

SOUND TRANSIT

MOTION NO. M2003-33

A motion of the Board of the Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority directing staff to complete additional work on North Link route alternatives in order to provide the Board with more comprehensive information for its North Link route decision-making process. Staff is directed to (1) perform additional engineering studies; (2) undertake additional third-party discussions based on results of those engineering studies; (3) conduct a peer review to assess completeness and accuracy of findings; (4) develop joint meetings of the Finance and Central Link Oversight Committees to identify financing tools; and (5) develop a Cost Estimating Validation Process for the estimates developed during preliminary engineering.

Background:

On September 27, 2001, the Board approved Motion No. M2001-104 directing the Executive Director to evaluate Central Link Light Rail routes and station alternatives between Convention Place and Northgate. On February 14, 2002, the Board selected the route alternatives for inclusion and study in the North Link Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (Draft SEIS), excluding less promising route alternatives from further study per Motion No. M2002-13.

On May 23, 2002, the Board approved Motion No. M2002-69, 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 by: (1) discontinuing further study of the Capitol Hill via Convention Place Station 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 45th Street via the Montlake route while discontinuing further study of another station site at 15th Avenue NE primarily north of NE 45th Street that was deemed less cost-effective compared to other sites.

At its March 11, 2003 Central Link Oversight Committee (CLOC) meeting, staff presented preliminary information on extending Link Light Rail north from downtown Seattle to the University District and then to Northgate. Staff reported that the analysis completed to date indicates that most of the North Link routes under study achieve the Board's objective of reducing construction costs and construction risks while maintaining strong ridership. The conceptual engineering cost estimates are very preliminary (based on 5% design completion) and provide a basis for comparing the relative cost of alignments under consideration.

Staff concluded the report with recommendations to conduct additional engineering studies; to engage in further third-party discussions based on results of those engineering studies; and to conduct a peer review to assess completeness and accuracy of findings. Completion of this additional work will provide the Sound Transit Board with more complete and accurate comparative cost estimates to support its North Link route decision process.

CLOC unanimously voted to request that the full Board take action on the recommendations presented by staff. CLOC included two additional recommendations for the Board's consideration: (1) direct staff to apply a Cost Estimating Validation Process (CEVP) for cost estimates developed during preliminary engineering; and (2) utilize joint meetings of the Finance and Central Link Oversight Committees to assess financing options.

Additional Engineering Studies

- Structural, geotechnical, constructibility, and maintenance of traffic studies of the portions of the routes along I-5, including refining costs of the possible impacts and mitigation to city streets, and King County Metro and WSDOT facilities in the area.
- Geotechnical investigations and studies to provide a more complete picture of comparative subsurface conditions associated with the West Tunnel crossing.
- Advanced design and other studies to refine the effectiveness and costs of Electro-Magnetic Field (EMF) and vibration mitigation in the vicinity of sensitive University of Washington facilities.

Third Party Discussions

- Based on results of the additional studies, further discussions with WSDOT, the University of Washington, the City of Seattle and King County Metro would be undertaken. The goal of these discussions would be to develop a better understanding of the relative costs of mitigation among the alternatives.

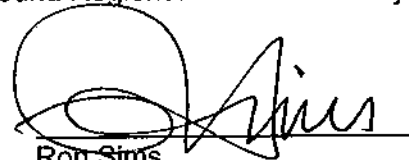
Peer Review

- As a final step, before presenting the findings to the Board, a peer review of the comparative cost estimates, construction risk analyses, and selected mitigation measures should be undertaken to assess the completeness and accuracy of the findings.


Motion:

It is hereby moved by the Board of the Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority to direct staff to complete additional work on North Link route alternatives in order to provide the Board with more comprehensive information for its North Link route decision-making process. Staff is directed to (1) perform additional engineering studies; (2) undertake additional third-party discussions based on results of those engineering studies; (3) conduct a peer review to assess completeness and accuracy of findings; (4) develop joint meetings of the Finance and Central Link Oversight Committees to identify financing tools; and (5) develop a Cost Estimating Validation Process for the estimates developed during preliminary engineering.

APPROVED by the Board of the Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority at a regular meeting thereof held March 13, 2003.


Ron Sims
Board Chair

ATTEST:


Marcia Walker
Board Administrator