



April 3, 2007

Dr. Michael Meyer
Chairman, Expert Review Panel
Professor of Civil Engineering
Georgia Institute of Technology
PO Box 0355
Atlanta, GA 30332

Dear Dr. Meyer:

Thank you very much for the Expert Review Panel's (Panel) fifth letter of January 8, 2007, providing comments on policy matters relevant to the Sound Transit (ST) Board of Directors' decision on the Sound Transit 2 (ST2) *DRAFT* Package. The Board remains appreciative of the Panel's comments and well-considered suggestions for improvement.

ST remains on a schedule to adopt the Final ST2 Plan on April 26th and, in accordance with State legislation, to place the ST2 ballot measure before the voters in November 2007.

Your fifth letter raised several important points to which I will respond here by topic. Please feel free to contact me with additional comments or concerns.

Third Party (Jurisdictional) Agreements

We appreciate the Panel's acknowledgement of ST's considerable effort over the past two years to secure written acknowledgments from local jurisdictions on project scopes. We also appreciate your acknowledgement that not all projects lend themselves to a term sheet at this point in development of the ST2 Plan and projects. Because we agree with your general concern, ST will continue to work with jurisdictions, throughout the remainder of the ST2 planning period, to ensure that they understand and acknowledge the project scopes. As the Panel observed, these projects are more likely the smaller "level three" projects, such as parking garages and transit centers.

Project Cost Estimates and Risk Assessment

ST is very pleased that the Panel regarded our risk assessment to be "very good, representing the state-of-the-practice for risk assessment in the transit industry." This is an analysis we took very seriously. Our risk assessment had regional significance because of ST2's linkage to the Regional Transportation Investment District (RTID) proposal since WSDOT has conducted risk assessments for the larger projects included in the RTID plan.

BOARD CHAIR

John W. Ladenburg
Pierce County Executive

BOARD VICE CHAIRS

Connie Marshall
Bellevue Councilmember

Mark Olson
Everett Councilmember

BOARD MEMBERS

Julie Anderson
Tacoma Councilmember

Mary-Alyce Burleigh
Kirkland Councilmember

Fred Butler
Issaquah Deputy Council President

Dow Constantine
King County Councilmember

Dave Enslow
Sumner Mayor

Doug MacDonald
*Washington State Department
of Transportation Secretary*

Richard Marin
Edmonds Councilmember

Richard McIver
Seattle Councilmember

Greg Nickels
Seattle Mayor

Julia Patterson
King County Councilmember

Larry Phillips
Chair, King County Council

Aaron Reardon
Snohomish County Executive

Ron Sims
King County Executive

Claudia Thomas
Lakewood Mayor

Pete von Reichbauer
Vice Chair, King County Council

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Joni Earl

We are pleased, as well, that the Panel concluded that both cost estimating and the adjustments of capital cost from 2005 to 2006 dollars have been done appropriately and provide a good sense of the likely costs of the ST2 candidate projects.

Private Investment

We agree wholeheartedly with the Panel that the ST2 facilities will offer significant opportunities for public-private partnerships that can reduce ST's risks and costs and increase the overall regional benefit of the Plan. We understand that this is an area of increasing interest in the transit industry as a whole. While the ST Board will be considering stronger policy language on this and related topics during the development of the final ST2 Plan, the actual implementation of most facilities is at least several years away. Accordingly, the ST Board has concluded it would be premature to assume such partnerships at this point in time, but proper to anticipate, encourage and provide the flexibility to pursue and develop such partnerships during the project development process. We appreciate that the Panel was not suggesting that the ST2 financial plan be revised to assume the impact of private investment.

As the Panel suggested, ST has a division devoted to investigating the potential for public-private partnerships and other private sector investments. Additionally, during implementation of ST2 we will investigate the possibility of benefit areas and local government contributions to projects.

Maintenance Facilities

We agree with the Panel's concern regarding rail yard and shop facilities, specifically the desire to minimize the total number of such facilities, and the need for clear criteria to guide decision-making. Sound Transit did establish criteria for determining the size and location of potential ST2 light rail yards and shops. The criteria used included:

1. Sizing of yards and shops:
 - ridership forecasts to determine the level of service and fleet size
 - Link design standards and Forest Street base experience to determine required land area for new bases
 - limitations on the expansion of Forest Street facility
 - contingencies appropriate to this early stage of development in ST2
2. Locating base investments:
 - close to revenue lines to minimize non-revenue rail infrastructure
 - minimization of deadheading and retention of flexibility
 - location of potential sites of adequate size and appropriate zoning (e.g. industrial)
3. Equipping shops to address necessary functionality, but not needlessly duplicating functions available at existing facilities (e.g., painting)

Dr. Michael Meyer
April 3, 2007
Page Three of Three

As further background, under ST Board Resolution R99-34, the size of the existing Forest Street maintenance base is capped and cannot be expanded. While this decision could be revisited by the Board (and potentially renegotiated with the City of Seattle), the availability of adjacent land to expand this yard and/or shops is severely constrained, with the only reasonable option to the west displacing a major industrial manufacturing firm. This base has been built to accommodate 104 vehicles to service the 25-mile system between Northgate and S. 200th Street (just south of the Airport). Unless additional vehicles can be accommodated within the existing Forest Street facility, which would reduce operational flexibility there, all new vehicle storage capacity must be provided at other (new) sites. However, while this base cannot be expanded, some of the heavy maintenance functions it provides are assumed to be available for fleet added in ST2. The Draft ST2 Package assumes that, with an east extension of Link light rail, a storage yard with some light maintenance capability will be required near the end of that line to reduce otherwise needless deadheading of trains. Likewise, extension of Link south of S. 200th Street, will require a new yard and shops facility in the south corridor.

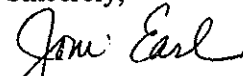
In summary, the combination of the existing Forest Street base and new East and South corridor facilities are planned to support the estimated 233-vehicle ST2 fleet. This represents essentially two "full function" maintenance shops (Forest Street and new South Corridor base) and one "light" shop (new East Corridor base). In addition, we plan to design the South Corridor facility to be expandable to accommodate further expansion of the system in a future phase. This approach, while conservative from a capacity standpoint, builds in flexibility for implementation decisions yet to be made over a 20 year program and is, we believe, appropriate to the early stage of planning and engineering that supports the ST2 program.

Coordination with Regional Transportation Investment District

We are gratified that the Panel finds the ongoing coordination between ST2 and the Regional Transportation Investment District appears to be reasonable and appropriate. Our efforts continue in this area and we will be happy to provide the panel a follow-up briefing at your April meeting.

Please extend the thanks of the Sound Transit Board to the entire Expert Review Panel for their efforts on the development of the ST2 Plan. It is a great benefit to the central Puget Sound region.

Sincerely,



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