



MEMO

TO: Sound Transit Board

FROM: Ric Ilgenfritz

DATE: March 13, 2008

SUBJECT: Input from First Quarter 2008 Public Involvement

In December 2007, the Sound Transit Board began a process to evaluate the priorities and timing for a future regional transit ballot measure. This work over the course of the first quarter of 2008 has included a significant public involvement component, continuing the Board's commitment to work closely with the region's residents in evaluating options for expanding the regional transit system. The Web-based public involvement survey we launched last month generated more than 9,000 responses. This memo provides an overview of this work, as well as a telephone survey that posed the same questions to randomly selected participants.

1. Sound Transit Public Involvement Web Survey Preliminary Report

Staff sought public input on the options and timing of a future ballot measure by asking people to visit the agency's website and take an online survey implemented by EMC Research. The availability of this survey was advertised via postcard to households, a suite of print and online advertising, and media coverage. Citizens also had the option to call a hotline to request a written survey by mail. The survey was designed to get reactions to ideas under consideration by the Board and also more general responses to open-ended questions.

I want to emphasize the online survey is first and foremost a public involvement tool, providing a fast, convenient means for citizens to tell the agency what they think about transit options. The results are not scientific, as the participants are self-selecting people motivated to participate in the public process.

Responses to the survey's seven open-ended questions are undergoing additional qualitative analysis, the preliminary results of which are summarized in the Appendix to this report. So far, just over half of these answers have been analyzed qualitatively by public involvement consultant EnviroIssues. Additional analysis of these answers will be provided as a final summary to the Sound Transit Board in the coming weeks.

2. Sound Transit Telephone Survey

In addition to the Web public involvement tool, EMC Research fielded the same questions as a telephone survey to 800 randomly selected voters. The results are attached. They provide scientific input that the Web survey does not. Participants in the telephone survey were selected at random from a list of all registered voters in the Sound Transit District. Unlike Web survey participants, telephone participants do not know the subject matter of the survey until it is completed; therefore their decisions to participate have nothing to do with the subject or ultimate consumer of the survey. Margin of error and confidence interval are summarized at the top of the document.

Analysis of Results

The results of these efforts are attached for your review and interpretation. EMC Research identified several key findings:

- A majority of district voters and Web participants say that traffic congestion, transportation, and mass transit are the most important problems facing the Puget Sound region.
- Three-quarters of district voters and Web participants say expanding mass transit in the Puget Sound is an urgent transportation issue.
- More than three-quarters of district voters and Web participants support expanding the mass transit system. Support is strong for expanding rail (light rail and commuter rail) and bus service.
- The survey addressed potential timing options for a future transit ballot measure. A majority of voters and respondents support moving forward with a measure, including support for a potential measure in 2008.

These findings do not inform the prospects of voter approval of a specific transit measure. They simply reflect the public's interest in seeing the regional transit system further expanded sooner rather than later, and include reaction to the numerous specific project and service proposals currently under consideration by the Board..

Next Steps with Public Involvement

If the Board identifies and adopts a draft package for a future ballot measure, this Spring, staff would continue public involvement activities centered around soliciting feedback on the specific plan. This would include a second online comment option and public meetings held around the region.