



Summary Minutes

Executive Committee Special Meeting June 11, 2020

Call to order

The meeting was called to order at 11:13 a.m. by Committee Chair Kent Keel virtually on WebEx.

Due to the Governor’s Stay Home – Stay Healthy Order issued on March 23, 2020, public viewing of the meeting was only available via WebEx. The meeting was streamed on

<https://soundtransit.webex.com/soundtransit/onstage/g.php?MTID=e7d05397a5bfb7199ea104124f01805d3>

Roll call of members

Chair	Vice Chair
(P) Kent Keel, University Place Councilmember	(P) Paul Roberts, Everett Councilmember (P) Dow Constantine, King County Executive

Board Members	
(P) Claudia Balducci, King County Councilmember	(A) Jenny Durkan, Seattle Mayor
(P) Bruce Dammeier, Pierce County Executive	(P) Roger Millar, WSDOT Secretary
	(A) Dave Somers, Snohomish County Executive
	(A) Victoria Woodards, Tacoma Mayor

Katie Flores, Board Administrator, announced that a quorum of the Committee was present at roll call.

Report of the Chair

Chair Keel announced that the CEO Monthly Contract Report was available for review.

He welcomed Boardmembers David Baker and Joe McDermott, who joined the meeting as non-voting members to take part in the realignment discussion.

Chair Keel informed committee members of a letter sent by Boardmember Jenny Durkan, informing the Committee that she would not be able to attend the meeting but that she was supportive of creating criteria. The letter also outlined some of her positions on realignment decisions to come.

Chair Keel reviewed the June 3, 2020 Board Realignment Workshop and advised that while the workshop was a helpful discussion, he expected the committee would be taking the first of many important actions such as proposing a list of criteria to the full Board.

CEO Report

CEO Peter Rogoff gave the CEO Report.

Program Realignment – Mr. Rogoff Thanked the Boardmembers who participated in the Board Realignment workshop on June 3, 2020.

Regional Protests – As protests for racial justice continued across the region, Sound Transit carried out its mission of connecting more people to more places to make life better and create equitable

opportunities for all by transporting riders to and from said protests. Link trains were 40 percent fuller than they had been before protests began. CEO Rogoff noted that Sound Transit followed a protocol that was developed after experiences in 2017 when law enforcement requested limiting transit access to protests at SeaTac Airport. The process escalates requests directly to the CEO, who will then make a determination. The protocol was followed during the protests and all requests were funneled through SDOT Executive Director Sam Zimbabwe to coordinate service. Closures took place in Bellevue, Tacoma and Seattle to account for protests.

Fare Reinstatement – As announced on May 18, 2020, fares were reinstated on Link and Sounder on Monday, June 1, 2020. Fares were suspended on March 21, 2020 in response to the COVID-19 crisis. ORCA-Lift promotions and discounted Recovery Fare program were instituted to accommodate the region’s iterative reopening process and expected gradual ridership increase, and Sound Transit has observed an increase in ORCA lift applications. The discounted \$1 Link Fare and \$2 Sounder fare are available from ticket vending machines and the “Transit Go” Mobile Ticket through June 30, 2020. Currently, 19 percent of Link boardings and 16 percent of Sounder boardings were paid for with the Recovery Fare option. Fare Enforcement Officers were mandated to maintain a safe distance and are not giving official warnings or citations until normal ORCA reader inspections can resume.

Public comment

Chair Keel announced that due to the Governor’s stay home stay healthy order, public comment would only be accepted via email to emailtheboard@soundtransit.org. The following people submitted email public comments prior to the meeting:

Bob Ortblad
Joe Kunzler
Wendy Ashmun
Kirkland City Council
Hester Serebrin on behalf of Transportation Choices

Business items

Boardmember Bruce Dammeier arrived at this time.

Items for Committee final action

May 7, 2020, Executive Committee meeting minutes

It was moved by Vice-Chair Roberts, seconded by Boardmember Millar that the minutes of the May 7, 2020 Executive Committee meeting be approved as presented. Chair Keel called for a roll call vote:

Ayes

Claudia Balducci
Dow Constantine
Bruce Dammeier
Roger Millar
Paul Roberts
Kent Keel

Nays

It was carried by unanimous vote of the six present Boardmembers that minutes of the May 7, 2020 Executive Committee meeting were approved as presented.

Program Realignment Discussion and Potential Action to Recommend Evaluation Criteria

Chair Keel explained that due to the 25-35 percent projected revenue loss in 2020 and 2021 and the likely long-term revenue loss impacts caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, Sound Transit would not have the revenue to implement and complete ST3 as planned. In a situation such as this, the voter-approved ballot measure directs the Board to consider the financial policies and determine how best to use the available funds to pay for the cost of those improvements that best achieve the overall transportation objectives of the plan. The Board would use the objectives developed in the ST3 plan to guide its decisions when realigning the system expansion plan, schedule, and funding. He briefly reviewed the discussion up to that point and then laid out the meeting's discussion, with the intent to agree upon eight proposed evaluation criteria to recommend to the Board.

He then introduced Don Billen, Executive Director of the Planning, Environment, and Project Development Department, and Matt Sheldon, Deputy Director of Planning and Innovation, to provide a presentation on the Realignment Process. Mr. Billen briefly reviewed the inputs used to create the Long Range financial plan and informed the Committee that the presentation would focus on the key planning assumptions in the model. Two of the most critical assumptions in the financial model are the service plan and the capital plan. Under the circumstances, the financial plan was not affordable under the service plan and capital plan assumptions, which was the basis for the realignment discussion. He noted the interplay between both plans, as ST Express service was intended to be interim service, expected to be replaced as the high capacity transit system expanded. Similarly, if high capacity transit projects were delayed, ST Express service would need to be extended.

As discussed at a previous Board of Directors meeting, a five-year delay in all upcoming capital projects would render the plan affordable. Mr. Billen advised that though this approach would result in a balanced financial plan, it may not be the smartest strategy. Instead, a list of criteria could be employed to guide different realignment scenarios which the Board consider. Mr. Billen clarified that the intent of the evaluation was to assess when the projects in the voter approved plan were delivered, not whether they were delivered. He provided an overview of the proposed process to develop a smarter realignment ultimately reaching Board supported a conclusion which was affordable within the agency's financial plan. He advised that staff's proposal was to maintain project "shovel readiness" even if project construction and revenue service are delayed, to allow for flexibility among a changing financial environment. Finally, he reviewed the next steps for the remainder of 2020, taking into account the routine Budget and Transportation Implementation Plan adoption.

Chair Keel urged the Committee to advance criteria to the full Board for discussion and consideration at its June 25, 2020 meeting.

Boardmember Millar expressed concern about the project tenure criteria, explaining that at the Washington State Department of Transportation, some of the projects which have been around the longest were a lower priority. He suggested explicitly adding subarea equity as a criteria, and also advised that when considering the phasing compatibility criteria, the Board consider how projects could be phased to create stations serviced by new ST Express routes until light rail could be built at a later date.

Vice Chair Constantine advised that while he supported the list of criteria, once decisions were to be made, advocacy would be as much about politics as any seemingly objective criteria. He supported an ultimate goal of uniting as one Board to support the eventual decisions which would be made.

Vice Chair Roberts supported the proposed criteria. He disagreed with Boardmember Millar's position regarding project tenure, arguing that instead of solutions in search of a problem, these projects were commitments promised to the voters of the region which have been waiting a long time to receive their share of the system. Finally, he advised that subarea equity was built into every facet of the ST3 plan,

and that it would have to be closely considered during the upcoming discussions, but this realignment was an opportunity to reconsider the overall region's needs.

Boardmember Balducci advised that she was thinking about the realignment discussion differently, stating that the primary consideration if the program is reshaped should be based on what level of service is desired to be provided to the region. She showed interest in the long-term interim bus bridge service idea suggested by Boardmember Millar. She questioned the timing of the discussion, based on the limited information available. Using the example of the Downton Redmond Link Extension, she advised that decisions made now may not reflect the ultimate outcome of certain projects. She asked whether there were other policies which could give guidance on the upcoming decisions.

Boardmember Dammeier reminded the Committee that every project up for discussion had been fully vetted and it was not a matter of whether to complete the projects but how to proceed and in which order. He acknowledged that any decisions reached would be political in nature, but the Board must consider the needs of the region as a whole. He advocated for the ridership potential, connecting centers, completing the HCT spine, and socio-economic equity criteria specifically. Finally, he supported advancement of the criteria as presented.

Chair Keel briefly reviewed the comments made and asked staff to reflect the requests and comments made during the committee meeting in the upcoming scenarios.

Boardmember Balducci advised that she believed the Committee and the Board was moving too quickly in coming to realignment decisions and that she would not support moving forward with the criteria.

Boardmember Baker advised that while he was not a voting member of the committee, he agreed with Boardmember Balducci.

Vice Chair Constantine voiced his ongoing concern that the Board and Executive Committee could make a decision around project delays or cuts before it may need to and other options are explored, but a list of criteria could be helpful if the Board is put in a position to need to make cuts. He offered his support of the criteria if the chair wished to move forward, but advised that disagreement within the committee may necessitate delay until a consensus is met in the interest of Board solidarity.

Vice Chair Roberts advised that he would support the criteria if the chair wished to offer them, but if they were not forwarded, he wanted to assure that the rest of the Board was able to review the criteria.

Chair Keel acknowledged the concerns of Boardmembers who did not support advancing the proposed criteria, but advised that the creation of the list of criteria was born out of caution for making decisions without adequate information. He explained that some decisions would need to be made at least in time for the 2021 budget, and if some criteria were not in place for those budgetary decisions, consensus may be more difficult to attain.

CEO Rogoff advised that the full Board could be made aware of the criteria, if advanced by the committee immediately following the meeting instead of the customary Friday before the meeting in order to provide more time to review and ask questions of agency staff.

Boardmember McDermott supported the points made earlier by Boardmember Balducci and advised that while budgetary decisions for 2021 would need to take place, it was only a single year's budget and not the full financial plan. He voiced concern that making long term decisions this early in the information gathering phase felt premature.

Chair Keel explained that the proposed criteria were intended to be a framework with which to make a number of scenarios, good, bad, and in between, from which the Board could discuss and move forward when actionable information is more available.

Vice Chair Constantine voiced caution that proceeding on large programmatic decisions with dissent among Boardmembers would be undesirable, and that consensus would be best to gain before moving forward at a Board level.

Boardmember Dammeier supported the sentiments of Vice Chair Constantine, and spoke to the need for more opinions from other Boardmembers. He recommended forwarding the criteria without recommendation to allow for more input from the rest of the Board.

Boardmember Balducci supported Boardmember Dammeier's suggestion to forward the criteria to the full Board without a recommendation to approve.

Vice Chair Roberts asked that the comments and points discussed by the Committee be shared with the full Board for the sake of a more informed discussion later in the month.

It was moved by Chair Keel, seconded by Vice Chair Roberts that Motion No. M2020-36 be forwarded to the Board without a recommendation to approve. Chair Keel called for a roll-call vote.

Ayes

Claudia Balducci
Dow Constantine
Bruce Dammeier
Roger Millar
Paul Roberts
Kent Keel

Nays

It was carried by a unanimous vote of the six present Boardmembers that Motion No. M2020-36 would be forwarded to the Board without a recommendation to approve.

Motion No. M2020-37: Directs staff to develop and present to the Board realignment scenarios utilizing currently planned financial resources and alternative scenarios that would utilize a variety of tools which could include but are not limited to state funds, additional federal funds and increased debt capacity to inform the Board on how to best achieve the objectives of the Sound Transit 2 and Sound Transit 3 plans when making upcoming realignment decisions.

It was moved by Vice Chair Constantine, seconded by Chair Keel, that Motion No. M2020-37 be forwarded to the Board with a do-pass recommendation.

Vice Chair Constantine spoke in favor of his motion and explained his reasoning for presenting it to the Committee for consideration and answered Boardmember questions.

Chair Keel called for a roll call Vote.

Ayes

Claudia Balducci
Dow Constantine
Bruce Dammeier
Roger Millar
Paul Roberts
Kent Keel

Nays

It was carried by a unanimous vote of the six present Boardmembers that Motion No. M2020-37 would be forwarded to the Board with a do-pass recommendation.

Reports to the Board

West Seattle Bridge presentation

Don Billen, Executive Director of Planning, Environment, and Project Development introduced Sam Zimbabwe, Director of the Seattle Department of Transportation and Heather Marx, Director of Downtown Mobility, to provide the presentation. He advised that Cathal Ridge, Executive Corridor Director, was working closely with the Seattle Department of Transportation as the West Seattle Link Extension and the West Seattle Bridge were in close proximity.

Mr. Zimbabwe provided an overview of the West Seattle Bridge closure and the efforts to repair or replace the bridge as well as the community outreach provided to that point. Ms. Marx provided background on the West Seattle Bridge's construction and details of its operation prior to its closure. She outlined the cracks in the bridge which prompted the closure and ongoing efforts to monitor them. The repair or replacement would take place in a three-phase process. Ms. Marx explained the activities within those phases which had taken place to that point and expanded upon the potential pathways to reopen the bridge. A request for qualifications was issued on June 2 and a team was expected to be on boarded and working by October.

She discussed potential cooperation with Sound Transit's West Seattle Link Extension project, explaining that joint work sessions between both agencies' engineers, resulting in a determination that a joint traffic and light rail vehicle bridge over the Duwamish River was feasible but she stressed that this was only from an engineering perspective, and other considerations such as environmental review, schedule, construction coordination, costs still needed to be reviewed. Additional cooperation would be done over the coming months to make that determination. Mr. Billen clarified that much coordination and cooperation was required.

Mr. Zimbabwe and Ms. Marx answered Boardmember questions regarding the nature of the deterioration of the bridge.

Executive session

None.

Other business

None.

Next meeting

Thursday, August 6, 2020
10:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.
Ruth Fisher Boardroom

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 1:01 p.m.



Kent Keel
Executive Committee Chair

ATTEST: 

Kathryn Flores
Board Administrator

APPROVED on August 6, 2020. AM