

October 10, 2007

Siim Sööt, PhD
Professor Emeritus
Chairman, Expert Review Panel
University of Illinois, Chicago
412 South Peoria Street (MC 357)
Chicago, IL 60607

Dear Dr. Sööt:

Thank you very much for the Expert Review Panel's eighth and final letter, providing the Panel's findings on the overall Sound Transit 2 (ST2) planning process conducted by Sound Transit (ST) as required by State law, RCW 81.104.110. The ST Board of Directors adopted the ST2 Plan on May 24, 2007 and, in accordance with State legislation, will place the ST2 ballot measure before the voters in November 2007. The Board greatly appreciated the Panel's comments throughout the ST2 planning process. Your thinking played a role in shaping the final plan. In the end, our final planning methodologies and results reflected the great majority of the Panel's specific comments.

We are delighted and gratified that, in all categories of planning work for which State law requires the Panel's technical review, the Panel found that ST met its requirements. We hope that it was apparent, throughout development of the Plan, that ST staff and consultants were highly motivated to consider and be responsive to the Panel's questions, comments and concerns.

Along with the Panel's finding that ST met the planning requirements, your final letter raised three important cautions regarding ST2. Each merits a response.

Combined ST2 and Regional Transportation Investment District Construction Activity

You urged ST to work with RTID to develop strategies for managing the significant construction activity these two programs will bring to the central Puget Sound region. We agree completely. While we have farther to go, RTID, WSDOT and ST are working together to develop a coordinated project development schedule that will limit the impacts of construction on our region. Next steps include developing specific ideas and action plans for maintaining a healthy bid climate and assuring reasonable prices. This work will include thinking seriously about topics such as:

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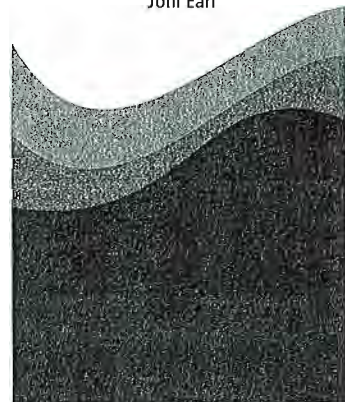
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- creative construction (bid) packaging,
- providing contractors increased flexibility regarding the sequencing of work,
- fairly and wisely assigning risk to all parties,
- use of incentive clauses,
- coordinated and intentional schedules for the advertisement of multiple large contracts stretching over the same construction seasons,
- working with the contracting community to solicit additional ideas for making bid packages more attractive and competitive, and
- other innovations that can make the RTID & ST2 construction programs attractive to the largest pool of qualified contractors.

We will also be considering other creative strategies that may require changes to State law in a future legislative session. As the Panel pointed out, getting the right tools in place to manage the ST2 and RTID construction programs will be vital to our success. There remains adequate time to address the issue effectively if ST and its partners expand our efforts aggressively and immediately after the November 6th election.

Link Light Rail on the I-90 Floating Bridge

The Panel has also highlighted the need to advance technical work on the operation of light rail across the I-90 floating bridge. Indeed, Sound Transit shares the Panel's view of the need to advance this work ahead of some of the other work on the East Corridor. Along the lines of your recommendation, we are engaged in the following activities:

- The rail expansion joint, presented in conceptual form to the Panel at your January 2007 meeting, is now under development to the 15% design level, while ST will advance the remainder of the East Corridor to the 5% conceptual level for the ongoing environmental impact statement.
- Conceptual engineering for the overhead catenary system is currently looking at the specific requirements of that system across the I-90 expansion joints.

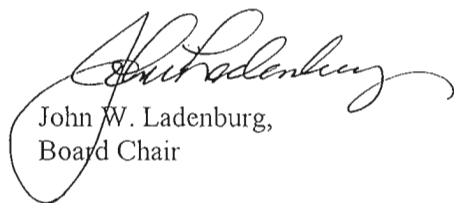
Passage of the ST2 vote will provide funding to advance further the design of the I-90 segment of the East Corridor while the continuing environmental work supports the selection of a preferred alternative. An early priority will be to install instrumentation at the I-90 expansion joints to gain more information about the range of motions encountered during normal operations, as opposed to those encountered during the storm and other extreme events accounted for in WSDOT design criteria.

Agreements with Local Jurisdictions and Institutions regarding Project Scopes

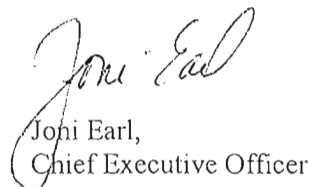
The Panel correctly noted the importance of appropriately controlling project scope to the successful implementation of ST2 within budget. To that very end, ST has put significant effort into ensuring that all jurisdictions that will have legitimate involvement in or control over implementation of individual ST2 projects understood and acknowledged the scope of those ST2 projects. Agreement on the definitions of the ST2 projects is critical because the ST2 cost estimates and project budgets are valid only for the specific project scopes. We appreciate that the Panel recognizes the value of that work and agree with your recommendation to continue and expand the effort as a means of gaining additional control over project implementation costs. We will continue this work, ensuring that affected jurisdictions concur with the project scopes, both as a general planning function and at each specific step of project implementation: environmental analysis, preliminary design, project base-lining, final design and permitting.

Please extend the heartfelt thanks of the Sound Transit Board and staff to the entire Expert Review Panel for their efforts throughout the extended development of the ST2 Plan. We feel certain that ST2 is a better, and stronger regional high capacity transit plan because of the Panel's myriad contributions. The central Puget Sound region has greatly benefited from the Panel members' earnest and valuable participation in this most consequential endeavor.

Sincerely,



John W. Ladenburg,
Board Chair



Joni Earl,
Chief Executive Officer

cc: The Honorable Christine Gregoire, Governor
Senator Mary Margaret Haugen
Expert Review Panel Members
Board of Directors, Sound Transit
Bob Drewel, Executive Director, Puget Sound Regional Council