

SEASHORE TRANSPORTATION FORUM
Meeting Minutes
May 4, 2012

Members

Deputy Mayor Chris Eggen, City of Shoreline (Co-Chair)
Councilmember John Wright, City of Lake Forest Park (Co-Chair)
Councilmember Doris McConnell, City of Shoreline
Chris Arkills, King County Executive's Office (Alternate)
Mayor Bernie Talmas, City of Woodinville
Councilmember Susan Boundy-Sanders, City of Woodinville
Mayor David Baker, City of Kenmore
Councilmember Kyoko Matsumoto-Wright, City of Mountlake Terrace
Councilmember Joan Bloom, City of Edmonds
Steve Thomsen, Snohomish County
Tibor Horvath, Councilmember Ferguson's Office (Alternate)
Kelly McGourty, PSRC

I. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

II. Approval of April 6, 2012 Meeting Summary

Councilmember Matsumoto-Wright requested changes to correct the spelling of 'Lynnwood' in the summary. The April 6, 2012 meeting summary was approved with those changes.

III. Reports

Co-Chairs

Co-Chair Eggen reported that he attended the RTC workshop on April 18 to discuss the Five-Year Implementation Plan for Alternatives to Traditional Transit Service.

Co-Chair Wright reported that there have been reinvigorated commitments from Shoreline and Lake Forest Park to look at ways to connect the Burke Gilman and Interurban Trails.

ST Board Decision on DEIS Alternatives

Nytasha Sowers, Sound Transit Project Manager, reported on the recent April 26th approval of the Sound Transit Board's motion. Sound Transit is performing an alternatives analysis of Lynnwood Link as part of the process to receive federal funding. Previously, the Sound Transit Board approved motions that narrowed the study from reviewing different modes and corridors to just reviewing light rail options along Interstate 5. The April 26 motion further specifies the light rail route and identifies station alternatives for detailed study in the Lynnwood Link Extension EIS.

The approved April 26, 2012 motion directs Sound Transit to perform a detailed study of the following Lynnwood extension stations:

Segment A: Northgate through NE 185th Street Station

- Alternative A 1: At-grade/elevated to NE 145th and NE 185th east side stations
- Alternative A3: Mostly elevated to NE 145th and NE 185th east side stations
- Alternative A5: At-grade/elevated to NE 130th, NE 155th and NE 185th east side stations
- Alternative A7: Mostly elevated to NE 130th, NE 155th and NE 185th east side stations
- Alternative A10: At-grade/elevated to NE 130th, NE 145th and NE 185th east side stations
- Alternative A 11: Mostly elevated to NE 130th, NE 145th and NE 185th east side stations

Segment B: NE 185th Street to 212th Street SW

- Alternative B1: East side to Mountlake Terrace Transit Center to median
- Alternative B2: East side to Mountlake Terrace Transit Center to west side
- Alternative B2a: East side to Mountlake Terrace Transit Center to west side with 220th station
- Alternative B4: East side to Mountlake Terrace Freeway Station to median

Segment C: 212th Street SW to Lynnwood Transit Center

- Alternative C1: 52nd Avenue W to 200th Street station
- Alternative C2: 52nd Avenue W to Lynnwood Transit Center station
- Alternative C3: 1-5 to Lynnwood Park & Ride station

Mayor Baker asked if there will be road crossings that may conflict with traffic when light rail is at-grade in the I-5 right-of-way. Ms. Sowers said that light rail will go either under or over all street crossings when in the I-5 right-of-way.

Co-Chair Eggen asked if Sound Transit will have enough right-of-way, or will they have to acquire more property. Ms. Sowers responded that Sound Transit will largely be in existing rights-of-way, but will have to acquire some abutting areas.

Councilmember Matsumoto-Wright said that the 220th Station in Edmonds would be a good bus connection for Edmonds and Mountlake Terrace.

Councilmember Bloom expressed a related concern regarding a requirement to perform an EIS on the proposal to have coal trains traveling through some cities on Puget Sound. Coal shipping companies are proposing to have coal trains travel through cities on their way to a proposed shipping terminal at Cherry Point in Whatcom County. These trains can be over a mile in length. There are concerns about the coal dust that the trains could leave behind. Since the railroad companies already own the property where the trains will be traveling, operating a coal-carrying railcar through the city does not automatically trigger an EIS. Edmonds recently passed a motion requesting that an EIS review be performed on the proposal to operate coal trains through these cities.

In Oregon, the Governor has stepped in and asked the federal government to perform a programmatic EIS under the Environmental Protection Act and look at the impacts of coal export proposals in the Pacific Northwest. Councilmember Bloom had a draft of the Oregon Governor's letter to the various federal agencies requesting an EIS. She asked for copies to be provided to all members. Councilmember Boundy Sanders also asked that a map be provided of the proposed coal train route. Councilmember Bloom added that she would like to see if SeaShore could take a position to ask for an EIS to be performed.

Chris Arkills said that SeaShore could pass a similar measure to Edmonds, although Mr. Arkills was not familiar enough with the issue to take a position. He knows the Port of Seattle is also concerned about this proposal. SeaShore could receive more information at the next meeting and decide if it would like to take a position. Co-Chair Eggen also asked if SeaShore could hear from the shippers as well those opposed to the proposal. Mr. Arkills suggested having staff identify groups who could present on each side of the issue—potentially the Port of Seattle or the Conservation Voters. Mr. Thomsen said he will bring this up at the next Snohomish County meeting.

IV. Metro Transit Ride Free Area Update

Chris O’Claire, King County Metro Strategic Planning and Analysis Supervisor, presented an update on plans for ending the Downtown Seattle Ride Free Area (RFA). Ms. O’Claire began by providing background regarding the temporary congestion reduction charge passed by the King County Council in 2011.

The \$20 congestion reduction charge was a vehicle licensing fee increase to preserve transit service that would have been eliminated due to a reduction in recent sales tax revenue. The ordinance for the congestion reduction charge included a free-ride ticket program that will give each household with a registered vehicle ten bus passes. People can also donate the passes to human service agencies through the King County Human Services Ticket Program. The Council ordinance also requires Metro to discontinue the RFA by October 2012 and to submit an implementation plan to council by May 2012, or renegotiate the terms of the RFA with the City of Seattle to accurately off-set the cost of operating the RFA. Seattle currently pays \$400,000 a year for the RFA, but Metro estimates its loss of fare revenues to be over \$2 million a year.

If the RFA is eliminated, all passengers in Downtown Seattle will start paying fares as they board. To ensure operational speeds are not degraded, Metro is proposing a number of steps to ensure smooth passenger loading and operations, including: move some buses from the bus tunnel to 2nd and 4th Avenues, find ways to reduce bus dwell times at stops, adjust traffic signals to support bus movements, find ways to more quickly collect fares, and improve fare enforcement.

On March 29th, Metro hosted a public meeting to discuss the impacts of removing the RFA. Metro had 300 people attend and collected almost 800 comments. Metro is also launching a marketing campaign to educate the public about the changes.

Metro recognizes that the RFA provides a no-cost option for many low-income riders to travel within the Downtown Seattle area, and is working to mitigate the impacts of removing this service. King County is working closely with its partners to evaluate all mitigation options including increased ticket distribution through the Human Services Ticket Program, donation of vans for human service agencies, or a free circulator as possible solutions to reducing the impact on these populations.

The following are the next steps for eliminating the RFA.

- May 1st: Implementation Plan transmitted to Council.
- May-September: Implement projects and communicate changes to riders
- September 29: End of RFA, implement mitigation

- October: Monitor implementation and adjust as needed to ensure smooth operations

Co-Chair Wright asked if there is any discussion to adjust traffic signals for pedestrian movements. Ms. O’Claire said they are looking at signal options, including limiting right-turn movements as much as possible and prioritizing bus travel through signaled intersections.

Co-Chair Eggen asked if Metro provides a free van or circulator, will that be paid for through Metro’s budget. Mr. Arkills responded that they are in negotiations with the City of Seattle about the costs.

V. Growing Transit Communities

Sara Nikolic, Senior Planner at the PSRC, presented the PSRC’s Growing Transit Communities (GTC) Partnership program. The program is trying to implement the region’s adopted growth management and transportation plans, Vision 2040 and Transportation 2040. The challenge that the program is trying to address is how to capture more of the region’s residential and employment growth in equitable transit communities. The GTC program involves a large consortium of cities, counties, human service agencies, developers, and others.

The GTC Program is funded by a grant from the US Department of Transportation and US Office of Housing and Urban Development. The PSRC collaborated with a number of agencies and jurisdictions in our region to apply for the grant. The program focuses on applying the HUD Livability Principles to growth in our region. These principles include:

- Provide more transportation choices
- Promote equitable, affordable housing
- Enhance economic competitiveness
- Support existing communities
- Coordinate policies & leverage investment
- Value communities & neighborhoods

The GTC Program is focusing on concentrating growing along our region’s three main rapid transit corridors: the South corridor from Seattle to Tacoma, the North corridor from Seattle to Everett, and an East corridor from Seattle to Redmond. In the North corridor, the program has identified study areas that include planned and proposed light rail stations, bus rapid-transit stations, and other major transit nodes. Although Sound Transit has recently reduced the numbers of stations for study in the

North corridor, all station areas are still shown because the GTC review process started before Sound Transit had narrowed the scope of the environmental review.

The GTC Partnership has four major components, the Corridor Action Strategies, the Regional Equity Network, the Affordable Housing Strategy, and the Demonstration Projects occurring in each corridor.

The Corridor Action Strategies will have three major deliverables. They include an existing conditions report of the corridors, recommended actions, and implementation agreements. These products will be informed by an 18-month stakeholder task force process which is underway, public engagement, review by partnership committees, consultant products, and input from other key stakeholders.

Another product being developed as part of the GTC Partnership is an Opportunity Map of our region. This map identifies areas with access to 'opportunity'. Opportunity is measured by looking at the education options, economic health, housing availability, transportation and mobility options, and the general health and environment of an area. The Final Opportunity Mapping report and interactive Opportunity Maps are available at the GTC Partnership website:

<http://www.psrc.org/about/advisory/gtc-committees/gtc-affordable-housing/fair-housing-subcommittee/regional-opportunity-maps/>

The first part of the Existing Conditions Report for the study areas is also available. The report is divided into two parts with the first part including data on demographics, economy, and land use in the 74 station areas. The second part will be available in June and will include data on housing, transportation, and the policy environment. A final report is expected in July. The draft report is available online:

<http://www.psrc.org/growth/growing-transit-communities/existing-conditions/>

PSRC staff is also performing a Residential and Commercial Market Analysis. This includes an assessment of local and regional house and commercial market conditions, TOD housing and commercial space demand projections by corridor, and a land use capacity analysis.

The GTC Partnership is working with all the program partners to develop a regional transit community typology. This will be a tool that categorizes study areas based on common characteristics, opportunities and barriers. The typology will also provide a number of policy strategies and future investments are that could be implemented for different transit community types.

Co-Chair Eggen asked if implementation of the GTC Partnership's recommendations would be at a city level. Ms. Nikolic responded that the recommendations will be at city and regional levels

Co-Chair Eggen called the meeting to a close.

Other attendees:

Monica Whitman, SCA	Scott MacColl, Shoreline
Wes Edwards, KCDOT	Nytasha Sowers, Sound Transit
Chris O'Claire, KC Metro	Candida Lorenzana, KC Metro
Ed Conyers, WSDOT	