



Summary Minutes

Executive Committee Meeting March 4, 2021

Call to order

The meeting was called to order at 10:31 a.m. by Committee Chair Kent Keel virtually on WebEx.

Due to the Governor's Order, public viewing of the meeting was only available via WebEx. The meeting was streamed on

<https://soundtransit.webex.com/soundtransit/onstage/g.php?MTID=e67754f73437d9e8b2f763ae0d6c728e6>

Roll call of members

Chair	Vice Chair
(P) Kent Keel, University Place Councilmember	(P) Paul Roberts, Everett Councilmember (P) Dow Constantine, King County Executive

Board Members	
(P) Claudia Balducci, King County Councilmember	(A) Jenny Durkan, Seattle Mayor (P) Roger Millar, WSDOT Secretary
(A) Bruce Dammeier, Pierce County Executive	(P) Dave Somers, Snohomish County Executive (P) Victoria Woodards, Tacoma Mayor

Katie Flores, Board Administrator, announced that a quorum of the Committee was present at roll call.

Report of the Chair

Upcoming Presentations

Chair Keel announced that the committee would receive three presentations. Two were related to ongoing realignment discussions and the third was related the inclusive culture at Sound Transit.

Monthly Contract Report

The monthly contract report was included in members meeting packets for review.

CEO Report

CEO Peter Rogoff gave the CEO Report.

State and Federal Update

That week marked the halfway point of the 2021 legislative session. A bill to authorize the Seattle Monorail Authority to raise revenue that could benefit Sound Transit made it through the first cut-off, and the fare enforcement bill that gave the Board flexibility to establish an enforcement program outside of the court system passed the State House of Representatives. The 2021-2023 transportation budgets were expected to be released from the State House of Representatives and State Senate. They would indicate how Sound Transit may stand in negotiations between the House and Senate on the final budget.

Senator Maria Cantwell mentioned Sound Transit several times during the Commerce Committee

confirmation hearing of Polly Trottenberg for Deputy Secretary of Transportation. She underscored the importance of continued investment in transit infrastructure. The US House of Representatives passed the third COVID relief package, the American Rescue Plan, the previous week and the Senate would review it that week. The bill included over \$30 billion for public transit which would provide Sound Transit relief funds in two ways. The first was through formula distribution, allocated by the Puget Sound Regional Council when the Seattle Urbanized Area received its share of federal funding. Disbursement could range from \$184 million to \$66 million. CEO Rogoff urged those serving on the Puget Sound Regional Council to help maximize the agency's funding through that mechanism.

The second mechanism was a provision in the bill which that set aside additional funds for projects with existing Full Funding Grant Agreements that had recently received appropriations from Congress. The bill was amended in the House of Representatives to boost the funding for the provision from \$1 billion to \$1.25 billion and changed the distribution of funding to be in proportion to each agency's local share of the projects instead of the federal share. The amendment effectively doubled Sound Transit's allocation to somewhere between \$180-\$210 million.

Workforce Development Awards

On Tuesday of that week, the City of Seattle, the Port of Seattle, and the Sound Transit announced a first of its kind partnership to invest \$1.75 billion in long-term construction careers for historically underserved communities, with the goal of closing the equity gap.

Public comment

Chair Keel announced that public comment would be accepted via email to emailtheboard@soundtransit.org and would also be accepted verbally.

The following people provided written public comment:

Joyce Hengesbach

The following people provided verbal public comment:

Joyce Hengesbach

Joe Kunzler

Business items

Items for Committee final action

February 4, 2020. Executive Committee meeting minutes

It was moved by Boardmember Roberts, seconded by Boardmember Balducci and carried by consent that the minutes of the February 4, 2021 Executive Committee meeting be approved as presented.

Reports to the Board

Cost Estimate Consultant Status Report

Kimberly Farley, Deputy Chief Executive Officer, introduced Jonnie Thomas and Sean VonFeldt from the Triunity consultant team. She advised that the draft report would be complete by the end of March and the team would report to the full Board at its March 25, 2021 meeting.

Chair Keel reminded the Committee that the consultants reported directly to the Board.

Mr. Thomas reviewed the assessment scope and schedule, noting that the first task, review and assessment of past cost estimates and trends, was nearly complete. The draft report would be complete the week of the

March 25, 2021 Board meeting and would cover the West Seattle and Ballard Link, Tacoma Dome Link Extensions, the Operations and Maintenance Facility South, and Bus Rapid Transit programs.

The assessment included three teams, consisting of more than 15 estimators. The estimators were various experts in fields related to the projects. The assessment was not a bottom-up estimate, meaning that the team did not start their review from scratch and compare results with Sound Transit's estimates. This allowed the experts to begin looking at areas of interest within Sound Transit's methods. The draft report would identify the changes in scope which occurred over time, provide recommendations for missing elements and potential improvements, assess the accuracy of the agency's estimates, and include informational costs of comparable large projects across the country.

Mr. VonFeldt explained the approach to gaining confidence in the ST3 estimates, which organized all data by Federal Transit Administration Standard Cost Categories. This established consistency across all projects. The estimates were also broken down by route alignment types and technologies, including at-grade, elevated, and underground. Doing so allowed the team to compare the original plan to the current estimates to help define reasons for the changes. The final method was referred to as the "80/20" principle. This analyzed the 20 percent of items that carried 80 percent of the cost and risk.

The top five most common risks for projects were ground conditions, right-of-way, environmental mitigation, tunneling, and bridge type. Recommendations expected to be included in the report were that there were some immature or missing estimate content, such as underground stations; improvements in accuracy of unit cost library; and use of risk based contingencies instead of only historically based contingencies.

Mr. Thomas advised that the team would be working with Sound Transit staff to more fully develop the recommendations.

Boardmember Roberts was curious about the team's risk assessment of ground conditions in regards to soil type and hydrological conditions. Mr. VonFeldt advised that the risk was assessed in terms of unknowns. Boardmember Roberts asked how the team would represent the unknowns. Mr. Thomas advised that the team was discussing that approach, but it was not complete yet.

Chair Keel noted that regardless of the report's conclusion, costs were going to increase, and asked the Board and consultant team what they hoped to achieve afterward. Mr. VonFeldt advised that what the Board would receive from this report is more certainty with the cost estimates. Many other transit agencies were also considering phasing projects, and being able to identify and move forward with phases early would limit further cost increases. CEO Rogoff advised that all projects were at a very low percentage of design completion, and staff would not assign a high level of confidence on the estimates either. The impetus for bringing the consultants onboard was the drastic increase of estimates between 2019 and 2020.

Boardmember Millar advised that as the realignment discussion advanced, one area of public concern would be whether the agency got the estimates for the projects right. This exercise was a matter of checking the agency's work. The value was gaining confidence at a public and agency level.

Boardmember Balducci added that she was looking for comfort that the funding gap was as accurate as possible, so the Board could be confident in the decisions it was making later in the year.

Chair Keel asked the consultant team to provide recommendations for how to proceed after they complete their report.

Ms. Farley outlined the next steps with the consultant team, noting that the draft report for estimate assessment would be provided the week of March 22, 2021 and they would review it at the March 25, 2021 Board meeting. The team would attend the April 1, 2021 meeting to field questions about the draft report. The final report would be released on April 19, 2021, and they would attend the April 22, 2021 Board meeting.

Boardmember Roberts noted that when the report is released, he hopes that there will be more confidence in the cost estimates, but uncertainty will still exist. He expected to see detailed information about each project and assessment to determine how confident the Board could be in them.

Ms. Farley advised that the Board should look for that information when the draft report is released, and they should address any shortcomings at that time, so it can be updated and finally published to their satisfaction.

Realignment Update and Public Engagement Plans

Chair Keel explained that the scenarios presented to the full Board at its January meeting were designed to provide an understanding of how various projects performed under some of the criteria. This presentation would give a possible framework for decisions on realignment. The Board was required to make adjustments to the program in a manner that achieved the goals for the Sound Transit 3 plan, and the framework was based on the work of the Board in 2010 when the Sound Transit 2 plan was realigned. It was also modified to account for the present situation, including how Motion No. M2020-56 could be incorporated.

He advised that the decisions made later in the year were not permanent, and the plan could be adjusted if the agency's financial situation changes.

Don Billen, Executive Director of Planning, Environmental, and Project Development, reviewed the work of the Board to-date on the realignment process.

He outlined the ST2 project realignment framework, noting that the timeline for the projects was 15 years, while ST3 was a 25 year process. With that in mind, the decision process was binary, choosing to advance projects or pause and even delete some. Presently, staff attempted to build on that approach by creating a series of tiered categories which were prioritized through the criteria adopted in 2020. The framework allowed the Board to direct staff to move forward with certain projects while completing work on others to keep them ready, should capacity for them become available.

He explained the relation between each tier's status in the work plan and finance plan. Progressing through scenarios in which various levels of additional financial capacity would allow for the advancement of the subsequent tiers. He noted that there were four ways to increase capacity: a better than projected tax revenue outcome; increased state, local, or federal funding sources; reduced project scope; and time.

Mr. Billen gave examples of a hypothetical realignment process with situations in which financial capacity was improved over time. He noted that the exercise was simply illustrative of project statuses changing over time. The intent of the framework was to enable the Board to establish priorities, to provide flexibility to plan for enhanced capacity, and to allow for the financial capacity to change in multiple ways.

Mr. Billen reviewed the next steps. He noted that public engagement was progressing.

CEO Rogoff reminded the Committee that no project would advance from category to category without Board approval. A new financial plan would be presented each year, as was required. As such, a review of the financial status would allow for budgeting and additional decision making each year.

He addressed public engagement, noting that conversations with more than 50 stakeholders had already been held. He extended the commitment that staff would meet with any community group requested by Boardmembers. The agency was intent on maintaining transparency with the public through the realignment process.

Chair Keel reiterated that what was presented and the decisions made in July would not be final, but only a construct with which to prioritize projects in relation to the agency's financial capacity. Decisions would continue to be made in the following years and as the financial situation developed.

Boardmember Roberts advised that he would need more time and information to develop opinions on which to make decisions. He especially looked forward to the cost estimate assessments.

Office of Civil Rights, Equity and Inclusion Update: Inclusive Culture

Jonté Robinson, Chief Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Officer, Daphne Cross, Diversity and Inclusion Manager, and LaTonya Kadar, Equity and Inclusion Training and Engagement Specialist, provided the presentation. Ms. Robinson summarized the office’s vision and mission. She explained that following the challenges faced in 2020, the agency felt it was important to affirmatively state its commitment to become an anti-racist organization.

Ms. Cross explained that the newly developed Inclusive Culture team was responsible for all internally facing programs and initiative. It assessed hiring and employment practices, and implemented Equal Employment Opportunity hiring concurrence, in addition to other responsibilities.

Ms. Kadar outlined the agency’s Employee-led Groups like the Employee resource groups and Employee Resource Networks. Five Employee Resource Groups existed, with a sixth on the way. The Employee Resource Networks operated in a reduced scale without an organized structure. The value each provided to Sound Transit was high. Of note, the Asian American and Pacific Islander Employee Resource Group met to address the rising violence against the Asian American community in Seattle and across the country. In 2020, Employee Resource Groups hosted 28 events.

She reviewed the Inclusion Competency and EEO training statistics, and announced an Anti-Bias training program which was in development. The first prong, an online training, was expected to be ready by the second quarter of the year. The second prong was an instructor-led training intended to deepen the understanding and create space for discussion among the participants.

Ms. Cross explained the process behind the agency’s Diversity, Equity and Inclusion goals.

Boardmember Roberts asked how the office was connected to the Human Resources department functions within the agency. Ms. Robinson explained that the office was separate from the Human Resources department, but they worked closely with each other. Data used in the office was provided by the Human Resources. They also oversaw the Small and Disadvantaged Business Enterprise program.

CEO Rogoff noted the energy and employee engagement which were magnified by the Employee Resource Groups and said they were invaluable resources to the agency.

Executive Session – None

Other business – None

Next meeting

Thursday, April 1, 2021
10:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.
Virtually via WebEx

Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 12:20 p.m.

ATTEST:

Kent Keel
Executive Committee Chair

Kathryn Flores
Board Administrator

APPROVED on _____. AM