

**SOUND TRANSIT  
STAFF REPORT**

**MOTION NO. M2002-69**

**Discontinue further study of North Link Capitol Hill Route with Convention Place Station  
and modify a University District Route under study**

<b>Meeting:</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>Type of Action:</b>	<b>Staff Contact:</b>	<b>Phone:</b>
Board	5/23/02	Discussion/Possible Action	Ahmad Fazel, Link Director <b>Ron Endlich, North Link Project Manager</b>	(206) 398-5389 (206) 398-5141

**OBJECTIVE OF ACTION**

- To remove a less cost-effective route option from further North Link environmental study and revise a University District route under study.

**ACTION**

- Authorizes staff to modify the set of route alternatives previously selected to be included for study in the North Link Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (Draft SEIS) by: 1) discontinuing further study of the Capitol Hill via Convention Place Station (CPS) route because it is less cost effective relative to system ridership and would have higher construction impacts and risk than comparable routes being evaluated; and 2) modifying a route under study in the University District to provide an additional route connection to the station site at Brooklyn Avenue NE and NE 45<sup>th</sup> Street via the Montlake route while discontinuing further study of another station site at 15<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE primarily north of NE 45<sup>th</sup> Street that is less cost-effective compared to other sites.

**KEY FEATURES**

- Authorizes staff to discontinue further study of the Capitol Hill via Convention Place Station (CPS) route from the set of route alternatives previously selected to be included for study in the North Link Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement.
- Recommended for no further study because while it could improve access to Denny Triangle and enhance TOD potential of the CPS site, there is no net gain in ridership as compared to another similar Capitol Hill route (without a rail station at CPS). Current evaluation of this Capitol Hill route (with a rail station at CPS) to the comparable Capitol Hill route (without a rail station at CPS) has shown it to have a variety of negative attributes, including:
  - Slower travel time
  - Substantially higher cost due to constructing a rail station at CPS
  - Higher costs because of required crossover tracks on Capitol Hill
  - More difficult construction of I-5 crossing
  - More difficult construction staging
  - Greater construction impacts
- Also authorizes staff to modify a route under study in the University District to provide an additional route connection to the station site at Brooklyn Avenue NE and NE 45<sup>th</sup> Street via

the Montlake route while discontinuing further study of another station site at 15<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE primarily north of NE 45<sup>th</sup> Street that is less cost-effective compared to other sites.

## **REVENUE, SUBAREA, AND FINANCIAL PLAN IMPACTS**

The proposed action is consistent with the current board adopted budget and is affordable within the agency's current long-term financial plan and subarea financial capacity. The action will have no new revenue impacts on Sound Transit.

## **HISTORY OF PROJECT**

The Sound Move plan included the completion of a light rail line to NE 45<sup>th</sup> Street in the University District and to Northgate if funding was available. In September 2001, the Board selected the Link initial segment from Convention Place to South 154<sup>th</sup>. The Board also directed staff to continue work to build Link north to Northgate. The Sound Transit Board adopted Motion No. M2001-104 on September 27, 2001, which authorized staff to complete an 18- to 24-month supplemental EIS and design effort to analyze alternative routes to the north of the initial segment interim terminus at Convention Place.

On February 14, 2002, by Motion No. M2002-13, the Board selected several route alternatives for inclusion and study in the North Link Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement and excluded less promising route alternatives from further study. The conceptual engineering and SEIS process would evaluate environmental impacts and mitigation as appropriate, and also provide an ability to develop realistic cost estimates and a financing plan to build it, so that Link can be built north as envisioned in Sound Move.

### **Capitol Hill via Convention Place Station Route**

Since February, more environmental work and conceptual engineering has taken place on the selected routes, including a variation of the First Hill bypass route that travels through Capitol Hill via a station at Convention Place. The additional study has found that while the route with a rail station at CPS could improve access to Denny Triangle and enhance TOD potential of the CPS site, there is no net gain in ridership as compared to another similar Capitol Hill route (without a rail station at CPS). Current evaluation of this Capitol Hill route (with a rail station at CPS) to the comparable Capitol Hill route (without a rail station at CPS) has shown it to have a variety of negative attributes, including:

- Slower travel time
- Substantially higher cost due to constructing a rail station at CPS
- Higher costs because of required crossover tracks on Capitol Hill (crossover tracks are required due to added travel time with this route but are not needed with the other Capitol Hill route without a rail station at CPS)
- More difficult construction of the I-5 crossing
- More difficult construction staging
- Greater construction impacts

This information was presented to the Central Link Oversight Committee at its April 18, 2002 meeting. A member of the Committee asked staff to prepare a recommendation on whether this route merited further study. This action item is in response to that request.

This route received evaluation consistent with the other route alternatives being studied, and was found to be less cost-effective than other comparable routes. This route option is less cost effective relative to system ridership and would have higher construction impacts and risk. Staff recommends no further design or environmental analysis on this route alternative. Thus, this

action would remove this route from the set of route alternatives selected by the Board in February 2002 for study in the Draft SEIS.

University District Route

This motion also addresses an action that would modify a route already under study in the University District. The Montlake route includes a station at the northwest corner of campus at NE 45<sup>th</sup> Street and 15<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE. In addition, staff has been considering another station option at 15<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE that would be primarily north of NE 45<sup>th</sup> Street near the University of Washington’s computer data center. The close proximity to the center presents concerns about possible construction impacts caused by this station option. The likely higher costs and complications of building a station in this location suggests that this site would be much less cost-effective than other sites still under consideration. This action would discontinue further study of this station option.

Additionally, representatives of the University of Washington and some Sound Transit Board members have requested consideration of an additional variation of the Montlake route that would serve the Brooklyn Ave NE station site at NE 45<sup>th</sup> Street. Approval of this motion would direct staff to study this route variation in conceptual engineering and the Draft SEIS.

**Prior Board or Committee Actions  
and Relevant Board Policies**

<b>Motion or Resolution Number</b>	<b>Summary of Action</b>	<b>Date of Action</b>
M2001-103	Identified the preferred initial segment to be constructed and operated for Central Link Light Rail	9/27/01
M2001-104	Directed the Executive Director to evaluate Central Link Light Rail routes and station alternatives between Convention Place and Northgate (North Link Work Program).	9/27/01
M2002-13	Selected the route alternatives to be studied in the North Link Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (Draft SEIS) and deleted other route alternatives from further study.	2/14/02

**CONSEQUENCES OF DELAY**

Removal of the less cost-effective Capitol Hill route and modification of the University District route sooner rather than later will allow for the Draft SEIS to concentrate on the most cost-effective and promising route alternatives.

**REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP AND COOPERATION**

A North Link Inter-Agency work team with representatives from City of Seattle, King County, Washington State Department of Transportation, the University of Washington and Sound Transit meets on a regular basis to review technical work in progress relating to North Link. This possible Capitol Hill route action has been discussed with the work team at meetings on April 4 and May 2, 2002. The possible modification to the University District route was discussed at a joint meeting between University of Washington Regents and members of the Sound Transit Board held on May 9, 2002.

## **PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT**

Since the Board selected routes to be studied in February 2002, Sound Transit staff have held station design workshops in the South Lake Union area, Capitol Hill and the University District, as well as meetings with property owners, neighborhood groups and interested parties on the environmental and conceptual engineering work taking place throughout the North Link study area.

## **LEGAL REVIEW**

JDW 5/10/02

## SOUND TRANSIT

### MOTION NO. M2002-69

A motion of the Board of the Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority authorizing staff to modify the set of route alternatives previously selected to be included for study in the North Link Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (Draft SEIS) by: 1) discontinuing further study of the Capitol Hill via Convention Place Station (CPS) route because it is less cost effective relative to system ridership and would have higher construction impacts and risk than comparable routes being evaluated; and 2) modifying a route under study in the University District to provide an additional route connection to the station site at Brooklyn Avenue NE and NE 45<sup>th</sup> Street via the Montlake route while discontinuing further study of another station site at 15<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE primarily north of NE 45<sup>th</sup> Street that is less cost-effective compared to other sites.

#### **Background:**

The Sound Move plan included the completion of a light rail line to NE 45<sup>th</sup> Street in the University District and to Northgate if funding was available. In September 2001, the Board selected the Link initial segment from Convention Place to South 154<sup>th</sup>. They also directed staff to continue work to build Link north to Northgate. The Sound Transit Board adopted Motion No. M2001-104 on September 27, 2001, which authorized staff to complete an 18- to 24-month supplemental EIS and design effort to analyze alternative routes to the north of the initial segment interim terminus at Convention Place.

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#### Capitol Hill via Convention Place Station Route

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- Higher costs because of required crossover tracks on Capitol Hill
- More difficult construction of the I-5 crossing
- More difficult construction staging
- Greater construction impacts

This information was presented to the Central Link Oversight Committee at its April 18, 2002 meeting. A member of the Committee asked staff to prepare a recommendation on whether this route merited further study. This action item is in response to that request.

This route received evaluation consistent with the other route alternatives being studied, and was found to be less cost-effective relative to system ridership and would have higher construction impacts and risk. Staff recommends no further design or environmental analysis on this route alternative. Thus, this action would remove this route from the set of route alternatives selected by the Board in February 2002 for study in the Draft SEIS.

University District Route

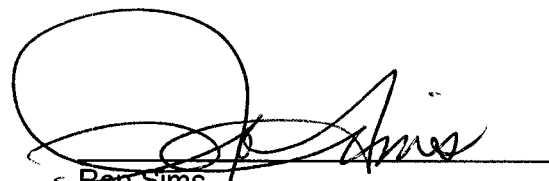
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Additionally, representatives of the University of Washington and some Sound Transit Board members requested consideration of an additional variation of the Montlake route that would serve the Brooklyn Avenue NE station site at NE 45<sup>th</sup> Street. This action would direct staff to study this route variation in conceptual engineering and the Draft SEIS.

**Motion:**


It is hereby moved by the Board of the Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority that staff is authorized to modify the set of route alternatives previously selected to be included for study in the North Link Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (Draft SEIS) by: 1) discontinuing further study of the Capitol Hill via Convention Place Station (CPS) route because it is less cost effective relative to system ridership and would have higher construction impacts and risk than comparable routes being evaluated; and 2) modifying a route under study in the University District to provide an additional route connection to the station site at Brooklyn Avenue NE and NE 45<sup>th</sup> Street via the Montlake route while discontinuing further study of another station site at 15<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE primarily north of NE 45<sup>th</sup> Street that is less cost-effective compared to other sites.

APPROVED by the Board of the Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority at a regular meeting thereof held on May 23, 2002.



Ron Sims  
Board Chair

ATTEST:



Marcia Walker  
Board Administrator