

West Seattle Transportation Coalition

Meeting Minutes for January 23, 2020

In attendance:

Board: Michael Taylor-Judd, Victoria Nelson, Kate Wells, Deb Barker, Mark Jacobs, Larry Wymer, Ethan Wyatt

Guests: Joe McDermott, Melissa Bailey, Osbaldo Hernandez, Michael Hatchett, Rich Koehler, Dennis Noland, John McNulty, Megan McIntyre, Chris Arkills, Tracy Record

1. Meeting called to order at 6:35pm by Michael Taylor-Judd
2. Introductions
3. October minutes approved
4. Megan McIntyre, Assistant Director of Public Projects of BNSF Railway Co.
 - a) The Lander Street overpass is expected to be completed this summer.
 - b) The opening of T-5 will increase the number of trains in West Seattle, so Seattle and the Port agreed to enact a quiet zone to mitigate noise. BNSF is planning to make 5 crossings safe without whistle use. Four of the crossings were straightforward. The easternmost is trickier and can't be closed due to tenant needs, but could have a plan in a few months, and all should be implemented in 2021.
 - c) Whistles may be used in some instances (person on tracks, short honks when reversing, etc.)
 - d) The end of W Marginal Way (the stub road at the Chelan Cafe intersection) will be closed permanently, as trucks will access the port via overpass.
 - e) Are BNSF and Sound Transit working together on the pathway for the light rail tracks? The Port prefers a crossing south of the WS Bridge, but BNSF isn't committed to a route.
5. Joe McDermott, King County Council Member for West Seattle and Sound Transit Board Member
 - a) Does the County Council have a plan in regards to I-976? A court case isn't expected until February, but it could be later or be appealed. The Sound Transit vehicle valuation schedule has been a concern for voters, so today Marko Liias proposed a new schedule - not based on Kelly Blue Book valuation since it's a private company, but with similar depreciation rates. Currently, newer cars are overvalued and older cars are undervalued. The new schedule should be revenue neutral. Metro's Regional Mobility Grant may be affected if I-976 is upheld, but they are continuing on as if it won't happen. Rapid Ride H should not be affected.
 - b) Sound Transit expects to do station planning outreach this year, probably around April. The Draft EIS is due in 2021 so not much else will be happening. They will begin preliminary discussions with property owners, but exact routing won't be finalized for a couple of years.
 - c) Has Sound Transit done due diligence with regards to the neighborhood? Homes are being bought, sold, remodeled and built, and sometimes the involved parties are unaware their properties might be involved. Sound Transit is in a difficult spot - they cannot buy properties until the route is finalized. But Sound Transit compensates landowners fully when property is taken.
 - d) Third party funding for light rail needs to be identified by the beginning of the final EIS (approximately a year after the DEIS comes out). The DEIS will yield a more accurate

dollar amount, so it's difficult to pin down funding before that is done. The Seattle City Council has passed a Statement of Legislative Intent for SDOT and the City Budget Office to report on schedule and status of third-party funding by July 1. Some potential sources include the Port of Seattle and the city. Could a surcharge on fares within West Seattle be considered? Whatever happens, CM McDermott stressed that a tunnel will be difficult to fund, so "If you don't love the funding source, think twice before coming out against it." Bellevue was brought up as an example of outside funding but was a real learning process and was quite contentious. Could the Avalon station be deferred? No, other cases of stations being cut were due to funding running out, not to shift money to other parts of the line.

6. A guest brought up how the SR-99 bus only lane snarls traffic. The feared traffic diversion from the tunnel hasn't materialized, so who was the ultimate deciding agency who put it back in? It was apparently left out of the post-tunnel striping because it was put in during tunnel construction. WSDOT indicates that traffic flowed better without the bus lane. Chris Arkills from Metro claims the buses may run more slowly between the WS Bridge and the SR-99 lane due to traffic, but the lane gives bus riders consistency. "Reliability can get people out of cars." Council Member McDermott supports the bus lane as well. The guest would still like actual data proving that the bus lane is the right choice.
7. Rapid Ride H planning - there are concerns that an important stop at Brandon, with a business cluster, library, access to nearby neighborhoods, and a safe pedestrian crossing, is being left out since it doesn't fit with the standard stop spacing. The WSTC requests that that stop be added or substituted for the stop located at Findlay. The WSTC also asking to replace all-day bus lanes with rush hour only around the community center and playfields.
8. Ethan Wyatt, a freshman at Chief Sealth High School was nominated and approved for WSTC Board Seat 5. Board positions 1 and 7 are still open.
9. Meeting adjourned at 8:15

Minutes compiled by Kate Wells.