

2012 SOUND TRANSIT BOARD RETREAT

Summary Minutes

April 5, 2012

CALL TO ORDER

The retreat was called to order at 8:46 a.m. by Chair Pat McCarthy, at the Bell Harbor Conference Center, 2211 Alaskan Way, Pier 66, Seattle, Washington.

BOARDMEMBERS PRESENT

Chair

(P) Pat McCarthy, Pierce County Executive

Vice Chairs

(P) Julia Patterson, King County Councilmember

(A) Aaron Reardon, Snohomish County Executive

Boardmembers

(P) Claudia Balducci, Bellevue Councilmember

(P) Fred Butler, Issaquah Deputy Council President

(P) Richard Conlin, Seattle Councilmember

(P) Dow Constantine, King County Executive

(P) Dave Earling, City of Edmonds Mayor

(P) David Enslow, City of Sumner Mayor

(P) Paula Hammond, WSDOT Secretary

(P) John Marchione, City of Redmond Mayor

(P) Joe McDermott, King County Councilmember

(P) Mike McGinn, City of Seattle Mayor

(P) Mary Moss, Lakewood Councilmember

(P) Larry Phillips, King County Councilmember

(P) Paul Roberts, Everett Councilmember

(P) Marilyn Strickland, City of Tacoma Mayor

(P) Peter von Reichbauer, King County

Councilmember

Sound Transit staff, members of the public, and members of the Citizen Oversight Panel were also in attendance.

INTRODUCTIONS AND PREVIEW OF THE DAY

The Sound Transit Board held a retreat on April 5, 2012 at the Bell Harbor Conference Center in Seattle, Washington to discuss Board policies related to parking and transit-oriented development (TOD). David Knowles of CH2M Hill facilitated the retreat. (A briefing book was distributed in advance.)

Chair McCarthy thanked participants for attending and expressed her wish that the retreat be meaningful and productive. The agenda includes two topics, Parking and TOD. A "parking lot/bike locker" list has also been established to cover other topics that Boardmembers express interest in discussing at a future time. The goal of the retreat is to come to an agreement on the path forward on the topics in order to provide direction to staff. She welcomed the three new additions to the Board, Dave Earling, a former Boardmember, Mary Moss and Marilyn Strickland.

STATE OF THE AGENCY

Ms. Earl gave a brief overview the Agency's history since she has been at Sound Transit including the 2010 program realignment and the agency's current financial position. Sound Transit is moving forward with delivery of 90% of the original ST2 plan even though there is a 25% revenue shortfall. The capital program includes University Link, North Link, environmental work on the Link Extension to Lynnwood, final design for East Link, and work to extend Sounder south to Lakewood. With regards to the capital program, there continue to be concerns about scope management. Sound Transit has built facilities in over 30 jurisdictions; in ST2 light rail will be located in 12 jurisdictions. In addition to the capital program, Sound Transit is also an operating agency. The Agency is focusing on increasing ridership, lowering operations costs and keeping capital projects on time and on budget. Operations is a cost growth area that has impacts on the capital program. For every one dollar spent on operations, 10 dollars could have been spent on capital. Operations expenditures continue to grow; one third of the ST2 budget will go towards operations costs. The percentage growth in the amount Sound Transit pays to service partners to provide service was 70% for the time period 1999 to 2011. In addition, because of the reductions to Pierce Transit and Community Transit,

Sound Transit has been paying higher overhead costs in recent years. The average annual increase for providing transit services to Sound Transit is 5%; for 2011, Community Transit was 8.2%, Pierce Transit was 10.4% and King County Metro was 4.5%. The higher CT and PT costs were due to overhead costs shifting to Sound Transit. This is a risk to Sound Transit that affects the Agency's ability to respond to operations issues. The reductions in service partners' resources have also impacted feeder service to Sound Transit services.

Sound Transit will begin looking at the 2013 budget in May and will bring budget information to the Board starting in September. Ms. Earl asked if the Committees feel they are receiving enough information during the budget process. Boardmembers asked for information during the 2013 budget discussions on operational cost increases due to cost escalation versus increased service, and for options to competitively bid service.

OVERVIEW ON PARKING CHALLENGES AND BOARD DISCUSSION

Mr. Knowles provided an overview on parking Sound Transit owns or leases. Sound Transit has 600 spaces for Link, 6,100 for Regional Express and 6,481 for Sounder. Sound Transit also has 4,758 jointly owned spaces and 715 leased spaces. 70% of the facilities are operating at over 85% of capacity. Based on current policy, parking is first come, first served and there is a 24-hour parking limit. There are concerns about parking constraints and satisfying parking demand. Customers accessing transit via stations can't always find parking which impacts riders and local streets. Some of the management tools include restricting access to transit users only (no carpools or vanpools), increasing enforcement, charging for parking, making parking lots more efficient through restriping, adding capacity to lots, and improvements around other forms of access such as feeder buses, bike access, or pedestrian access.

Results the Board is seeking on Parking

Mr. Knowles asked the Board to discuss the results it is interested in achieving with regards to parking. Boardmembers wanted to provide parking to riders and ensure customer satisfaction by providing parking to the maximum number of riders while remaining financially solvent. Boardmembers were interested in maximizing the existing facilities so that parking could be provided without building expensive garages. Parking challenges were also seen as a regional issue that requires a regional solution. Solutions should be long term, proactive, and based on existing community plans and specific location characteristics.

Policy Statements

Boardmembers offered principles that should be used in shaping future Board policy on parking.

The amount of parking provided should be based on local land use policies, the regional travel shed, and the nature of alternative access at that station. The location of the station, parking demand, and transit connectivity are also important factors. The location of future parking facilities is important because of the operational impact of satellite lots.

The policy should be flexible and allow for different facility designs at different locations and times. Parking facilities should fit into the pattern and land use plans of the area. The development of stations and parking should provide an opportunity for new development that is integrated with the neighborhood while providing parking. Opportunities for transit-oriented development should be pursued.

Parking should be managed to optimize existing facilities before additional facilities are built. Management strategies such as charging for parking and use of technology, including ORCA card capabilities, should be pursued. These strategies should be used to encourage people to park closer to their home and manage demand across multiple facilities.

The policy should address whether parking at transit facilities should be limited to transit riders only, or whether they should be open for carpool formation and other uses. Parking policies should be enforced to ensure parking facilities are being used appropriately. Access to stations should be improved for bicycles and pedestrians to reduce parking demand.

Work should take place towards regional integration of parking facilities and policies. As the RTA, Sound Transit is well positioned to lead Regional coordination by bringing together key stakeholders, including other public owners of parking facilities, as well as through Sound Transit Boardmembers' work on other transit Boards. Regional coordination could improve feeder service and specific parking capacity issues. There could also be opportunities for public/private partnerships to improve the regional transit system.

OVERVIEW OF TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT AND BOARD DISCUSSION

Mr. Knowles defined TOD as compact, public and private development that supports transit by clustering transit and advanced land development and activities. Sound Transit has been able to do this by selling land to a developer, often a non-profit organization. Sound Transit has existing TOD policies and developed a TOD strategic plan that the Board received in December 2011.

Mr. Knowles noted that TOD involvement can range from passive involvement to active involvement. Sound Transit currently offers technical assistance and has more of a passive role in TOD. Active involvement could include land acquisition, basing station location decisions on TOD opportunities, financial participation, and joint development. Current law limits TOD to within .25 miles of the station location.

Results the Board is seeking on TOD

Mr. Knowles asked the Board to establish a base vision of what role Sound Transit should play in TOD. Boardmembers envisioned TOD being a magnet to attract private investment around transit and lead to more dense and walkable communities. The goal would be to integrate with future land use plans including PSRC's 2040 vision plan and updates to the Growth Management Act. Work should begin at an early stage of project development to integrate the community into the project design. In addition, Sound Transit should try to take advantage of appreciation of transit values and TOD at stations to capture real estate value.

Sound Transit's Role

Boardmembers were interested in developing new policies around TOD and discussed Sound Transit's role in developing TOD projects. Boardmembers felt that Sound Transit's role was to preserve and facilitate opportunities for TOD and work with developers to help their plans integrate with transit. Sound Transit should also foster transit-oriented communities by including TOD as a part of planning studies and by being involved when cities update their comprehensive plans. Sound Transit should communicate with cities early in the process to maximize the impact of the transit investment, including doing preliminary engineering or feasibility planning and looking for opportunities for private growth. There was also some interest in working with cities to plan beyond the .25 mile area around the station.

Boardmembers were also concerned about opportunity costs, in the form of staff time and capital investments as Sound Transit's involvement in planning increases. Before additional dollars are invested, the ST2 plan should be completed. There was also concern about taking on additional risk by being more involved in TOD rather than having private entities develop TOD projects. Boardmembers were interested in finding ways to make an impact through a modest investment.

Overall, there was interest in early consideration of community needs, and community involvement. There were differing opinions on the scale of Sound Transit's role and the financial aspect.

SMALL GROUP WORK

Boardmembers split into three groups to discuss principles from the morning discussion.

Principles from the morning discussion:

Parking

- Parking capacity policy based on:
 - Local demand
 - Local land use
 - Regional travel shed
 - Alternative Access modes (Bike, Pedestrian, transit connectivity)
 - Development opportunities
- Parking management tools to be used before expanding capacity:
 - Sound Transit and other parking (Shared)
 - Satellite parking
 - Enforcement
 - Real time information for drivers
 - Tailor tools to location
 - Pricing
- Sound Transit Board to manage the regional parking resource
 - Conversation: Take advantage of Board structure/membership
- Transit users should have priority use

TOD

- Planning for Sound Transit alignment and Stations should start with community vision
- New TOD policy should consider:
 - Maximize ridership
 - Leverage and maximize transit (Investment toward economy, development and TOD)
 - Balance cost of system expansion and TOD

Group 1: Richard Conlin, Dow Constantine, Marilyn Strickland, Joe McDermott

Group 2: Pat McCarthy, Paul Roberts, Mary Moss, Mike McGinn, Claudia Balducci, Paula Hammond

Group 3: Larry Phillips, Julia Patterson, Dave Enslow, John Marchione, Pete von Reichbauer, Fred Butler, Dave Earling

REPORTS FROM SMALL GROUPS

Small Group Reports on TOD

Boardmember Marilyn Strickland reported for Group 1. The group felt that TOD planning should begin early and be consistent with Cities' comprehensive plans. A law change may be necessary to get a demonstrable benefit from the TOD program. Sound Transit should invest money in finding TOD opportunities, possibly through use of the TOD Assessment tool that was distributed to the Board by Dow Constantine (attached to this document). The group felt that Sound Transit's role should be broader than transit development.

Boardmember Paul Roberts reported on Group 2's discussion. The group felt that TOD investment should be done with willing partners since Sound Transit does not have land use jurisdiction. Partners should be committed to the project. Sound Transit should establish a guideline for investing that includes environment, social justice and economic considerations as a triple bottom line. There are three scenarios; 1) Sound Transit is ready to go to work with a willing partner that has resources, 2) Sound Transit is ready to go to work with a willing partner but they don't have resources, and 3) Sound Transit is ready to work but does not have a willing partner. A vision should be established early to guide the project. Boardmembers discussed whether Sound Transit should drive the vision, or whether jurisdictions would drive the vision. Boardmembers felt that an assessment of TOD opportunities would help jurisdictions see the possibilities for integrating with transit.

Boardmember Dave Enslow reported for Group 3. The group discussed using Sound Transit resources to help jurisdictions see what TOD opportunities exist. The development of land around stations would benefit Sound Transit and the jurisdiction. Sound Transit should initiate discussions with jurisdictions using the comprehensive plans and existing zoning as a starting point. Boardmembers also discussed the possibility of TOD opportunities at existing stations, such as converting surface parking lots.

Small Group Reports on Parking Challenges

Boardmember Marilyn Strickland reported on Group 1's discussion on parking challenges. Parking management tools should be used before expanding parking. Parking issues don't only involve Sound Transit. Parking pricing should be reviewed instead of using punitive systems to manage parking. Parking for transit users should be prioritized over other users.

Boardmember Paul Roberts reported for Group 2. The group felt that parking management should include more enforcement. Sound Transit should consider all existing resources in the region, should optimize resources by using tools and creative solutions, and should convene active regional discussions on parking. The group did not have agreement on whether Sound Transit parking should be exclusively for transit riders. Pricing and other tools should be researched. All tools should be studied operationally, and different tools could be used for different circumstances.

Boardmember Enslow reported on Group 3's discussion. Transit facilities should be prioritized for transit customers. A policy should be developed on the use of management tools including pricing, use of ORCA for parking payment, enforcement, and use of feeder service. A regional discussion needs to take place. There are also different priorities and tools for different locations. Parking demand at a station should be a factor in determining what tools to use.

NEXT STEPS

Boardmembers reviewed the Parking Lot/Bike Locker list of future topics.

"Parking Lot/Bike Locker":

- How do we engage in the budget process?
- Future need for information on operations cost and ramp up from a budget standpoint
- Future discussions: ST Express Bus Base and Sounder Yard and Shops
- Bus service contracts
- Long range planning in ST2
- ST3 discussion
- Tacoma-Airport connection

Boardmembers felt the retreat was very helpful and appreciated the opportunity to discuss the issues. Board Chair Pat McCarthy asked that two to three work sessions be set up for the rest of the year to discuss some of the issues on the Parking Lot/Bike Locker list.

ADJOURN

The retreat was adjourned at 3:55 p.m.



Pat McCarthy
Board Chair

ATTEST:



Katie Flores
Board Coordinator

APPROVED on May 24, 2012, KWF