

**SOUND TRANSIT
TRANSIT OPERATIONS TASK FORCE
Meeting Summary
January 29, 2009**

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 11:09 a.m. by Chair Dow Constantine in the Ruth Fisher Boardroom, 401 South Jackson Street, Seattle, Washington.

Roll Call

Chair

(P) Dow Constantine, King County Council Vice Chair

(P) Fred Butler, Issaquah Deputy Council President

(A) Dave Enslow, Sumner Mayor

(P) John Marchione, Redmond Mayor

(P) Julia Patterson, King County Council Chair

Report of the Chair

Chair Constantine noted the agenda included a discussion on increasing the bus fleet in order to add 100,000 additional service hours that were programmed in ST2.

Minutes of the December 11, 2009 meeting

It was moved by Boardmember Butler, seconded by Boardmember Marchione, and carried by the unanimous vote of all members present that the December 11, 2008 minutes be approved as presented.

Bus Fleet Composition and Procurement Discussion

Bonnie Todd, Operations Director, introduced Michael Perry, the new deputy director of Operations. She also introduced David Huffaker, Transportation Finance Planner to give the presentation on bus fleet composition and procurement.

Mr. Huffaker indicated he would cover the current fleet configuration, fleet additions and replacements, methodology, and an action plan. He noted that an additional 100,000 hours of bus service was included in the ST2 plan that was passed by voters in November 2008. Currently, the baseline service is 646,000 hours. After a fleet plan is developed, fleet procurement and maintenance capacity initiatives will take place. He explained that the fleet plan will be informed by partners and their maintenance base projects.

The current fleet inventory is 240 buses, the majority of which are 40-foot diesel buses. Sixty additional coaches are needed to meet the level of service included in the ST2 plan. Sound Transit and partner agencies have existing contracts that can be used to procure new buses. A bus procurement is scheduled for Board action at its meeting later in the day.

One hundred forty seven buses will be replaced between now and 2014. Replacements will be staggered as long as it is financially prudent. The benefit of the staggered approach is to match bus type with the service demand and to target the fleet to ridership demand. Fleet plan procurement considerations include fuel and operating costs, service characteristics and ridership trends, partner support, and matching capacity constraints with capabilities of partner agencies, as well as affordability and efficiency to make certain the plan fits into the finance plan.

In response to Boardmember Butler, Mr. Huffaker indicated the agency is moving toward standardizing the number and type of buses to minimize dealing with the numerous manufacturers and types of fuel.

Standardizing add-ons, such as radios, would be one of the advantages of Sound Transit having its own maintenance capacity and comprehensive fleet. In the near term, Sound Transit needs to fit with partner agency technology. Technology investments last about seven years, so standardization could begin in 2016.

Boardmember Butler asked how the partner agencies would coordinate and work toward a common integration system if the partner agencies are all very different. Chair Constantine reported the King County Council Regional Transit Committee recently had a similar discussion regarding various transit agencies and how they are independent but need to get technology to work within the agencies and have common systems. He asked what processes are in place to make sure these conversations are happening. Mr. Huffaker said he would follow up with answers to both questions.

Mr. Huffaker described the different bus options and fleet types including hybrid buses, and he noted that Sound Transit does not operate 42-foot double decker buses. Chair Constantine noted that hybrid buses are \$200,000 more than standard buses, and asked what the fuel savings are by choosing a hybrid bus. He suggested Sound Transit discuss with King Count Metro its experiences in cost savings with hybrid buses versus any savings with standard buses.

Mr. Huffaker said that hybrid buses are cost effective and the only buses that can operate in the tunnel. Therefore, hybrid buses will be an essential part of the fleet. Sound Transit will need to choose between CNG fuel and ultra low sulfur diesel (ULSD) fuel. ULSD fuel emissions are superior, but ULSD Diesel and CNG rate equally on particulate matter. The difference in fuel cost per mile is minimal; \$0.54 for Diesel and \$0.58 for CNG. Boardmember Butler asked about the volatility of the cost swings between the ULSD fuel and the CNG. In the long run, the volatility of CNG prices will mirror that of diesel. Diesel would be more cost effective, when comparing cost per mile. A Sound Transit maintenance facility will provide more flexibility in fleet and fleet deployment choices.

Boardmember Marchione noted that both light rail and buses will use the downtown transit tunnel for about four to five years but that buses will likely be phased out of the tunnel so that the ability to use buses in the tunnel should not be a main criteria in determining fleet type. Ms. Todd added that a Sound Transit maintenance base would remove many constraints as well and several locations for a base are being considered.

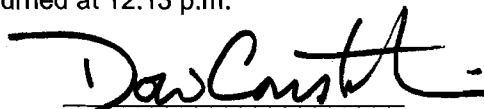
Next Meeting:

The Task Force's next scheduled meetings are March 26, 2009 and May 28, 2009. Boardmember Marchione noted that May 28 might conflict with a Seattle Chamber of Commerce Retreat. Chair Constantine asked staff to look into rescheduling the meeting.

Thursday, March 26, 2009 11:00 a.m. to 12:45 p.m., Ruth Fisher Boardroom, 401 South Jackson Street, Seattle WA.

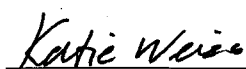
Adjourn

There was no other business; the meeting was adjourned at 12:13 p.m.



Dow Constantine
Transit Operations Task Force Chair

ATTEST:



Katie Weiss
Board Coordinator