



King County

Metropolitan King County Council
REGIONAL TRANSIT COMMITTEE

STAFF REPORT

AGENDA ITEM: 11

DATE: March 17, 2010

BRIEFING NO. 2010-B0045

PREPARED BY: Arthur Thornbury

SUBJECT: 2010 Regional Transit Committee Work Program

SUMMARY: The committee considered potential work program items at its February 17th meeting. Based on that discussion the chair, in consultation with the vice-chair, has prepared a draft work program for committee consideration.

BACKGROUND: At the beginning of each year the committee sets its goals by agreeing upon a work program outlining the major items to be addressed that year. In practice, work programs evolve over the course of a year as new issues arise or those that are anticipated change in timing or scope. In the past the committee has informally approved a work program and revised it as needed during the year.

ATTENDING: Kevin Desmond, General Manager, Transit Division

ATTACHMENT: Draft 2010 Regional Transit Committee Work Program

REGIONAL TRANSIT COMMITTEE

DRAFT 2010 WORK PROGRAM

The Regional Transit Committee is committed to being accountable to the residents of King County and strives to ensure that the best possible transit service is provided, especially to those who are most dependent on public transportation for their essential mobility.

FIRST QUARTER

Transit Security At its February 17th meeting, the committee was briefed on the January 28th transit tunnel assault and the Transit Division's response to-date. The committee will receive updates on that response as part of a broader transit security discussion later in the year.

Transit Audit Consultants and staff from the King County Auditor's Office completed a performance audit of the Transit Division in 2009, presenting their findings and recommendations to the RTC at its September meeting. In adopting the 2010/2011 Transit Budget, the council set aside \$350,000 for a follow-up audit in 2010. At its March 17th meeting the committee will be briefed on implementation of the 2009 audit recommendations and the scope and timeline of the 2010 audit. The auditor will present the 2010 audit findings and recommendations to the committee in the third or fourth quarter.

Fare Evasion The council added a proviso to the 2010/2011 Transit Budget related to the problem of fare evasion on Metro buses. The proviso directs the Transit Division to partner with its transit operators to gather fare evasion data, and then estimate its costs and report on strategies to address it by April 30th. In anticipation of that report, the committee will be briefed at its March 17th meeting on the design of the data-gathering phase of the project.

Transit Stakeholder Task Force The committee will be briefed on the task force structure and process in advance of its first meeting, planned for late March.

SECOND QUARTER

Year-End Report The Transit General Manager will present his annual report.

Transit Stakeholder Task Force A 28-member task force has been convened to "consider a policy framework to guide the growth and, if necessary, the contraction of King County Metro Transit's system." Materials prepared for task force meetings will be simultaneously provided to RTC members and the committee will get monthly reports on the work of the task force from:

- the RTC Chair who is a Task Force Executive Committee alternate,
- the Transit General Manager who is a non-voting member of the task force, and
- those RTC members who are also task force members.

Transit Advisory Committee/Accessible Services Advisory Committee 2010 Work Plan Implementing an executive initiative in the 2010/2011 KCDOT Director's Office Budget, the TAC and ASAC will be merged in 2010. The committee will be briefed on the merged body's 2010 work plan.

Fare Evasion The committee will review the fare evasion report (to be submitted by April 30th), discuss fare collection best practices, and consider strategies to address the fare evasion problem.

Fare Policies The committee periodically reviews Metro Transit's fare policies and recommends changes as needed. Specific fare levels are established separately in the King County Code based on RTC-reviewed fare policy guidance. A budget proviso calls for the Transit Division to work with Sound Transit, and possibly other transit agencies, to address the disparity in certain discounted fare categories for riders transferring between systems, and report on that effort by April 30th.

Additional fare policy-related transmittals from the executive are described in the Third Quarter section (below).

Alaskan Way Viaduct Project Mitigation In conjunction with the 2010 start of construction to replace the south end of the Alaskan Way Viaduct, WSDOT will fund transit-related mitigation measures to address traffic impacts. These will include additional service on five Metro bus routes, promotion of rideshare and other commute alternatives and monitoring the project's impact on transit service. The committee will receive periodic briefings on the effectiveness of these mitigation measures.

Transit Security The committee developed the original set of transit security policies adopted by the council in 2003 and has considered various aspects of transit security since then. While the trend in incidents and assaults has generally been positive, rider and operator safety concerns persist and the recent assault in the transit tunnel highlighted a new area of concern. In light of the deferral, due to budgetary constraints, of planned 2010 investments in more Transit Police, the committee will be briefed on the deployment existing forces and inter-jurisdictional cooperation in providing security on-board as well as at transit facilities such as park-and-ride lots and transit centers. The committee will also be briefed on high-incident routes and facilities and what is being done to address security concerns on these routes and at these locations. These committee deliberations may result in proposed revisions and additions to the existing transit security policies.

THIRD QUARTER

Transit Stakeholder Task Force

The committee will review the task force's recommended policies and strategies for future growth, or contraction, of the transit system. The submittal target is September and, depending on the nature of the recommendations, the committee may propose policy changes at that time or await the transmittal of executive-proposed plan updates in December, as envisioned in the budget proviso that initiated the task force.

Financial Policies Past RTC work programs have included an annual review of the Transit Division's Financial Policies intended to guide development of the Transit Budget and CIP proposal for the following year. With the recent shift to a biennial budget for the Transit Division, annual RTC review may no longer be needed but in the third quarter of 2010, the Transit Division proposes to implement the following 2009 Transit Audit recommendation:

"Transit should propose updated financial policies; particularly those related to sales tax distribution and cost growth for consideration by the Regional Transit Committee and the King County Council."

Fare Policies The 2009 Transit Performance Audit included a number of fare-related recommendations which the Transit Division expects to implement in third or fourth quarters of 2010. The auditors recommended that the Transit Division:

- propose fare policy goals that are clearly tied to Transit's strategic plan;
- define and monitor a target farebox recovery ratio;
- consider fare policy changes to generate additional revenue;
- update and document the formula used to determine the City of Seattle's payment for the ride free area, and
- report on the implications of raising ACCESS fares to the maximum allowable under the ADA and state law.

Transit Now Service Investments As part the effort to close a structural gap in the 2010/2011 Transit Budget, the council approved an RTC-recommended amendment to the service investment phasing established in the Transit Strategic Plan. Further investment in two categories of Transit Now service was suspended indefinitely in response to lower-than-projected sales tax revenues. A budget proviso requires the executive to transmit an amendment to the Transit Strategic Plan, which the RTC will review, to "show when transit revenues are projected to recover sufficiently to allow resumption" of those investments.

FOURTH QUARTER

Transit Comprehensive Plan & Transit Strategic Plan The proviso initiating the Transit Stakeholder Task Force calls for the executive to transmit by December 15th "an ordinance amending the Transit Comprehensive Plan and Transit Strategic Plan" taking into consideration the task force recommendations. The committee may have an initial briefing on the proposals in December in preparation for deliberations in 2011.

