

City of SeaTac

Council Workshop Minutes Synopsis

November 9, 2010
5:00 PM

City Hall
Council Chambers

CALL TO ORDER: The SeaTac City Council Workshop was called to order by Mayor Terry Anderson at 5:10 p.m.

COUNCIL PRESENT: Mayor Terry Anderson, Deputy Mayor (DM) Gene Fisher, Councilmembers (CMs) Rick Forscherler, Anthony (Tony) Anderson, Ralph Shape, Pam Fernald, and Mia Gregerson (*arrived at 5:40 p.m.*).

STAFF PRESENT: Interim City Manager (ICM) Todd Cutts, City Attorney Mary Mirante Bartolo, City Clerk Kristina Gregg, Interim Assistant City Manager (IACM) Jeff Robinson, Program Manager Soraya Lowry, Acting Fire Chief Brian Wiwel, and Police Chief Jim Graddon.

DISCUSSION ITEM:

•South Link Extension (Airport to South 200th Street) Project Update

Program Manager Lowry introduced Deputy Executive Director of Business Services Ron Lewis, Government and Community Relations Specialist Rachel Smith, and Expert Civil Engineer Rod Kempkes. Ms. Lowry stated that this is the first of monthly updates to Council on the South Link Extension.

Mr. Lewis gave an overview of what would be discussed as part of this presentation: update on the South 200th Street Station Extension Project, financial situation, parking, and detail and schedule of Sound Transit's design refinement process.

He stated that the big challenge is regarding revenues which are down 25% below projections. However, even with the financial downturn, Sound Transit still has a robust program that includes moving ahead with the voter approved projects and services, including light rail extensions. Sound Transit will not be able to complete the entire ST2 Program within the original 15 year timeframe.

Mr. Lewis reviewed the revenue forecast for 2009 – 2023, based on revenues generated in the South King County (SKC) Subarea.

The Sound Transit Board asked staff to develop options on how to respond to the revenue downturn. He reviewed discussions between the Sound Transit Board and staff:

- Design and construct as planned: add four Sounder trips to the commuter rail and extend it from Tacoma south to Lakewood
- Keep moving (proceed as scheduled, but monitor and evaluate until revenue uncertainties are resolved): link to South 200th Street (accelerated), Tukwila Sounder Station, Tacoma Link Extension, and Sounder Station Access Projects
- Limited Funding (proceeding with some of the design to evaluate options and risks – not currently funded): light rail extensions south of South 200th Street to South 272nd Street, Sounder Station access projects in SKC
- Suspended (no further work will occur at this time): Sounder Platform Extensions.

Mr. Lewis gave an overview of the scope of the South 200th Street Station extension. Preliminary engineering and the environmental impact statement (EIS) have been completed and a record of decision has been issued. This is an important milestone because that allows the design to continue and means that Sound Transit can move forward with implementing the project.

Sound Transit is anticipating using a design build procurement to construct the project as a means of saving time in the delivery and perhaps cost savings as well. All of that could lead to being able to open the station in 2016.

Ms. Smith stated that Sound Transit staff is preparing a framework for the board to be able to make decisions about extending light rail south of South 200th Street. Due to the current revenue shortfall, they can't deliver light rail to the Star Lake area in the time frame that was set forth in ST2. Sound Transit needs to determine exactly what can be delivered and when. There will be a three phased approach: (1) staff led review of all of the projects in the SKC subarea and their mobility benefits and affordability. During Phase 1, Sound Transit will also be developing a robust stakeholder engagement process; (2) preliminary studies of light rail south of South 200th Street; and (3) system plan review.

DISCUSSION ITEM (Continued):

South Link Extension (Airport to South 200th Street) Project Update (Continued):

Mr. Lewis discussed parking as it relates to existing conditions and the work they are doing for designing the South 200th Street Extension. The last monitoring of the Tukwila Station was done in October. The data shows that the parking is at capacity (98 – 100%) from 9 a.m. – 3 p.m. They are also monitoring spill over parking. They are considering all of this information when designing the South 200th Street Station.

Observations so far are that the SeaTac/Airport Station is not creating the same spill over impacts as the Tukwila Station. Sound Transit will continue to monitor the parking and address any issues with the City.

Mr. Lewis gave a quick update regarding the design refinement phase: executed a contract with a design consultant; design refinements on both the station as well as the alignment are being revised; the station footprint is being moved slightly to optimize the alignment; and coordination between Sound Transit, SeaTac, and Port of Seattle (POS).

The current schedule: in discussion with City staff about parking demand, hope to be able to complete that effort by the end of 2010; preparing conceptual designs of the station, will need an agreement with the City of SeaTac; spring 2011 Sound Transit will come back with the findings from the design refinement phase and have a cost estimate to be reviewed by the board for a “go/no go” decision; and summer 2011 Sound Transit will seek the City’s approval to move forward with the project.

Upon a question posed by CM A. Anderson, Mr. Lewis stated that the board asked staff to come back with a cost estimate for the South 200th Street extension. At that time the board will decide whether to implement the project and have it in operation by 2016.

ICM Cutts stated that City staff is working closely with Sound Transit. It is a tight time frame, so the City is doing its due diligence to make sure the community is represented.

Upon a question posed by CM Shape, Mr. Lewis stated that the POS started a program where they offer short term parking during major events. They programmed it around Seahawks games as their first target. Sound Transit encourages that kind of partnership because it helps ridership; it intercepts people before they have to deal with the congestion around the stadiums and it utilizes a structure that would otherwise be empty on a Sunday afternoon.

Public Comment: Leslie Baker stated that she is a volunteer at the airport and assists people with using this mode of transportation. She stated that it is a learning curve because every day they have more people asking how to find the light rail because they want to start using it. Ridership will increase as they learn to use the facility. She stated one concern is that light rail is not handicap friendly. She encouraged Sound Transit to consider this when building other stations.

ADJOURNED: Mayor T. Anderson adjourned the Council Workshop at 5:49 p.m.