

SOUND TRANSIT EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

Summary Minutes

March 3, 2011

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 10:32 a.m. by Committee Chair Aaron Reardon, in the Ruth Fisher Boardroom, 401 South Jackson Street, Seattle, Washington.

ROLL CALL

Chair

(P) Aaron Reardon, Snohomish County Executive

Vice Chairs

(P) Fred Butler, Issaquah Deputy Council President

(P) Claudia Thomas, Lakewood Councilmember

Boardmembers

(P) Dow Constantine, King County Executive

(P) David Enslow, Sumner Mayor

(A) Paula Hammond, WSDOT Secretary

(P) Pat McCarthy, Pierce County Executive

(A) Mike McGinn, Seattle Mayor

(P) Julia Patterson, King County Council Chair

Board Administrator Marcia Walker announced that a quorum of the committee was present at roll call.

REPORT OF THE CHAIR

None.

CEO REPORT

Joni Earl, CEO, reported that Sound Transit Customer Service Specialist Robert Nedrow was the winner of the national APTA Call Center Challenge held in San Diego, CA on March 1, 2011. He was one of seven finalists and had to address three call center situations in front of a live audience.

REPORTS TO THE COMMITTEE

Public Opinion Survey

Ron Klein, Executive Director of Communications and External Affairs, and Andrew Thibault of EMC Research presented the results of annual public opinion, choice rider, and rider satisfaction surveys conducted in 2010. The public opinion survey was conducted in November 2010 with 842 interviews and has a margin of error of 3.4 points.

In 2008, traffic and transportation issues were mentioned by half the respondents as the most important problem facing the region, compared to one-in-five in the 2010 survey.

Sound Transit's favorable rating is the highest it has been and unfavorable is the lowest it has been in 9 years of testing. Sixty-seven percent of respondents rated Sound Transit favorable, 18% rated the agency unfavorable. Overall brand health has been increasing substantially since 2003, with favorable ratings currently at 67%.

Unaided awareness of Sound Transit's revenue shortfalls is below 3%. When asked directly, about a quarter of respondents said they are aware of the revenue shortfall. To deal with the revenue shortfall, 48% of respondents preferred eliminating projects, 46% preferred delaying projects, 75% preferred controlling costs, and 19% preferred meeting the requests of local governments.

Sixty-seven percent of respondents prefer the light rail west alignment in Bellevue; 14% prefer the east alignment. Sixty-one percent preferred the Bellevue street level option; 27% preferred the Bellevue tunnel.

Interviewees were asked what the most important problem facing the region is; 34% responded with unemployment/economy, followed by transportation/traffic at 20%.

Sixty-five percent of transit riders and 44% of all respondents rated the ORCA card system favorable. Eight percent of transit riders and 6% of all respondents rated it unfavorable.

Seventy percent of respondents said tax investments in Sound Transit are worth it, 25% said they are not worth it. Favorable responses are highest in North King County at 79% and lowest in Snohomish County at 63%.

On a 1 to 7 scale of project priority, expanding parking and access at Sounder stations was ranked highest at 5.34.

The Rider Satisfaction Survey was conducted in November and December 2010 with 1,177 interviews of riders on Express Bus, Tacoma Link, Sounder, and Central Link. Sound Transit received an overall grade just below an "A". ST Express received a "B+" grade. Sounder, Central Link and Tacoma Link received an "A-". Twenty-two percent of the respondents who gave an "A" grade said the reason is the service is good/great/excellent/wonderful, 21% said the reason is prompt/timely/on-time/on schedule service. Sixteen percent of the respondents who rated the service C or lower said the reason was late/late at times/always late, 12% said too many stops/need more expresses/go faster.

The Choice Rider Survey was conducted in November and December 2010 with 304 interviews. Eight-eight percent of choice riders would definitely continue to use public transit in the future, even if other options were available.

One-hundred percent of Link and Sounder choice riders said they would definitely or probably continue using their specific modes of transit in the future. Ninety-eight percent of ST Express choice riders said the same.

Eight-eight percent of riders rated not having to drive in traffic as extremely important or important. Eighty-four percent rated not having to worry about parking at destination as extremely important or important.

Sound Transit Three-Year Communications Plan

Mr. Klein explained that the Communications Plan is intended to help the agency reach people who currently use ST service, people who could use ST service but don't, people who don't use ST service but still benefit from it, and people who are impacted by ST projects. The plan incorporates multiple aspects of outreach and communication such as television and print, social media, and face-to-face interaction. The plan reinforces that every Sound Transit employee is an ambassador who understands what the Sound Transit brand is and how to represent it effectively.

The new Customer Outreach Division in the Communications and External Affairs Department works in the community with niche markets. Sound Transit is communicating with the limited English proficiency market by working with City of Seattle to translate an ORCA instructional video into various languages for use in the Rainier Valley. Sound Transit is working to reach the market affected by the new SR-520 tolling, and has created a Ticket Vending Machine teaching tool.

Sound Transit is instituting a new research program to meet quarterly with riders, potential riders, and those affected by projects to ensure the Agency is communicating regularly and effectively with customers.

Re-designed ST Website Preview

Mr. Klein and De Meyers, Information Technology Program Manager, described the redesigned Sound Transit website. Mr. Klein explained that 90% of regular website users are riders, while 5% are looking for information on projects and plans and 5% have other various uses. The new website has been redesigned to improve the transit rider's experience.

The new website focuses on providing information to riders and includes an interactive map application in which riders can view their route, fare locations, and parking. It also includes a new trip planner, improved maps and mapping tools, and allows users to see information for different agencies and modes of service.

Federal and State Government Status Reports

Ann McNeil, Government and Community Relations Director, and Melanie Smith, State Relations Specialist gave an update on current Federal and State issues.

Ms. McNeil reported that there is proposal in the House of Representatives to rescind unobligated New Starts funding. Sound Transit was awarded \$23 million in New Starts funding for the University Link project and \$2 million for the North Corridor Alternatives Analysis that may be affected. Sound Transit's Grants Division and partners at FTA are working to obligate those funds as soon as possible. \$9 million in grants for the Tukwila Sounder Station are also in jeopardy.

The current 2012 Federal budget proposal includes the \$110 million in grant money anticipated in 2012 for the University Link project.

Ms. Smith provided an update on activities in the State House of Representatives and State Senate that could have implications for Sound Transit. Last year a proposal was vetoed by Governor Gregoire that would have required transit agencies to provide additional access of park and rides and transit-only lanes to private providers. There are similar proposals this year in both the House and Senate, but Sound Transit has worked with the proponents of those proposals to make adjustments addressing key concerns.

The Legislature recently re-authorized previous tolling decisions including allowing tolling on SR-520 and authorizing HOT lanes on I-405. Transit will be exempt from SR-520 tolling due to federal requirements related to the Urban Partnership Agreement. The Transportation Commission and/or Legislature will decide if Sound Transit will be exempt from other state tolls.

CEO EVALUATION

Chair Reardon announced that the order of the agenda was being revised to consider the CEO evaluation before other business items.

At 12:19 p.m., Chair Reardon announced that the Executive Committee would convene an executive session for 30 minutes to conduct the annual job performance evaluation of chief executive officer Joni Earl. The executive session is authorized by RCW 42.30.110 subsection (1)(g).

Chair Reardon reconvened the meeting at 12:47 p.m.

Chair Reardon announced that the Committee reviewed the CEO's performance toward achieving the 2010 milestones and the strategic objectives outlined by the Board and would take action to recommend that the Board approve a 3% increase to Ms. Earl's base salary effective January 1, 2011 and a \$6,000 performance award for work in 2010.

Motion No. M2011-19 – Implementing the performance evaluation and salary provisions of the chief executive officer's existing employment agreement.

It was moved by Vice Chair Butler, seconded by Boardmember Enslow, and carried by the unanimous vote of all Boardmembers present that Motion No. M2011-19 recommending an increase to the chief executive officer's base salary of three percent effective January 1, 2011, and a performance award of \$6,000 for work performed in 2010 be forwarded to the Board with a do-pass recommendation.

NEXT MEETING

Thursday April 7, 2011
10:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.
Ruth Fisher Boardroom

ADJOURN

The meeting was adjourned at 12:49 p.m.



Aaron Reardon
Executive Committee Chair

ATTEST:



Marcia Walker
Board Administrator

APPROVED on July 7, 2011, AH