

**SOUND TRANSIT  
STAFF REPORT**

**MOTION NO. M2007-128**

**2008 State Legislative Program**

| <b>Meeting:</b> | <b>Date:</b> | <b>Type of Action:</b>     | <b>Staff Contact:</b>  | <b>Phone:</b>                        |
|-----------------|--------------|----------------------------|--|--------------------------------------|
| Board           | 12/13/07     | Discussion/Possible Action | Ann McNeil, Government and<br>Community Relations Manager<br><b>Melanie Smith, State<br/>Government Relations<br/>Specialist</b> | (206) 398-5239<br><br>(206) 255-9678 |

**PROJECT NAME**

2008 State Legislative Program

**PROPOSED ACTION**

Adopting the Sound Transit 2008 State Legislative Program and directing staff to continue to evaluate issues for impact to the agency as it continues to successfully implement the regional transportation system.

**KEY FEATURES of PROPOSED ACTION**

This action would authorize Sound Transit staff and consultants in Olympia to advocate and/or pursue the following positions during the upcoming state legislative session:

- **Support a balanced statewide and regional transportation investment strategy that addresses critical transportation infrastructure needs and continues the State's role in public transportation.**

The Sound Transit Board continues to express support for a balanced approach to transportation funding, project planning and implementation. Sound Transit supports the allocation and timing of state appropriations for projects in a manner that ensures coordinated and timely delivery of projects and services.

Sound Transit supports the State's efforts to promote public transit and improve the connectivity and efficiency of the transportation system through the Regional Mobility Grant Program. The grant program aims to aid local governments in funding projects such as inter-county connectivity service, park and ride lots, rush hour transit service, and capital projects. Sound Transit and project partners received more than \$14 million in grant funding for Sound Move projects for the 2007-2009 budget cycle and will be submitting proposals for consideration for the next biennium.

- **Support and collaborate with Sound Transit's partner agencies on efforts that would facilitate the cost-effective delivery of transit projects and services.**

Sound Transit has historically supported the legislative efforts of our partners that facilitate the cost-effective delivery of transit projects and services.

- **Monitor governance legislation that might alter the oversight, financing, construction and operation of Sound Transit projects.**

Sound Transit welcomes greater coordination between systems and service providers, and we will monitor proposed legislation to ensure there is not a negative impact on the agency's ability to continue its mission of delivering regional projects and services. The Sound Transit Board also welcomes the opportunity to participate in discussions aimed at improving transportation in the region and state by building on the successes and expanding public transit.

- **Oppose legislation that would interfere with Sound Transit's authority to submit future ballot measures to the voters.**

Sound Transit was created to provide voter-approved transit projects and services in the region and remains committed to improving the transportation system with investments that build on Sound Move. Sound Transit will oppose legislation that interferes with the agency's authority and flexibility to propose needed transit investments to voters in the future.

- **Amend state law to clarify that local jurisdiction impact fees do not apply to Sound Transit projects.**

Sound Transit is subject to the regulatory authority of cities and counties when it designs, sites and constructs its capital projects. Sound Transit's projects qualify as "essential public facilities" under the Growth Management Act, so local jurisdictions cannot "preclude" their siting, but local jurisdictions may impose mitigation that makes it more difficult and expensive to construct projects. Sound Transit works with local jurisdictions on a regular basis to mitigate the impacts of construction and therefore should not also be subject to impact fees.

- **Clarify legislation that allows Sound Transit to benefit from state special fuel tax incentives.**

Sound Transit is committed to the protection of the environment for present and future generations as we provide high capacity transit to the Puget Sound region. In an effort to avoid environmental degradation, Sound Transit's fleet includes hybrid buses and natural gas buses. State law currently encourages use of alternative fuels by exempting all urban transportation systems from payment of special fuel taxes except for trips exceeding twenty-five road miles beyond the corporate limits of the county in which the trip originated. A Washington Department of Revenue audit of one of Sound Transit's partner agencies determined fuel used for ST Express routes is potentially subject to state special fuel taxes, with a projected cost to Sound Transit of more than \$90,000 per year. Legislation is needed to extend the exemption to Sound Transit's regional bus routes.

- **Oppose legislation which amends Sound Transit's enabling statutes without the consent and advice of the Sound Transit Board of Directors, and oppose legislation that would increase the costs of transit improvements and services or otherwise impair the agency's ability to deliver its voter-approved regional transportation program.**

Having served more than 70 million riders in eight years of service, and with many capital projects built or under construction, the Sound Transit Board will continue to oppose

legislation that would change the agency's enabling statutes, or increase the cost of delivering Sound Transit's regional projects and services without consultation with the Board.

### **BUDGET IMPACT SUMMARY**

There is no action outside of the Board-adopted budget; there are no contingency funds required, no subarea impacts, or funding required from other parties other than what is already assumed in the financial plan.

### **BUDGET and FINANCIAL PLAN DISCUSSION**

Adoption of the State Legislative Program does not create a budget or financial impact to the agency or any of its programs. Advocacy of the State Legislative Program is fully funded through the Office of Policy, Planning and Public Affairs.

### **M/W/DBE – Small Business Participation**

Not applicable to this action.

### **PROJECT DESCRIPTION and BACKGROUND for PROPOSED ACTION**

Annually, the Sound Transit Board adopts a State Legislative Program. The program has typically included issues and policy guidance to staff and contract lobbyists to assist them in representing the agency's interests during the legislative session.

### **CONSEQUENCES OF DELAY**

Sound Transit's interests are better served at the State Legislature if the Board of Directors adopts a State Legislative Program for the legislative session. Delaying adoption until the start of the session could minimize effective advocacy.

### **PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT**

Not applicable to this action.

### **LEGAL REVIEW**

SS 12/12/07

## **SOUND TRANSIT**

### **MOTION NO. M2007-128**

A motion of the Board of the Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority adopting the Sound Transit 2008 State Legislative Program and directing staff to continue to evaluate issues for impact to the agency as it continues to successfully implement the regional transportation system.

#### **Background:**

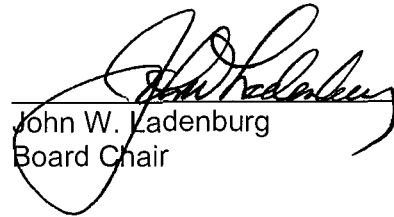
Annually, the Sound Transit Board adopts a State Legislative Program. The program has typically included issues and policy guidance to staff and contract lobbyists to assist them in representing the agency's interests during the legislative session. This action would authorize Sound Transit staff and consultants in Olympia to advocate and/or pursue the following positions during the upcoming state legislative session:

- Support a balanced statewide and regional transportation investment strategy that addresses critical transportation infrastructure needs and continues the State's role in public transportation.
- Support and collaborate with Sound Transit's partner agencies on efforts that would facilitate the cost-effective delivery of transit projects and services.
- Monitor governance legislation that might alter the oversight, financing, construction and operation of Sound Transit projects.
- Oppose legislation that would interfere with Sound Transit's authority to submit future ballot measures to the voters.
- Amend state law to clarify that local jurisdiction impact fees do not apply to Sound Transit projects.
- Clarify legislation that allows Sound Transit to benefit from state special fuel tax incentives.
- Oppose legislation which amends Sound Transit's enabling statutes without the consent and advice of the Sound Transit Board of Directors, and oppose legislation that would increase the costs of transit improvements and services or otherwise impair the agency's ability to deliver its voter-approved regional transportation program.


**Motion:**

It is hereby moved by the Board of the Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority to adopt the Sound Transit 2008 State Legislative Program and directing staff to continue to evaluate issues for impact to the agency as it continues to successfully implement the regional transportation system.

APPROVED by the Board of the Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority at a regular meeting thereof held on December 13, 2007.

  
John W. Ladenburg  
Board Chair

ATTEST:

  
Marcia Walker  
Board Administrator