

BOARD WORKSHOP ON SOUND TRANSIT 3

Summary Minutes

December 4, 2015

CALL TO ORDER

The workshop was called to order at 10:03 a.m. by Board Chair Dow Constantine, in the Ruth Fisher Boardroom, 401 South Jackson Street, Seattle, Washington.

BOARDMEMBERS PRESENT

Chair

(P) *Dow Constantine, King County Executive*

Boardmembers

(P) *Claudia Balducci, City of Bellevue Mayor*
(P) *Fred Butler, City of Issaquah Mayor*
(P) *Dave Earling, City of Edmonds Mayor*
(P) *David Enslow, City of Sumner Mayor*
(A) *John Lovick, Snohomish County Executive*
(P) *John Marchione, City of Redmond Mayor*
(A) *Pat McCarthy, Pierce County Executive*
(P) *Joe McDermott, King County Council Vice Chair*

Vice Chairs

(P) *Marilyn Strickland, City of Tacoma Mayor*
(P) *Paul Roberts, Everett Councilmember*

(P) *Mary Moss, Lakewood Councilmember*
(P) *Ed Murray, City of Seattle Mayor*
(A) *Mike O'Brien, Seattle Councilmember*
(P) *Lynn Peterson, WSDOT Secretary (Amy Scarton attended as designee)*
(A) *Larry Phillips, King County Council Chair*
(P) *Dave Upthegrove, King County Councilmember*
(P) *Peter von Reichbauer, King County Councilmember*

WELCOME, PURPOSE AND OVERVIEW

Chair Constantine welcomed Boardmembers and provided an overview of the purpose of the Sound Transit 3 (ST3) workshop. The workshop provides Boardmembers with information on projects identified by the Board as representative projects to be considered in the development of an ST3 system plan.

The provided materials are the outcome of work prepared by staff and consultants to develop detailed evaluations of each the projects identified. In addition to detailed project information, the Board will look deeper into the financial picture that will inform how we proceed with financing a system plan.

OVERVIEW OF TECHNICAL EVALUATION AND PROCESS

Ric Ilgenfritz, Executive Director of Planning, Environment and Project Development, reviewed the agenda for the workshop. The agenda includes analytical results for the projects identified by the Board in August 2015, a discussion of the evaluation process and a review of projects by corridor, and an overview of the financial plan.

Mr. Ilgenfritz stated that the Boardmembers have two books in front of them. One book titled Evaluation Summary Information contains background information, evaluation information, and corridors/project summaries. The other book titled Project Details contains the detailed information for segments for longer corridors and corridor options.

The core priorities for ST3 include completing the light rail spine, ridership, connecting the region's centers, socioeconomic equity, transit integration, multi-modal access, land use and transit-oriented development, and advancing logical next steps.

Staff continues to work with the Expert Review Panel (ERP). The ERP Chair attended the December 3, 2015, Executive Committee meeting and presented their views on Sound Transit's cost estimating methodologies, capital cost and operating methodologies, work addressing transit integration, and forecasting methodologies. The panel will continue its review to ensure the staff work is complete and adequate to support the decisions the Board will be making in 2016.

REVIEW OF ST3 CANDIDATE PROJECTS BY CORRIDOR

Review of Candidate Projects

Karen Kitsis, Planning and Development Manager reviewed the ST3 candidate projects by corridor. The categories used for technical evaluation and process are regional light rail spine, ridership, capital cost, annual O&M cost, travel time, reliability, system integration, ease of non-motorized access, percent of non-motorized access, connections to PSRC-designated regional centers, land use and development/TOD potential, and socioeconomic benefits.

Ms. Kitsis summarized information contained in the each of the project sheets for the ST3 candidate projects by corridor: north, east, south, and central.

Light Rail Transit System Operations Options

Mr. Ilgenfritz discussed the light rail system operations options. All of the potential light rail extensions, with the exception of the intra-Eastside line and the Ballard to UW line, converge in downtown Seattle. He presented options for how the light rail lines can interact with each other to carry the demand and enable trips.

Option #1: Everett to Tacoma via the Downtown Seattle Transit Tunnel (DSTT); Everett to downtown Redmond via DSTT; Ballard to West Seattle at-grade via downtown Seattle. This option uses a surface alignment for the Ballard to West Seattle portion, which will require an additional operations and maintenance facility to support the fleet. Transfers from the surface line to the other light rail lines would be pedestrian connections on the surface streets.

Option #2: Everett to Tacoma via (DSTT); Everett to downtown Redmond via DSTT; Ballard to West Seattle via new rail-only tunnel. This option uses a tunnel alternative beneath 5th Avenue or 6th Avenue with underground connections at International District and Westlake plus transfer opportunities at SODO for the West Seattle line for travel to/from the airport. This option would require an additional facility for operations and maintenance.

The run times for Options #1 and #2 present some challenges for crew management.

Option #3: Everett to West Seattle via DSTT; Everett to downtown Redmond via DSTT; Ballard to Tacoma via new rail-only tunnel. This option would provide better capacity, better performance, and position the system to expand for future demand. The West Seattle line would use the existing tunnel and would interact with East Link and provide two lines that are substantially grade separated that would provide high reliability in the north corridor. The Ballard line would operate in the new tunnel along with the existing central link alignment and the completion of the spine to Federal Way and Tacoma. This option provides more capacity in the urban core to balance out the ridership.

Mr. Ilgenfritz noted that that they do not expect the travel times to be much greater with Option #3 due to the three or four minutes peak-hour headways.

Region-wide/Planning Studies

Ms. Kitsis reviewed programs that would extend across the district for system access, innovation and technology, and transit-oriented development. There are two groups of planning projects: future system planning for ST4 and HCT project studies.

Upcoming Schedule

- December 7, 2015: Letter to jurisdictions/partners requesting acknowledgement of project scopes and comments. Requests responses by January 21, 2016.
- March 2016: Draft System Plan.
- April 2016: Public and Stakeholder Outreach.

- June 2016: Potential adoption of Final System Plan.

DISCUSSION OF EVALUATION RESULTS

Boardmembers expressed interest in ensuring the planning addresses where ridership demand will be in the future, and that the plan is integrated with long-range plans developed by other transit agencies. Ms. Kitsis noted that staff is coordinating directly with King County Metro (KCM). One of the elements that KCM staff and Sound Transit staff will be working on is the development of the express bus network. Community Transit and Pierce Transit are also working on updating long-range plans and Sound Transit staff will be working with them to integrate service.

Boardmembers asked when feedback is needed from jurisdictions that want to comment on or propose adjustments to projects. Ms. Kitsis responded that Planning and Project Development staff and the Government and Community Relations staff have been meeting with jurisdictions. Sound Transit staff will continue to meet with jurisdictions either in the process of developing responses to Chair Constantine's letter request or to better understand the project and help identify potential scope elements that could change.

Boardmembers commented on the ridership information in the templates and asked if there would be any changes or updates to the information. Ms. Kitsis responded that there would be updates to the information. The modeling process is one that utilizes the Sound Transit model, but it relies on input for population and employment from the Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC). PSRC has been working on an updated population and employment forecast which would be used for development of the draft plan information. The next iteration in the March timeframe will have updated ridership numbers.

FINANCE CONSIDERATIONS OF ST3 AND DISCUSSION

Brian McCartan, Executive Director of Finance and Information Technology, presented information on the ST3 finances. The successful work that went into the Financial Policies and Financial Plans for Sound Move and ST2 provides a solid foundation to move forward with the Financial Policy and Financial Plan for ST3. The Financial Plan includes financial planning assumptions, uses of funds, and sources of funds.

The uses of funds starts with the project templates and the Board's selections of the desired projects. Both operating and capital costs are embedded in the projects and are rolled into the financial plan. Other miscellaneous costs are added for debt service and reserves. The revenue portion uses surplus of existing taxes, grant revenue, ridership fares, and bonding.

As the Board decides which projects will move forward, other decisions will include what tax level will go before the voters, the duration of the program, and how to meet the requirements of the equity provision. There is an equity provision related to regional transit authorities in the State's statutes and it requires that as the plan is developed for submission to the voters, the revenue and benefits by county be disclosed. In both Sound Move and ST2 programs, the Board went further than what was required by State law by dividing the region into five subareas and developing a principle stating that the revenues from each of those five subareas would be utilized to the benefit of residents and businesses within those subareas. Revenues from the subareas do not need to be invested physically in the subarea. The Board could decide that money from one subarea could be used to benefit its citizens or businesses by a physical investment in another subarea.

Mr. McCartan went over funding levels for three time scenarios. The total estimate for sources of funds increases with the duration of the plan. Level 1 (2017 – 2032) estimated total funding is \$26 billion; Level 2 (2017 – 2036) is \$30 billion; and Level 3 (2017 – 2041) is \$48 billion.

Mr. McCartan noted that major light rail projects take a minimum of 15 years. There would be issues about agency capacity to deliver many of the investments with less than a 15-year period. Financing would not be as much of a constraint and bonds can be issued to help finance for shorter periods.

Mr. Ilgenfritz added that there are several considerations on project delivery to understand how long it takes to deliver a project. During the project development phase, multiple alignments, station locations, etc. are studied. The number of alternatives selected to study can determine how long it takes to make the decision

of what the project will be. When partnering with the federal government on funding, the FTA first goes through their own process to determine funding. Another consideration is technical capacity for both the agency and the industry.

NEXT STEPS

Chair Constantine stated that as the process moves into the final stages, the Board's task is to formulate the ST3 system plan. This must be accomplished within the next seven months in order to bring a system plan to the voters in November 2016. He advised that next week he would be sending a letter to jurisdictions and partner agencies asking them to acknowledge the scope of the projects they are interested in and provide feedback by late January.

Not all of the projects can be included in the draft plan. Boardmembers need to consider the information presented at this meeting and have discussions during the committee meetings in January. He asked that the Executive Committee review how well our policy priorities are reflected in the ST3 documents, the Operations and Administration Committee review the operational assumptions and transit integration, and the Capital Committee discuss capital program priorities. The schedule is to adopt a draft system plan in March to present to the public for comment. Following public outreach and feedback, the Board will be in a position to consider adopting a final system plan in June.

ADJOURN

The workshop was adjourned at 11:51 a.m.



Marilyn Strickland
Board Vice Chair

ATTEST:



Kathryn Flores
Board Administrator

APPROVED on January 28, 2016, JE