

# June 2021 Seattle Transit Advisory Board meeting

Minutes, 6/23/2021

Board members: Erin Tighe, Emily Walton Percival, Alex Wakeman-Rouse, Barbara Wright, Sandro Pani, Art Kuniyuki, Andrew Parker, Keiko Budech, Carla Saulter, Andy Martin, Jen Malley-Crawford, Michelle Zeidman.

SDOT: Nico Martinucci.

Public: none.

Erin called the meeting to order.

## **Approval of May meeting minutes**

Barbara moves to approve, Andy seconds. No objections. Erin abstains. Minutes approved.

## **King County Metro SaFE Reform Initiative Update**

*Mitchell Lloyd, King County Metro*

Presentation:

- Safety, Security, and Fare Enforcement (SaFE) Reform Initiative responds to a King County Council 2020-21 budget proviso
- History of Metro's fare enforcement program, including its suspension in 2020 (current condition)
- Approaching this with a commitment for Metro to become an "anti-racist mobility agency."
- Co-creation with community, focusing on BIPOC and people most impacted by current fare enforcement and security policies; taking a targeted universalism approach.
- Described the structure of the initiative and who will be engaged in the effort, its engagement plan, and timeline
- Goal is "safe and welcoming"
- Opportunities for general public and Metro employees to get engaged via focus groups, interviews, and survey.

Board Questions:

- Andrew Parker: What organizations are you collaborating with? Criteria for picking them?  
Answer: list is being finalized, they are contracting with up to 10 community-based organizations. Proviso set forth criteria, focused on getting a breadth of voices and issues at the table. Will follow-up with a list.
- Barbara: What do you think you'll hear regarding what makes for a safe and welcoming Metro?  
Answer: No pre-conceived ideas. Going in with no idea of what community will say. New approach for Metro. Other transit agencies across the country are doing similar work and Metro is tracking that work.
- Alex: Is fare enforcement as it exists today off the table? Wonders to what extent is ridership impacted by fare enforcement. How many people are not using transit because of fare enforcement, cost to community. Answer: open to all outcomes. Fare enforcement is currently suspended. Annual rider/non-rider survey. Fare enforcement brings safety/security for some riders; others experience fare/law enforcement officers differently. Also, bus operators have a

different perspective. Trying to get a better sense of this and find an approach that works for everyone.

- Erin: What is scope of this group? Any Metro policy/plan? Answer: focus is on safety and security functions of Metro only. Not service planning. Will be talking about code of conduct, Metro transit policing, etc.
- Keiko: In the anti-racism training for 2 days and was really appreciative of it and co-creation approach. Thanks.
- Michelle: Is a fare-free Metro on the table? Answer: anticipating that question and will discuss if it brought up.
- Emily: Alternatives to fare enforcement that might include mental health services, etc that would make Metro safer. Are potentially costly alternatives truly on the table in terms of implementation? Answer: there is discussion and interest in figuring out Metro's role with regard to mental health and homelessness; lack expertise and haven't have policies around this, and are looking to have those conversations with community. Becoming common practice for transit agencies to have resources for mental health and helping the unhoused.
- Andy Martin: How are riders represented in the co-creation effort? Answer: assuming everyone has a perspective on transit, whether they ride or not. King County Council proviso specifically calls out BIPOC communities, and will provide space for all riders or potential riders to get engaged.
- Alex: Has Metro done community voting for prioritization before? Answer: has been participatory budgeting at King County, but not quite like this. Will be working to figure out how to do this successfully.

Follow-up:

- Mitchell will share future engagement opportunities with us.

### **King County Metro Service Look-ahead**

*Graydon Newman, King County Metro*

Presentation:

- Service Planning group looks at changes that last longer than 6 months.
- 2021 Fall Service change – October this year, normally September. One of largest in Metro's history in amount of service being brought back post-pandemic and major system changes. 200,000 service hours will be restored on Oct 2, 2021.
- Gave background from start of pandemic/March 2020. Multiple service suspensions and restorations, City of Seattle funding cuts related to changing size of STBD.
- 3 coordinated but distinct components of Fall 2021 service change: (1) pandemic-related service restoration/suspensions. (2) NorthLink connections. (3) Seattle Transit Benefit District funding reductions.
- Centered engagement and decision-making on BIPOC, people with disabilities, low-income folks, and immigrants and refugees ("priority populations").
- Fall 2021 changes informed by data and analysis (including equity analysis) and community input.
- Showed off-peak and peak period restorations planned for Oct service change. Note: service predominately suspended outside of S King County because of focus on equity; therefore, fewer restorations there possible.

Board Questions:

- Andy Martin: Can we get a list of the routes that are not coming back or coming back partially? Are they both peak and non-peak? Answer: Both. Can provide list as a follow-up via email.
- Erin: Clarification of suspended routes with no other operating service? Answer: Will follow-up on that. Some suspended routes that have other service options and will stay fully suspended.
- Erin: timeline for loosening load limits on Metro buses? Answer: State guidance is looking towards early July. This informs Metro's timeline.
- Art: Rider on #25 and am sometimes only one on route, do in part to COVID and college closed. Does serving a college/school make it more likely a route will be preserved? Answer: Yes. We consider ridership and with a college/school present we would expect high ridership and also prioritize serving educational institutions.
- Andrew Parker: How will you restore service systemwide? Do you partner with other transit agencies to ensure close connections for multi-agency riders? Answer: developing planning approach to build back network. Understand they can't bring it back as it was because travel patterns have changed and we're seeing more all-day travel than before pandemic. Will bring back service in phases, at each service change. Final network will serve new travel behaviors, proactively and quickly. Yes, coordinate with them, especially with Community Transit as Lynnwood Station nears opening.
- Andy Martin: Metro has often held back service hours in the back to address unexpected needs. Is that happening with this service change in October? Answer: originally planned without anything held back, but would adjust service with what was on the street. Expect we will need to make adjustments, but no hours were held back to enable quick changes. Adjustments likely to happen at next service change (March 2022), except for acute crowding.

#### **Board Liaison/Workgroups/Project Committees**

- No report from Move Seattle Levy Oversight Committee.

#### **Recruitment/Reappointment Update**

- Jen announced that she is not pursuing a re-appointment in August, so her position on board will be open and also on the Move Seattle Levy Oversight Committee.
- 5 in total expiring at beginning of August. 3 are not seeking renewal. 2 are pursuing reappointment.
- Will be recruiting more board members this summer; Nico will send recruitment info.

#### **Other Board Business:**

- July meeting cancelled.
- Nico will send a survey gauging interest/comfort in reconvening in person.
- August meeting may be a retreat.

#### **Major Items updates:**

- "Recovery Cards" program – fully funded ORCA cards to essential workers distribution efforts underway. Cards good thru end of Dec 2021; will collect data to determine whether pilot should be continued into the future.

#### **Potential August Agenda Topics**

- Financial and service update for STBD, federal relief funds being received by regional partners and transit agencies which will provide relief to STBD. Will have something to share in August.

- Update from Northgate Mobility Project team regarding the transit network, overview of upcoming Service Change.
- Andrew Parker: connections from East and North related to upcoming Link Light Rail extensions
- Barbara: update from Mitchell Lloyd on today's topic
- Andy Martin: ST3 early wins
- Keiko: federal infrastructure package and its implications for transit

Emily will attend the Move Seattle Levy Oversight Committee on behalf of Jen in August.

**Public Comment**

No public comments.

Meeting adjourned at 7:51pm.