

Sound Transit
May 28, 1998
Board Meeting Summary Minutes

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 2:10 p.m. by Vice Chair Paul Miller. The meeting was held in the sixth floor conference room of the Puget Sound Regional Council offices, 1011 Western Avenue, Seattle, Washington.

Report of the Chair

Mr. Miller announced that he was chairing the meeting in Mr. Drewel's absence. Mr. Drewel was hospitalized earlier in the week, but is home now. Mr. Earling indicated that he'd spoken with Mr. Drewel's office earlier in the day and was asked to report that he is doing well.

Mr. Miller announced that the Board would be working from a revised agenda. Specifically, agenda item 9B, a status report on Tacoma Link Light Rail, was added. In addition, the revised agenda indicates that items 10, 11 and 12 will be deferred until the June 11 meeting when Mr. Drewel will be present.

In Mr. Drewel's absence, he asked Mr. Miller to announce that this past week Seattle Mayor Schell, joined by Sound Transit Chair Bob Drewel, County Executive Sims, Washington State Transportation Commissioner Aubrey Davis and Elevated Transit Company representative Walt Crowley signed the Seattle Transit Initiative. The initiative creates a working partnership among Seattle's existing and new transit partners calling for collaborative work to perform a comprehensive assessment of Seattle's needs for transit service and capital improvements, as well as development of a strategic implementation plan for a locally-oriented, intermediate capacity transit system that complements existing local and proposed regional transit service.

Mr. Schell remarked that he is very pleased with the initiative. It will help the City of Seattle be a better customer for the Sound Transit service. Feedback from the Secretary of Transportation in Washington, D.C. has been positive.

Mr. Miller pointed out that boardmembers packets contain a copy of the final motion confirming the most promising route alternatives to be included in the Central Link light rail transit (LRT) draft environmental impact statement (DEIS) approved by the Board two weeks ago.

Roll Call

Chair

(A) Bob Drewel, Snohomish County Executive

Vice Chairs

(P) Paul Miller, City of Tacoma Councilmember

(P) Greg Nickels, King County Councilmember

Board Members

(A) Sarah Casada, Pierce County Councilmember
(P) Ann Davis, City of Lakewood Councilmember
(P) Dave Earling, City of Edmonds Councilmember
(P) Mary Gates, City of Federal Way Councilmember
(P) Jane Hague, King County Councilmember
(P) Ed Hansen, City of Everett Mayor
(P) Richard McIver, City of Seattle Councilmember
(P) Rob McKenna, King County Councilmember

(A) Sid Morrison, WSDOT Secretary
(P) Dave Russell, City of Kirkland Councilmember
(P) Paul Schell, City of Seattle Mayor
(A) Ron Sims, King County Executive
(P) Cynthia Sullivan, King County Councilmember
(P) Doug Sutherland, Pierce County Executive
(P) Jim White, City of Kent Mayor

Ms. Walker, Board Administrator, announced a quorum of the Board was present.

Public Comment

None.

Executive Director Report

Mr. White alerted the Board of actions upcoming in June. The items scheduled are the award for commuter rail cars, locomotives for the commuter rail system and bus purchase.

Consent Agenda Items

The Board of the Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority does hereby approve the voucher certification for the period March 1 through March 31, 1998 totaling \$1,939,568.45.

It was moved by Mr. White, seconded by Mr. Earling and carried by the unanimous vote of all Board members present that the Consent Agenda be approved as presented.

Resolution No. R98-23 - Amending Sound Move by approving the reallocation of \$2.5 million from the Lynnwood Transit Center/Park and Ride Connector project to the SR 99 Improvement Project for HOV lane construction and adding the SR 99 HOV Lane Improvement Project to the Snohomish County subarea list of projects

Mr. Miller announced that the Board would defer action on Resolution No. R98-23 until additional Boardmembers arrived, as a supermajority vote was required.

Motion No. M98-29 - Approval to release the Request for Proposals for procurement of Sounder Commuter Rail automatic fare vending machines

It was moved by Mr. Sutherland and seconded by Mr. White and carried by the unanimous vote of all Boardmembers present that Motion No. M98-29 be approved as presented.

Policy Issues for Discussion and Deliberation

Status Report on Downtown Seattle Transit Tunnel Studies

Mr. Paul Bay, Director of Light Rail, indicated he and Mr. Jim Jacobson, King County Metro, would brief the Board on studies related to the tunnel and its potential use for light rail. The presentation would be divided into three parts: financial and policy issues, physical design issues, and operating and maintenance (O&M) issues. As Mr. Jacobson had not yet arrived and had planned to present the financial and policy issues to the Board, Mr. Bay proceeded with the physical design portion of the presentation, utilizing several slides (copies on file).

(Board member McKenna arrived at this time.)

Mr. Bay indicated there are a number of physical design issues for retrofitting the tunnel for use by rail. The biggest single one is at Convention Place station, which is the end of the line at the north end of the tunnel.

Additionally, the two cross streets over I-5 are on a big structure, which is a complex structure because there are streets going north/south and east/west.

Mr. Bay presented a slide looking north on I-5 at the proposed LRT crossing under I-5. He indicated there would be two tunnels, one for light rail in each direction. They must pass under I-5, including not only north/south lanes

and express lanes, but also the piles and columns for those complex street structures over I-5. Pilings have been put in place for those structures that retain the slope and make it possible to insure the stability of the area. There are also large caissons that have been built to support I-5 itself, which go fairly deep. When the light rail crosses under I-5, a determination must be made to find a way to go completely under the lanes and the caissons and under those piles that have been placed to retain the slope or go through the pilings and wind among the caissons without hitting them. Staff has been discussing that issue with the structural engineer at DOT as well as Sound Transit's own geotechnical design experts.

Mr. Bay showed a slide portraying the profile light rail would follow, either completely under the caissons and piles or among the caissons and through the walls of piles at the higher level. It appears at this time, the preferred alignment would be the higher profile, from Sound Transit's standpoint and that of DOT.

In addition, Mr. Bay showed slides portraying that the use of the lower profile would make a Convention Place station for light rail difficult or impossible, because the tunnel would have to be reprofiled from Westlake station on to accomplish that.

Mr. Bay continued to say that in terms of ridership, the lowest volume station between the University of Washington and the International District is the Convention Place station. The highest volume station is Westlake.

(Board member Sullivan arrived at this time.)

Mr. Bay then raised the issue of the need to adjust the platform heights at the existing bus tunnel stations. Staff will be bringing to the Board in June design criteria including those for the vehicle itself. Low floor vehicles would create a need to adjust platform height by a small amount; high floor vehicles would require a much greater adjustment to be made in platform heights in the stations that could conflict with bus loading.

In addition, Mr. Bay pointed out that the capacity of moving crowds of people in and out of the stations would be another issue. Currently there is a large number of people in the bus tunnel stations but that number will more than double with light rail. Staff is examining the capacity of each station to handle those crowds, not only for the first phase but for future extensions, as well. City fire codes must be taken into consideration as well.

Mr. Bay stated that some Board members have asked about other possible exits and entrances to the stations. When the tunnel was built by Metro some years ago, they provided knock out panels to provide connections to the other buildings. These would go into the basement of the Public Safety Building and King County Courthouse but it is very costly to connect them to the tunnel. Although it would be desirable to have as many connections as possible, there will be a cost associated with it. Sound Transit would work with private and public agencies to determine how to accomplish that.

Regarding the track, Mr. Bay addressed the rumor that the track in the tunnel is the wrong gauge for light rail. While the rumor is not true, he pointed out that the stray current, vibration and crossover are issues to take into consideration. Geotechnical staff and consultants are testing the vibration in the soil and the wrappings, and a design staff is exploring different methods of avoiding stray current problems. Studies are also underway regarding the crossovers.

Mr. Bay stated that another rumor is that light rail will not fit in the tunnel. He indicated that is not the case. Sound Transit has verified the tunnel is useable by light rail. However, some work will need to be done to provide an overhead wire in the tunnel for light rail to operate.

Mr. Miller proposed that the Board take action on Resolution No. R98-23 because the required supermajority was present at that time.

Resolution No. R98-23 - Amending Sound Move by approving the reallocation of \$2.5 million from the Lynnwood Transit Center/Park and Ride Connector project to the SR 99 Improvement Project for HOV lane construction and adding the SR 99 HOV Lane Improvement Project to the Snohomish County subarea list of projects

It was moved by Ms. Gates and seconded by Mr. White that Resolution No. R98-23 be approved as presented.

Ms. Barbara Gilliland, Systems Integration Program Manager, reported that this resolution has been reviewed by the Finance and Executive Committees. She provided some background information on the resolution itself, stating that the proposed action would relieve or significantly reduce Sound Transit's investment on the Lynnwood Transit Center/Park and Ride Connector Project as the City of Lynnwood has successfully obtained funding for that project. In turn, Sound Transit would reallocate those funds to a new project on the SR-99 corridor.

Ms. Gilliland announced that Ms. Tina Roberts, Mayor of Lynnwood, was present and invited her to make some comments.

Mayor Roberts thanked the Board for considering the proposed resolution. She indicated that the SR-99 project would benefit not only Lynnwood, but all of Snohomish County.

The motion to approve Resolution No. R98-23 was carried by the unanimous vote of all Board members present.

Downtown Seattle Transit Tunnel Studies

Mr. Jacobson presented slides to the Board regarding financing for the existing tunnel. The county completed refinancing and there is less than \$160 million left in remaining debt. The payments are \$12 million per year through 2019. The bonds are currently county general obligation bonds, but initially they were Metro transit bonds.

The second issue is tunnel ownership and use. Under the 1985 mixed cooperation agreement with the City, the space under the streets at Third and Pine has been dedicated by the City as a transit way for use by public transportation. Metro has been granted the right to use that transitway and has been designated as responsible for the tunnel's operation.

Finally, the county at this time retains ownership of all improvements associated with the tunnel. While use of the space under the streets is granted by the City, the tunnel itself and "betterments" are property of King County.

Mr. Jacobson provided information on the current use of the tunnel, stating that Metro currently operates 24 routes in the tunnel. Those 24 routes serve practically every community in the county, including Federal Way, SeaTac, Des Moines, Auburn, Bellevue, Redmond, Kirkland, Bothell, etc. 130 buses per hour operate in the peak periods; that number drops to about 50 per hour in the midday.

Mr. Bay pointed out that, in looking at the feasibility of joint operation for bus and rail, several questions arise. What kind of buses will be used in future operations? What kind of light rail operation headways will be required, not only in Phase I but in future phases? Not very long after Phase I or about when the light rail is extended north to Lynnwood, south to Federal Way and Tacoma and east to Bellevue, ridership demand would no longer allow bus operation between trains.

(Board members Hague and Nickels arrived at this time.)

Mr. Bay indicated that other issues arise as well, such as bus operations during tunnel retrofit. Certain parts of the work can be done on nights and weekends; however, the change in the bus profile up by the Westlake and

Convention Place stations would require some period of time when the tunnel would have to be shut down. Mr. Bay stated that, under the best case scenario, the tunnel would be shut down for a period between six and nine months. Under the worse case scenario of reprofiling the tunnel clear back to the Westlake Station, the closure of the tunnel could be two to two and a half years.

Status Report on Tacoma Link Light Rail

Ms. Valerie Rosenkrantz, Light Rail Product Development Manager, introduced Ms. Sue Comis, Light Rail Project Manager for the Tacoma light rail segment. She indicated that the Board would be asked to confirm the most promising alternatives to be studied in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) on June 25.

Ms. Comis presented slides to the Board detailing the alignment options and criteria for selecting those alignments. The project areas have been divided into two pieces: an east/west segment and a north/south segment. She indicated that staff will come back to the Board in June with a recommendation of which of the alternatives should go forward into the DEIS.

Other Business

Mr. Miller announced that agenda items 10, 11 and 12 have been deferred to the June 11 Board meeting.

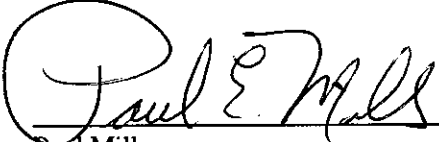
In addition, he reported that Mr. McIver has agreed to chair the Transportation Committee for the Puget Sound Regional Council.

Next Meeting

The next Sound Transit Board meeting will be held on Thursday, June 11, 1998, from 2-5 at the Tacoma Public Library.

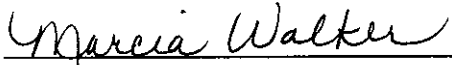
Adjourn

As there was no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:40 p.m.



Paul Miller
Board Vice-Chair

ATTEST:



Marcia Walker
Board Administrator