



Summary Minutes

Rider Experience and Operations Committee Meeting January 19, 2023

Call to order

The meeting was called to order at 1:01 p.m. by Chair Walker.

The meeting was available in person and streamed on:

<https://soundtransit.webex.com/soundtransit/j.php?MTID=m098b93d46815154f0c10a2098f0b2016>

Roll call of members

Chair	Vice Chair
(P) Kristina Walker, Tacoma Councilmember	(P) Ed Prince, Renton Councilmember

Board Members	
(P) David Baker, Kenmore Councilmember	(A) Kim Roscoe, Fife Mayor
(A) Christine Frizzell, Lynnwood Mayor	(P) Dave Upthegrove, King County Councilmember
(P) Debora Juarez, Seattle City Councilmember	(A) Peter von Reichbauer, King County Councilmember

Josephine Gamboa, Board Relations Specialist, announced that a quorum of the committee was present at roll call.

Report of the Chair

Draft 2023 Committee Work Plan

Chair Walker noted the Committee received the draft 2023 Rider Experience and Operations Committee work plan in their meeting packets for review. The work plan will be reviewed and finalized at the February 2023 Committee meeting.

Monthly Contract Report

The monthly contract report was included in members meeting packets for review.

CEO Report

CEO Julie Timm provided the CEO Report.

Update on Future Ready work

Future Ready work that was planned during Q4 2022 was being pushed to Q1 2023 until staff was ready to develop a passenger care plan with sufficient quality. CEO Timm noted several Board members were able to join her in a test ride of the new Hilltop Tacoma Link Extension.

Chair Walker asked where riders can find more information about Future Ready. CEO Timm responded that information would be publicly released when it's available. Kimberly Farley, Deputy CEO, mentioned updates would be provided to this committee prior to being available on the Sound Transit website.

Public comment

Chair Walker announced that public comment would be accepted via email to emailtheboard@soundtransit.org, in person, and would also be accepted virtually.

The following people provided written comments:

Geoffrey Evans
Lindsey Lachner

The following people provided in-person comments:

Lauri Hooks

There were no virtual public comments submitted.

Business Items

For Committee final action

December 1, 2022, Rider Experience and Operations Committee meeting minutes

It was moved by Committee Vice Chair Prince, seconded by Boardmember Baker and carried by unanimous consent that the minutes of the December 1, 2022 Rider Experience and Operations Committee meeting be approved as presented.

For Recommendation to the Board

Motion No. M2023-05: Authorizing the chief executive officer to execute a Partnering Agreement with Pierce Transit to provide ADA complementary paratransit services for Tacoma Link.

Dave Turissini, Deputy Director of Bus and Paratransit, provided the staff presentation.

Boardmember Baker was pleased to see work taking place to assist physically challenged riders move around the area.

Motion No. M2023-05 was moved by Committee Vice Chair Prince and seconded by Boardmember Upthegrove.

Chair Walker called for a roll call vote.

Ayes

David Baker
Debora Juarez
Ed Prince
Dave Upthegrove
Kristina Walker

Nays

It was carried by unanimous vote of five committee members present that Motion No. M2023-05 be forwarded to the Board with a do-pass recommendation.

Motion No. M2023-06: Approving Sound Transit's annual 2023 Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan submittal to Washington State Department of Transportation's State Safety Oversight Office.

Melissa Durel, Manager of Security and Safety Management System, and Ross Edwards, Program Manager for Safety and Security Data, provided the staff presentation.

Motion No. M2023-06 was moved by Committee Vice Chair Prince and seconded by Boardmember Juarez.

Chair Walker called for a roll call vote.

Ayes

Nays

Debora Juarez
Ed Prince
Dave Upthegrove
Kristina Walker

It was carried by unanimous vote of four committee members present that Motion No. M2023-06 be forwarded to the Board with a do-pass recommendation.

Motion No. M2023-07: Authorizing the chief executive officer to execute an Interlocal Agreement with the Washington State Department of Transportation, the Washington State Patrol, King County Metro Transit, and the City of Seattle for Sound Transit to become a member of the Virtual Coordination Center at no cost to Sound Transit.

Ken Cummins, Director of Public Safety, provided the staff presentation.

Motion No. M2023-07 was moved by Boardmember Juarez and seconded by Committee Vice Chair Prince.

Chair Walker called for a roll call vote.

Ayes

Nays

Debora Juarez
Ed Prince
Dave Upthegrove
Kristina Walker

It was carried by unanimous vote of four committee members present that Motion No. M2023-07 be forwarded to the Board with a do-pass recommendation.

Motion No. M2023-08: Authorizing the chief executive officer to execute four individual contracts with Universal Protection Service, LP dba Allied Universal Security Services, PPC Solutions Inc, Inter-Con Security Systems, Inc., and PalAmerican Security, Inc. to provide Sound Transit with public safety and security services in individual contract amounts that may exceed \$2,000,000 each provided that the aggregate total of all four contracts does not exceed \$250,000,000 over a six-year period with each contract having an initial term of four years with two one-year options to extend.

Ken Cummins, Director of Public Safety, provided the staff presentation.

Boardmember Juarez asked if the agency currently had one contractor and whether this action would expand to four total contractors. Mr. Cummins confirmed that was correct and explained the agency currently had one prime contractor. Because of staffing challenges over the past two years the agency had engaged with three other vendors to do emergency procurements that held the full scope of training and supervision expectations to address those staffing needs. Boardmember Juarez asked if the agency had one major contractor then four subcontractors. Mr. Cummins explained that was what the agency currently employed, and this action would authorize four contractors so that the work was evenly distributed.

Boardmember Juarez asked which companies were union. Mr. Cummins answered that one was union, one was on the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) preferred vendor list, one was new to the Seattle area, but had union transit contracts in Southern California, and that firm had stated they would proactively contact the SEIU to begin discussions to ensure the workers were taken care of, and the fourth company was a small women-owned disadvantaged business enterprise that was not unionized but they were committed to not interfere should they choose to unionize.

Boardmember Juarez asked how the Board would receive updates on whether the four vendors and contract totals weren't exceeding \$250,000,000. Mr. Cummins responded that a Sound Transit contracts

and agreements manager would track spend rates and analyze and approve invoices to ensure the agency was receiving the services listed in the contract. There would also be a Sound Transit security specialists team assigned to monitor expectations that the contractors were providing necessary officers, having proper training, and performing specific job functions required at individual posts.

Boardmember Juarez asked how each contract total and aggregate total was decided upon. Mr. Cummins answered that all the assignments of work would be based on hours of service. Each company would take care of individual onboarding of various positions, and all assignments had various range of billing rates. Sound Transit staff took the highest financial scenario from each vendor assignments, regardless of actual assignments, to ensure there was capacity to procure the services.

Boardmember Juarez asked how the Board would get informed if contract totals weren't met and if there were additional funds available. Mr. Cummins explained it would be part of the annual budget process and broken into funds spent as an aggregate total.

Boardmember Juarez asked about the issues involving recruiting and retainment of officers, which she acknowledged was a known issue across multiple security agencies apart from the agency. Mr. Cummins responded that staff would work with the new vendors to proactively recruit throughout the community. He also mentioned the agency wage was within a \$3 to \$5 rate above the prevailing wage, allowing competitive hiring. Tech companies in the area were competitors in the labor market as they were able to afford premium rates and hire private security. Boardmember Juarez asked if wages were related to retention, or perhaps morale or safety. Mr. Cummins replied that retention issues were caused by multiple reasons – a large portion was due to pay, lack of supervision and mentoring. Other reasons included the transit working environment. Mr. Cummins noted that reason was more difficult to monitor but what was controllable was increased staffing for support, increased supervision, better training, and pay.

Boardmember Juarez asked if all four vendors would be responsible for education and training before they appear on site for work duties. Mr. Cummins confirmed that was a requirement from the vendors and was part of the transition activity. All vendors must provide their training curriculum. Sound Transit would review it to ensure it is meeting expectations and would provide the necessary skills and resources to perform their work.

Boardmember Juarez asked how many vendors were local. Mr. Cummins replied all four would be local; one vendor recently moved to the area. Boardmember Juarez noted the importance of local vendors for their familiarity with the region and sensibilities of Sound Transit and the surrounding counties.

Boardmember Upthegrove thanked staff for addressing the responsible contracting provisions. The union that represented most of the Local 6 was comfortable with the outcome. He noted a suggestion made in the testimony of Local 6 to address retention issues when contracts were changed with a larger work force. He asked if there were ways to help ensure retainment of employees from previous contractors. Boardmember Upthegrove suggested staff investigate work being done with Port of Seattle and Seattle Tacoma Airport that had provisions aimed towards that issue. Boardmember Upthegrove asked if there were ways for the agency to help the current workforce make transitions by looking into strategies and current polices. Mr. Cummins replied that the market would take care of a large portion of the transitions. One of the companies had reached out to the agency to voice concern to attempt prioritizing their workers in being chosen first with the new companies. Mr. Cummins noted the agency was accommodating that concern. Layoffs due to the transitions were unlikely.

Boardmember Upthegrove noted King County Metro had other strategies around behavioral health teams and community partnerships at transit stops, in addition to making an investment for additional security presence, and asked if Sound Transit employed any of those strategies. Mr. Cummins replied a current pilot project was engaged with a King County agency to provide behavioral crisis interventions specialists that would be paired up with outreach staff. The small pilot would focus on the DSTT stations and would help security and law enforcement assist individuals experiencing health crisis at the point of

engagement. This pilot began in December 2022 and would last for one year. Sound Transit staff would also engage with county services to help provide outreach and options to individuals that need service.

Boardmember Upthegrove suggested updates on that pilot program could be an addition to the 2024 committee work plan. Chair Walker agreed.

Committee Vice Chair Prince wanted to ensure recruitment was taking place in populations of color. Mr. Cummins replied affirmatively. Chair Walker asked if that was accounted for. Mr. Cummins responded affirmatively, with the caveat of not knowing exactly where the recruitment was taking place. The action currently taking place was to ensure proactive recruitment by traveling to various locations to provide opportunities rather than waiting for candidates to apply. Using this strategy would allow outreach throughout all communities. Chair Walker asked if the committee would receive updates on recruitment efforts as it became available.

Boardmember Baker noted representatives that arrived in-person to share their voice during the comment period and asked that their concerns were acknowledged. Mr. Cummins voiced his confidence in employees job security either through remaining at Sound Transit or at their current employer and moving to a different contract.

Chair Walker asked if the labor unions Sound Transit was engaging with were in favor of the contract outcomes. Mr. Cummins confirmed.

Motion No. M2023-08 was moved by Committee Vice Chair Prince and seconded by Boardmember Baker.

Chair Walker called for a roll call vote.

Ayes

Nays

David Baker
Debora Juarez
Ed Prince
Dave Upthegrove
Kristina Walker

It was carried by unanimous vote of five committee members present that Motion No. M2023-08 be forwarded to the Board with a do-pass recommendation.

Resolution No. R2023-05: (1) Adopting a \$1.00 fare for ORCA LIFT riders on Sound Transit services, effective March 1, 2023 and (2) superseding the rates of fare established in Resolution No. R2022-29, with the rates of fare established by this action as shown in Attachment A.

Chad Davis, Deputy Director of Fares, provided the staff presentation.

Resolution No. R2023-05 was moved by Committee Vice Chair Prince and seconded by Boardmember Baker.

Chair Walker called for a roll call vote.

Ayes

Nays

David Baker
Debora Juarez
Ed Prince
Dave Upthegrove
Kristina Walker

It was carried by unanimous vote of five committee members present that Resolution No. R2023-05 be forwarded to the Board with a do-pass recommendation.

Reports to the Committee

REO Metrics Performance Report

Raj Cheriell, Director of Essential Data and Analytics, and John Carini, Deputy Director of Vertical Conveyances, provided the report. Mr. Cheriell reminded the committee that unlike the passenger survey, customer service and vertical conveyance metrics, much of the operating data that was shared comes from agency partners. Most partners send data on the 25th of the following month, which meant December 2022 data was unavailable at the time of this meeting. A year-end review presentation was anticipated for the February 2023 meeting.

The performance metric drives better continuous improvement when there was a target associated with the metric. In June 2022, Mr. Cheriell mentioned a six-to-nine-month timeline on target setting. At that time, there was a plan in place to review and update the service standards that were adopted in 2018. That work would begin in late 2023 and would set new standards which could then be translated to targets for multiple current metrics and be provided to the committee. Within the next few months, staff would talk about the existing targets throughout various metrics.

Mr. Cheriell noted that even though current ridership levels reached levels of pre-covid ridership, passengers didn't share similar concerns regarding overcrowding compared to pre-covid levels. Staff began to proactively address operational concerns before overcrowding became an issue. Staff believed the lack of complaints received was likely a function of differences in how ridership was currently distributed throughout the day versus pre-covid. Given the new ridership patterns, staff thought one straightforward way to address overcrowding was to increase train capacity by assuring as many of the trains as possible were running, for example, four cars instead of three. However, in order to do this, staff must improve vehicle availability numbers.

At the December 2022 meeting, Mr. Cheriell shared data about ridership on the link that showed the beginning increases compared to pre-covid ridership levels. At that meeting, he noted these ridership levels caused concern from staff about the potential for crowding to negatively impact the passenger experience. The crowding concern became forefront of staff thinking and the desire to address this early before it became a big issue formed the basis of an analysis staff began with a review of customer complaint data. The data showed that overcrowding wasn't driving significant customer complaints at the time, but that overcrowding was a major source of complaints when ridership was about this level before COVID.

Staff investigated how full the cars were in each direction at various times of day and at specific stations. Using the average passenger load data, ridership saw very high average passenger loads during the morning and afternoon peak prior to COVID. Those loads fell significantly during the early morning midday and late nighttime. Currently, passenger loads were comparably higher during the off-peak periods and lower during the peak. This represented the leveling off of passenger loads throughout the day. Assuming this distribution of ridership throughout the day continued, staff believed cars could carry just as many passengers now than it could pre-covid, without passengers experiencing the overcrowded conditions they did during pre-covid peak hour time. Another finding was that the largest average passenger load was 66 passengers per vehicle. Depending on the vehicle, it could have seating for between 70 and 74 passengers. That meant on average, even during the busiest times of day, everyone could have a seat. Mr. Cheriell recognized that "on average" was an important caveat and that there were instances in which train cars were crowded to their capacity and that as ridership grows these incidents would become more frequent.

The next step in staff analysis was how to meet growing demand. This was determined by looking at how much additional capacity could be provided for passengers. It was suggested that vehicle availability may have the biggest impact on the ability to provide the capacity. Vehicle availability was the function of many factors, such as the total number of vehicles in the fleet, the capacity at maintenance facilities to store vehicles, coupled with the use of some of that space for the

commissioning of new vehicles, the need to have trains available to handle moments of high demand, the need to replace in-service trains for things like biohazard safety or mechanical issues, and of course the number of trains that were in shop under regular maintenance or being repaired.

All factors worked together to reduce ability to provide four car trains which would reduce capacity to serve more riders – especially if and when ridership demands grew to the point it was impacting the passenger experience related to overcrowding. Staff examined vehicle availability data to potentially increase vehicle capacity. Staff would return in March to review results and share the data associated with the aforementioned factors along with how the data could improve the passenger experience.

Chair Walker acknowledged the level of analysis and was appreciative of how the data was being used to improve the passenger experience.

Mr. Carini provided an overview of 2021 versus 2022 vertical conveyance unplanned outage performance. The agency experienced an increase in number of unplanned outage events and overall outage hours at stations outside of the downtown tunnel stations in 2022 over 2021. This was driven by an increase of lead time for spare parts. There was a decrease in out of service hours in the downtown tunnel stations which drove overall year over year performance in a positive direction. Mr. Carini reviewed the three pillars of the vertical conveyance program. A presentation was given late 2022 on the operations and maintenance pillar to inform the committee of how staff conduct day-to-day operations. Staff would return later this year to review the communications pillar, which would encompass signage, passenger alerts, asset outage updates, scheduled maintenance messaging and how staff communicate to the passengers and provide an update on the replacement program.

In 2021 the year began with 165 total assets. With the opening of Northgate Link extension in October 2021, 28 assets were added. There was no change to the agency asset portfolio in 2022.

Staff defined unplanned out of service time as any occasion a vertical conveyance asset was unavailable to passengers during revenue service due to an unplanned outage. Every business day, the vertical conveyance team would review all previous outages using a variety of sources – such as vendor updates, security reports, and most importantly CCTV. The team would document when an asset became inoperable, why it went out of service, when it was returned to service, and any repairs that were performed. The team would then create a work order for every single outage. By doing so, the team was able to generate visual dashboards that show identifying trends for areas of concern to ultimately help with mitigation plans.

Mr. Carini reviewed compared 2021 data versus 2022 for all vertical conveyance assets, aside from the downtown tunnel stations. This included all other Link and Sounder locations and non-revenue elevators such as operations and maintenance facilities and garages. There were 135 assets, roughly 70 percent of the portfolio, in this category outside of the downtown tunnel. 835 assets encompassed approximately 1.2 million total operating hours in 2022.

The mechanical category referred to any outage caused by a maintainable mechanical, electrical park, or if an outage occurred due to no known outside influence. The vandalism/misuse category referred to outages due to a variety of events which were not necessarily intentional, such as luggage getting hung up on an escalator or a person riding on top of an escalator handrail therefor setting off a safety switch, or a person inadvertently hitting the elevator doors when opening or closing causing the equipment to become inoperable. Staff also categorize misuse for intentional events such as a person pressing the escalator emergency stop button. The Other category referred to categories of environmental, which included outages caused by debris buildup. It also included station power related outages and accidents such as a passenger falling down an escalator. In that instance, it may be required to keep that piece of equipment out of service until it can be inspected by a state inspector to deem safe to return to service. There was an increase in all unplanned outage categories, as well as the total out of service hours in 2021 to 2022.

These increases were driven partly by supply chain in 2021. There was an average of 20 hours total downtime for each unplanned outage event. In 2022, that number jumped to nearly 30 hours for unplanned events, primarily due to the inability to get spare parts in a timely fashion. The agency pivoted its spare parts strategy due to many previously readily available parts that could be acquired next day or within 48 hours expanded to three or five days or more. Northgate link extension added 28 additional assets in late 2021. The escalators were of the very first transit grade units in the state of Washington. While there was extensive training completed, the learning curve was underestimated but necessary for the local technicians to get familiar with efficiently troubleshooting. In 2022, outside of the downtown tunnel, there was 41,300 total unplanned out of service hours. Approximately 14,000 of them occurred at the three Northgate link extension. Misuse continued to be an issue. Northgate link extension accounted for 231 of the 513 total events of misuse and approximately a third of the total outage hours for that category. The third factor which affected the mechanical category was due to two specific pieces of equipment, Beacon Hill elevator #4 and UW elevator #2, which accounted for 37 mechanical events just between these two units in 2022. The vendor struggled to troubleshoot the root cause of the Beacon Hill outages throughout the first half of 2022. Repairs were made to major components to this in Q3 and now experience minimal issues. UW was having issues in the latter part of 2022 due to repairs on major door components.

On January 1, 2021, Sound Transit assumed management of the 58 vertical conveyance assets within the downtown tunnel stations from King County Metro. All but one of these assets were over 34 years old and past their useful life expectancy. When Sound Transit assumed management, 28 of the 58 assets were inoperable. Staff enacted a short-term plan, which was still being executed throughout the end of 2023, to upgrade and repair these assets to increase availability while working on a replacement program. Mr. Carini reviewed highlights of mechanical related out of service hours for the four downtown tunnel stations from 2021 to 2022 and compared the total out of service hours which included all categories of outages between those four states. In 2021, approximately 90 percent of the 172,000 total service hours were related to the over 30-year-old vertical conveyance assets in the four downtown tunnel stations. Staff continued to evolve how to track and analyze vertical conveyance to create actionable mitigation plans.

Boardmember Baker shared the interest and importance of vertical conveyance outages towards the handicap population and appreciated the efforts towards mitigating and minimizing outages. Chair Walker echoed Boardmember Baker's comments.

Chair Walker asked staff to explain how information was passed on to determine mitigation plans. Mr. Carini answered that all data goes through the vertical conveyance team and findings are communicated with internal teams and vendors. There were consistent bi-monthly review meetings within the team to discover trends.

Boardmember Upthegrove echoed the importance of minimizing vertical conveyance outages and the hardships it creates and thanked staff for their efforts.

Battery Electric Buses for the Bus Rapid Transit Program

Lacy Bell, Deputy Program Executive for Bus Rapid Transit Operations, provided the update on Stride Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) fleet propulsion. BRT was a new mode, or line, of business for Sound Transit. A successful launch of operations of this mode required implementing a multi-part start-up plan in parallel with the development of capital investments. Major start-up activities in 2023 included the procurement of operating systems, beginning a competitive process for an operator and maintainer, and placing an order for the bus fleet. Ms. Bell noted the SR 522 BRT corridor was known as S3. A few years ago, Sound Transit decided the most suitable vehicle for the corridor was 60-foot articulated coaches. These coaches best suited to urban arterial operations. They had three doors which would mean faster ingress and egress for more frequent stops. The agency also committed to battery electric propulsion, consistent with the agency's sustainability goals and maturing industry technology. To

ensure reliable service, S3 would include inductive charging facilities at both ends of the line, where coaches would be charged when not in service at layovers. These inductive charging layovers and terminals would be at the South Shoreline station and I-405/SR 522 transit hub.

Over the past two years, staff continued to analyze the I-405 corridor to determine the appropriate coach type and propulsion. Double-decker coaches were currently used for ST Express routes on I-405 N because they were more suitable than articulated coaches for higher speed operations. They were also popular with riders. Double-decker coaches would be used for both Stride I-405 BRT lines, S1 and S2. Additionally, staff had been tracking industry experiences and the maturation of battery electric bus (BEB) technology. It was concluded that electric propulsion was suitable for the corridor, particularly with inductive charging at layovers.

The Stride BRT system would be fully electric and doing so would move Sound Transit closer to its sustainability goals. Electrification of the system would require additional investment at the bus base and at all layover locations. The cost would be incorporated into program baselining that staff would bring to the Board for consideration in mid-2023. Staff would continue to pursue grants and other resources to offset the additional cost of electrifying.

Executive session – None.

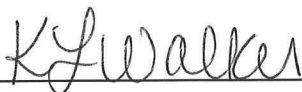
Other business – CEO Timm acknowledged staff efforts to provide complex data to riders and have improved levels of communications.

Next meeting

Thursday, February 2, 2023
1:00 to 3:00 p.m.
Ruth Fisher Boardroom and Virtually via WebEx

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 2:48 p.m.



Kristina Walker
Rider Experience and Operations Committee Chair

ATTEST:



Kathryn Flores
Board Administrator

APPROVED on February 2, 2023, JG.