would assume the operation. Mr. Ginsberg replied there would be a separate maintenance contract.

It was moved by Board member Roscoe and seconded by Board member Birney.

Chair Walker called for a roll call vote.

Ayes	**Nays**
Angela Birney	
Christine Frizzell	
Ed Prince	
Kim Roscoe	
Dave Upthegrove	
Girmay Zahilay	
Kristina Walker	

It was carried by the unanimous vote of all seven committee members present that Resolution No. R2024-14 be forwarded to the Board with a do-pass recommendation.

Motion No. M2024-34: Authorizing the chief executive officer to execute a second amendment to the lease agreement with 705 Union Station, LLC to extend the term for an additional three-and-a-half-year period for the first, fourth, fifth, and sixth floors, consisting of 79,475 rentable square feet of space in the 705 Union Station building, in an amount not to exceed $14,415,361.

Faith Roland, Director of Real Property, provided the staff presentation.

It was moved by Board member Roscoe and seconded by Board member Birney.

Chair Walker called for a roll call vote.

Ayes	Nays
Angela Birney	
Christine Frizzell	
Ed Prince	
Kim Roscoe	
Dave Upthegrove	
Girmay Zahilay	
Kristina Walker	

It was carried by the unanimous vote of all seven committee members present that Motion No. M2024-34 be forwarded to the Board with a do-pass recommendation.

Motion No. M2024-35

Chair Walker reiterated that this item would be considered at a future meeting.

Reports to the Committee

REO Metrics – Vertical Conveyances

John Carini, Deputy Director of Vertical Transportation, provided the report. Mr. Carini briefly highlighted that the agency was changing the term from Vertical Conveyances to Vertical Transportation (VT) to a more generally accepted industry phase when discussing elevators and escalators. He reviewed the history of the VT Program which began in 2018.

The agency's current portfolio consisted of 122 elevators and 101 escalators, a total of 223. The opening of Lynnwood Link Extension (LLE) will increase the total assets to 250 by the end of 2024. Mr. Carini reviewed the asset portfolio growth, having 71 assets in 2015 and estimating 575 by 2041, and shared a map showcasing where those assets were situated. He provided background on the 58 Downtown Tunnel VT assets which were currently over 35 years old. The general rule of thumb for VT assets life expectancy is 25 years old. In 2020, the Board approved $8.7 million for repairs and safety upgrades of the Downtown Tunnel VT assets to improve passenger availability while executing a modernization strategy. On January 1, 2021, Sound Transit commenced its tandem strategy of repair/upgrades and modernization of all tunnel station VT assets. Mr. Carini highlighted that when Sound Transit assumed management of the tunnel, 28 of the 58 total VT assets were inoperable.

Mr. Carini provided an update on progress showing a total month over month chart of service hours on the Link alignment, including the downtown tunnel. This data was inclusive of all unplanned categories such as misuse, deliberate vandalism, environmental outages caused by debris build up, power related failures and mechanical failures throughout January 2021 to April 2024. Mr. Carini reported monthly out of service hours were decreased from 17,000 to 2,500 hours. The average return to service (RTS) hours per outage decreased from over 200 hours per outage to 7. Mechanical related monthly out of service hours decreased from 16,400 to 1,100 and average mechanical related RTS time per outage decreased from nearly 300 hours per outage to 10.

Mr. Carini reviewed the modernization program and its passenger focused strategy for VT assets. Instead of shutting down a station for extended periods of time, the team investigated how to continue work with minimal disturbance to ingress and egress at stations while modernizing assets. There was minimal change from the previous timeline in phase projects due to extended manufactured lead times for elevator cab components and elevator controller electronics. The team had to reorganize phasing, beginning the hydraulic jack replacements at the International District Station (IDS) for all four elevators. Mr. Carini informed the committee of the schedule of work taking place on each elevator at IDS from the months of July to October 2024. He reviewed a 10-year estimated modernization timeline which estimated the IDS project to lead into the World Cup event, creating a pause in work to ensure maximum passenger availability. Afterwards, work would resume at Pioneer, University, and Westlake

stations – that work would go through 2033. Around approximately 2029, the team would have to look outside of the Downtown Tunnel VT assets, such as areas like King Street or Everett station, to begin modernization as well.

Chair Walker acknowledged the impressive improvements on service hour outages and response time from the team.

Board member Zahilay appreciated the data provided and questioned the drastic improvement with service hours outages. Mr. Carini agreed on the dramatic positive outcome and credited the Board's funding approval from 2020 and the execution of strategy from the team and vendor. Those groups worked to identify how to not only repair equipment, but how to replace critical components.

Board member Zahilay noted the social media awareness of Sound Transit's out of service elevators and escalators. He asked if the level of outages the agency experienced before was below or above the average in the industry for an agency of this size. Mr. Carini noted it was a high number comparatively to other agencies. The team had set target availability goals with 90 percent overall availability for escalators and 97 for elevators across all categories. The reason the number was so high in 2021 was because Sound Transit assumed the management of the Downtown Tunnel assets and recognized the improvements needed.

Board member Zahilay asked if the level the agency was currently at was excellent or below standard. Mr. Carini noted he speaks to many others in the industry and compares percentages to Sound Transit's. He believes the agency measures itself to a higher level due to the complexities of data measurements. The team has several categories to track availability in order to hold the agency to a higher accountability and therefore makes overall numbers higher.

Board member Zahilay asked what the next goal or benchmark was to achieve. Mr. Carini replied that the team was constantly looking towards improvement and had not set a floor yet. Since the live monitoring hardware was instituted, the level of analysis being conducted on a daily basis would record how often equipment was being used and when it was being used. That data would be fed into the mitigation plans that the team executed daily within Sound Transit staff and vendors in order to understand repeated outages and discovering root causes.

Board member Zahilay praised team for their positive outcome.

Board member Frizzell echoed praise and emphasized the importance of elevators and escalators within the ADA community. She also shared her personal experience with seeing improvements at station stairways regarding cleanliness.

Passenger Impact Portfolio Plan

Pamela Wrenn, Deputy Project Director of Service Delivery, provided the report. The annual rail replacement work would take place from May 7, 2024 to July 31, 2024 with 20-minute headways starting at 11 p.m. to the end of service. This was necessary preventative maintenance to increase long term rail health. The Federal Way Link Extension (FWLE) power tie-in to Angle Lake project was required to occur prior to Lynnwood Link simulated service. This project would deliver the FWLE on time with fewer impacts to new passengers. This work would occur from May 12, 2024 to June 23, 2024 and require single tracking with shuttles between SeaTac and Angle Lake, with 3 weekend partial station closures. The weekend of June 1 and 2, 2024 included work to repair tile at the Columbia City Station.

Phase 1 of the 2 Line signal testing in the Downtown Tunnel would occur June 21 through June 23, 2024 causing a full closure of the downtown tunnel with bus bridging between SODO and Capitol Hill. This work would coincide with the final weekend closure for tie-in at Angle Lake Station. This was necessary to tie in 2 Line signal system to the downtown tunnel and test with live trainsets. Phase 2 of this testing would cause three downtown tunnel full closure weekends with bus bridging between SODO and Capitol Hill.

Ms. Wrenn reviewed accomplishments from Q2 and Q3 2024. Those included securing resources to help manage service disruptions, beginning work to complete draft Passenger Impact Portfolio Plan (PIPP) norms and documentation by late summer in a program management plan, and by July 2024, PIPP Leadership would define accountability for setting agency targets for service during disruptions for bus and rail, would ensure adequate operational coverage during event planning and execution, and augment high-impact project management processes. Other improvements in progress included passenger wait times, resourcing, program repeatability, and program scalability.

Board member Roscoe shared anticipation in continuing to hear of these improvements and acknowledged the agency's efforts in keeping passengers informed of planned closures.

Chair Walker noted the multiple references to work surrounding the World Cup event and asked if there was a larger effort taking place within the agency to prepare. Deputy CEO Arnold confirmed and noted a kickoff meeting would take place in the following week to build an internal group that would engage with the committee that had been working on those efforts. Interim CEO Sparrman added another big event the agency was focusing on was connecting the 2 Line to the 1 Line across Lake Washington before the World Cup.

Presentation on the Passenger Experience Survey

Michael Berman, Deputy Director of Research and Innovation, provided the report. He was here 4 months talking about the innovation side of the portfolio and today is regarding the passenger experience survey and present the results of the 2023 Passenger Experience survey and describe how those results would be used to improve service.

Mr. Berman reviewed the Passenger Experience team's belief was that if they're available to provide an experience that's dependable, safe, clean, and available with informed riders, that passengers would have a good experience. Mr. Berman asked the Committee to keep in mind that this was the team's goal while reviewing results.

The Passenger Experience survey measured overall experience and performance across key categories: passenger characteristics, overall performance, foundational categories, and specific drivers of performance. The foundation of the survey, as Mr. Berman talked about the main categories of passenger experience was "How much would you agree or disagree that …" then would follow with a question related to the foundational categories. The respondent could reply with an answer within the five-point scale of strongly agree or strongly disagree. Anything less than strongly disagrees would prompt the survey to dive into additional questions to figure out why they gave that answer. Mr. Berman showed how that was applied to an accessibility question. In that example, he shared the additional questions that would populate based on the previous answer. Such as, what made it difficult to access Sound Transit: too crowded, hard to pay the fare, etc. If they chose more than one answer, then the survey would ask what the primary reason was. This process gave the team a powerful data set to understand exactly what riders were finding problematic with using Sound Transit services.

Mr. Berman reviewed methodology and caveats. This survey was conducted in October/November 2023 and received over 20,000 responses. Doubling the amount of any previous survey and had significant response across demographic groups. The survey sample mirrored the demographic of the region when the team looked at racial, income, and other demographics. That said, Mr. Berman noted it was not a random sample, responses were from passengers that were more motivated to respond to the survey than if it was conducted randomly. This survey didn't reach former riders, only current riders. Mr. Berman explained this may overstate performance because individuals that rode once or twice did not have the opportunity to respond as to why they were no longer riding. The team was looking at how to improve that portion of the survey for the next round.

Mr. Berman pointed out that the committee would see high level information that looked at the entire survey sample. This information was in a dashboard that allowed the team to filter the data and look at various opinions based on service used, demographic categories, subareas, etc.

A graph was shown that had two different measures of the overall impression, one was overall grade on a scale of A to F, the other was likelihood to recommend on a scale of 0 to 10. It showed a decline in likely to recommend between Summer 2022 to Summer 2023, but an increase in overall grade. These results were puzzling as the overall grade has increased overtime but the likelihood to recommend has declined. The team investigated further.

In past presentations, Mr. Berman had noted the presence of a Sounding Board, which was a panel made of riders that had taken the survey but then volunteered to take surveys once a month for in depth studies. The team asked the Sounding Board to help understand how someone would treat likelihood to recommend differently than overall grade. They found two main factors: one was question of whether Sound Transit was easily available and accessible to their friends and family and likes taking Sound Transit may not recommend to somebody who lives in a more outlying area and wasn't able to take it conveniently. Second was people who ride Sound Transit that were happy with the services and their experiences from getting from point A to B but not sure their friend or neighbor was going to be as comfortable riding as they were.

Mr. Berman dove into more category specific results using the question, "how much would you agree or disagree that …" as a foundational category/question. He noted the agency was generally doing well even in the categories that were performing least well. There were still between 50-60 percent of passengers agreeing that we meet their needs in those categories. However, there were some discrepancies. The areas passengers felt best about that the agency was excelling in was safe operation of service and courtesy and professionalism of staff. Fundamentally, the agency provided to strive for safe service and interactions with staff were meeting riders' needs. The biggest areas for improvement regarded safety, diving deeper into that, regarding behavior of other people, maintenance, and cleanliness. Nearly 60 percent of riders agree Sound Transit provided safe service, but looking into the disagreements and concerns, riders comment on unpredictable behavior from others. It was unknown what respondents exactly mean by unpredictable behavior, but the team believes they have an understanding. Another Sounding Board activity was taken to better understand. The team found that nearly 40 percent of respondents felt they saw someone behaving unpredictable at least half the time or more and 90 percent saw that happening occasionally or more, so 11 percent of Sounding Board respondents had never experienced that.

Cleanliness was also very important to passengers. 50-60 percent think Sound Transit had a clean enough system and most large complaints came from stations/stops being dirty. The team would work towards improving the survey to better identify which stops/stations they were referring to. Maintenance was the last identifier as an area for improvement, specifically for escalators and elevators.

Mr. Berman reviewed how the team was using survey results to improve performance. The main intent in conducting surveys was to generate information to drive for improvements. The goal with the program was to collect information and provide to internal teams on what's being learned. There was a lot of current work underway to improve performance based on passenger feedback, such as improving maintenance with elevator and escalators, improved analysis, better signage during outages, Link station deep cleaning, end of line train cleaning, bird deterrents, increased contracted security staffing, creating a FAST team for 24/7 incident response, and establishing agreements with local law enforcement in service area. The team developed infographics to present to internal working teams to let them know where the passenger pain points were and what could be done to improve it.

Chair Walker shared appreciation towards the Sounding Board.

Board member Birney acknowledged the praise given to staff and operators through this survey. She asked about the results between satisfied with riding versus likely to recommend and asked whether the

team received more information on what their personal experiences were. Mr. Berman replied that the Sounding Board delivered results the morning of this meeting and he had not been able to review them yet. The questions revolved around whether respondents were speaking from personal experience or word of mouth. He asked whether it would be helpful to return to the committee to present those results Board member Birney replied it was unnecessary to return for a full report but acknowledged the goal to improve service in any way possible. Interim CEO Sparrman added that the agency recognized a core issue that public perception was important. There was work underway to have thorough reviews of safety and cleanliness. He shared the agency was trying to have visible security presence throughout the system so that when people experience this unpredictable behavior, or whatever caused discomfort, that they had uniformed personnel present.

Board member Zahilay asked for more information on the FAST team for 24/7 incident response. Deputy CEO Arnold explained the FAST team was a dedicated group of Sound Transit employees that were out on the system engaging with contracted security employees to ensure they were moving to the right locations, but also responding to incidents within their proximity along with other security and sometimes fare ambassadors. Sound Transit was also doing analysis right now on how effective the team was, how it worked, how well they coordinated, and how to maximize it in the future to minimize the response time once alerted.

Board member Zahilay asked for staff to speak to relationships or partnerships to these incidents with the continuum of care from responders and whether there was more data on type of incident such as overdose, addiction, mental illness, etc. He noted it was one part to have an incident responder appear, but another part is what level of ability do they have such as training and resources to address a more complex situation. Deputy CEO Arnold noted that there were multiple groups and an analysis being conducted to improve the training. There was also a pilot program with King County crisis services in the Downtown Corridor where there were dedicated professional responders available throughout a set number of hours per day. Fare ambassadors were also trained on how to engage and connect to resources as quickly as possible. Work was underway to create better coordination efforts and the goal was to create a seamless experience for the individual.

Board member Zahilay asked if incident responders collected data. Deputy CEO Arnold confirmed they record number of interactions, services provided, and services accepted and acted on. That data was collected by the safety team. Board member Zahilay asked if they collected data on types of incidents such as overdose, using drugs, mental health crisis, etc. Deputy CEO Arnold committed to providing Board member Zahilay with the specific categories of data recorded. Board member Zahilay thanked staff and emphasized that could be a source to understand the gap between the incidents staff was responding to versus what resources they were able to provide.

Chair Walker requested more information on the FAST team be provided to the committee or in form of a memo. She noted she would work with the Tacoma alternative response team to ensure they were coordinating with Sound Transit.

Board member Roscoe referenced a slide regarding methodology and caveats. She shared positive remarks with the information the team had gathered and extracted in order to surface that the agency was thought well of, but somehow less likely to be recommended. Regarding respondents that the agency was not able to sample, Board member Roscoe asked if those riders would ever be included into a survey and whether they would be identified separately from the group that consistently provides responses. She also showed interest in those demographics in relation to the previous riders and if they differed from those getting consistent responses. Mr. Berman noted the main way to receive survey responses was through email, text alerts, and through distribution lists. But those typically consisted of past riders that had an ORCA card at one period or signed up for a rider alert in the past but no longer rode. The first question offered on the survey was whether the individual had ridden Sound Transit in the last 30 days. If they responded with No, the survey would not continue. Mr. Berman noted next year's survey could go further and continue to ask questions to better understand why they stopped riding.

Chair Walker echoed other committee members on receiving this level of responses from passengers and appreciated the agency's proactive methods to addressing comments. She noted Mr. Berman's presentation explained how the survey would dig deeper into answers that were on the negative scale and asked whether the survey would go through the same methods with those that answered positively. Mr. Berman explained the survey was not programmed in that way as it was a way to drive improvements. The survey took an average of 15-20 minutes to respond so the team ensured the respondent's time was put towards answering questions that could help the agency improve.

Chair Walker asked if data was broken down by mode. Mr. Berman confirmed, and the survey then asked about stations being used, in which a respondent could have several answers. In next year's survey, the team would update the survey to have respondents reply with the top two station they use most frequently instead.

Chair Walker asked staff to share how the public can view these results on the dashboard. Mr. Berman explained the steps to access it on the Sound Transit website and use the filters for detailed viewing.

Executive session – None.

Other business – None.

Next meeting

Thursday, July 18, 2024
1:00 to 3:00 p.m.
Ruth Fisher Boardroom and Virtually via WebEx

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 2:22 p.m.

Kristina Walker
Rider Experience and Operations Committee Chair

ATTEST:

Kathryn Flores
Board Administrator

APPROVED on July 18, 2024, JG.