

**SOUND TRANSIT BOARD WORKSHOP**  
**Summary Minutes**  
**November 29, 2012**

**CALL TO ORDER**

The workshop was called to order at 10:14 a.m. by Chair Pat McCarthy, in the Santa Fe Room at Union Station, 401 South Jackson Street, 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

(A) Claudia Balducci, Bellevue Councilmember

(P) Fred Butler, Issaquah Deputy Council President

(P) Richard Conlin, Seattle Councilmember

(A) 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

(A) 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

(A) Marilyn Strickland, City of Tacoma Mayor

(A) Peter von Reichbauer, King County Councilmember

Boardmembers Paul Roberts and Richard Conlin participated in the workshop by phone. Sound Transit staff, members of the public, and members of the Citizen Oversight Panel were also in attendance.

**PURPOSE AND OVERVIEW**

Chair McCarthy noted that the workshop would be held as an informal discussion similar to the Board retreat and announced that no public comment would be taken. The purpose of the workshop is to establish a common understanding of what the ST2 plan includes for planning a future phase of capital projects, or ST3 plan. The workshop will also review the recession's impact to Agency fiscal capacity for ST3 and explore potential approaches to update the Long Range Plan and develop a high-capacity transit plan.

**ST3 DEVELOPMENT – THE STARTING POINT**

Ric Ilgenfritz, Executive Director Planning, Environment and Project Development, reviewed a memo in the retreat notebook that describes the procedural steps for planning a third phase of high-capacity transit investments, or ST3. The memo also includes three process options for moving forward with ST3 planning. The retreat notebook also includes questions to frame the discussion, information on financial capacity and revenue authority the Agency has as well as five informational maps.

Planning requirements include reviewing the Long Range Plan, developing a system plan, and review of the technical aspects of the plan by an expert review panel. A program-wide State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) analysis must take place before Board decisions take place, and the plan developed by the Board must meet the definition of High Capacity Transit (HCT) and SEPA requirements. To develop ST2, over 500 initial projects were narrowed to 418, and then reduced down to the final ST2 plan.

The ST2 plan currently assumes individual corridor studies in the major corridors shown on the HCT Corridor map in blue. The studies would inform the Board in order to update the Long Range Plan. These studies are currently scheduled to begin in 2015, except for the Ballard to Seattle HCT corridor study and Federal Way to Tacoma HCT corridor study that the Board decided to begin earlier. Corridor studies include alternative analysis work to determine if light rail is the best HCT for the corridor. Work is assumed to take eight to 12 years to complete with a potential vote on ST3 in 2024.

An alternate approach is to accelerate and consolidate corridor planning studies in order to update the Long Range Plan earlier. The alternate approach could be completed in six to 10 years. Based on this approach, a plan could go to voters in 2020 if the Board wanted to take a plan to voters in a presidential election year.

A jump-start approach would immediately begin work to complete corridor planning and update the Long Range Plan in a four year time period. The jump-start approach could possibly be completed in time for a public vote in 2016. A variation of the three approaches could also be done. Sound Transit does not currently have the staff resources to accelerate planning. Acceleration would also require an amendment to the 2013 budget because no corridor planning studies are currently assumed for 2013.

Funding to complete the planning work and elections is in the ST2 plan. All three approaches are affordable in the ST2 finance plan.

Mr. Ilgenfritz also noted that in 2009 the Board sent a letter to the PSRC that identified the light rail spine for the purposes of 2040 planning.

## **BACKGROUND AND FINANCIAL FRAMEWORK**

Brian McCartan, Executive Director of Finance and IT, reviewed financial capacity for future work. Cash and bonding capacity left over at the completion of the ST2 plan would be the first step in financing a ST3 plan. Voter approval would be needed to approve new projects, but voter approval is not needed to continue collecting from current revenue sources.

Sound Transit currently collects the full percentage of sales tax authorized by the legislature. Additional authority would be needed from the legislature to increase the percentage. Increases to the rental car tax and the start of an employer tax would raise less than \$1 billion through 2030. There is a significant gap between Sound Transit's current authority and the amount needed for another capital program the size of ST2. Legislative action may be needed to give Sound Transit additional revenue authority.

A planning approach that comes to a public vote as early as 2016 would need to be a modest, incremental plan if additional funding authority was not granted by the legislature.

## **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

Chair McCarthy asked for discussion on the questions included in the retreat notebook.

*Given the three approaches to System Planning presented, how should Sound Transit proceed?  
Should Sound Transit engage at State-level on transportation funding and/or other related statutory issues?*

Boardmembers spoke in favor of accelerating planning to allow for a possible vote in 2016 or 2020 while also pursuing additional resources to pay for a ST3 capital program. Boardmembers discussed the need for completing some planning work before approaching the legislature for additional funding authority. Some Boardmembers felt that additional authority from the legislature would be required regardless of when the ST3 was presented to voters. Boardmembers also reiterated the priority to complete ST2 projects before beginning future projects. Earlier planning would improve integration with other regional planning. There were some concerns raised about a public vote in 2016 before major ST2 projects are completed. Some Boardmembers felt an incremental plan could serve as a bridge between ST2 and a larger ST3 plan further in the future.

*Should Sound Transit continue to prioritize the Light Rail "Spine"?*

- *Other principles for staff to follow in developing LRP and/or ST3?*
- *Any additional Board priorities?*

The Long Range Plan includes a light rail spine from Everett to Tacoma and east to Redmond. Boardmembers spoke in favor of the spine, including the benefits of assuring light rail connections to

communities outside the current light rail system. Some Boardmembers also expressed interest in making adjustments to the Long Range Plan including reviewing at the current light rail spine.

*Next Steps?*

Boardmembers asked staff to prepare an amendment to the Proposed 2013 to accelerate planning in order to bring a future capital plan to voters in 2016 or 2020 for Board consideration at the December Board meeting. The Board also asked to look at options to deal with additional reductions in revenues for ST2 because of the economy. The Board will also consider the 2013 legislative agenda at the December Board meeting. The legislative agenda includes language that allows the Board to pursue additional funding from the legislature.

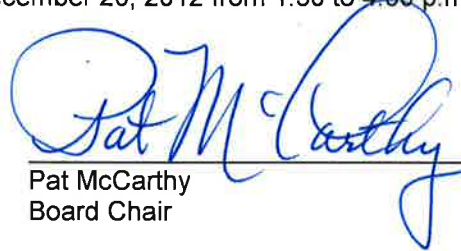
**SUMMARY**

Chair McCarthy noted that more study sessions will be scheduled in 2013 to continue the Board discussion on ST3 planning.

**ADJOURN**

The next Board meeting is scheduled for Thursday, December 20, 2012 from 1:30 to 4:00 p.m. in the Ruth Fisher Boardroom.

The workshop was adjourned at 11:47 a.m.



Pat McCarthy  
Board Chair

ATTEST:



Marcia Walker  
Board Administrator

APPROVED on January 24, 2013, KWF