



# *Tacoma Dome Link Extension*

**Draft** Environmental Impact Statement



December 13, 2024

Dear Recipient:

The U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and Sound Transit (the Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority) have prepared this Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) on the proposed Tacoma Dome Link Extension Project. The Draft EIS informs Tribes, the public, agencies, and decision makers about the alternatives and environmental consequences of building and operating the Tacoma Dome Link Extension from the City of Federal Way in King County to Tacoma in Pierce County. The document was prepared pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (42 United States Code 4321) and the State Environmental Policy Act (Chapter 43.21C Revised Code of Washington). Sound Transit is the project proponent.

In July 2019, the Sound Transit Board identified the alternatives for study in the Draft EIS, including preferred alternatives for the majority of the Tacoma Dome Link Extension. In March 2023, the Sound Transit Board identified additional alternatives for study. The major choices for the project involve the route of the light rail line and station locations. The project would extend Link light rail nearly 10-miles and includes four stations. The alternatives are generally along either Pacific Highway (State Route 99) or Interstate 5 from Federal Way through Fife. All Alternatives would cross the Puyallup River at the same location and follow a similar route to about East Portland Avenue in Tacoma. The alternatives then split into multiple routes between East 25<sup>th</sup> Street and East 26<sup>th</sup> Street.

The Sound Transit Board will consider the analysis in the Draft EIS, Tribal, public and agency comments, and other information before confirming or modifying the preferred alternative. FTA and Sound Transit will prepare a Final EIS, which will respond to substantive comments on the Draft EIS and will evaluate impacts and potential mitigation measures for all of the alternatives. After completion of the Final EIS, the Sound Transit Board will select the project to be built.

The Draft EIS includes the Executive Summary and appendices, which can be found on the flash drive included in this document and online at [www.soundtransit.org/system-expansion/tacoma-dome-link-extension/documents](http://www.soundtransit.org/system-expansion/tacoma-dome-link-extension/documents). Please see the Fact Sheet in this Draft EIS regarding availability of appendices and technical report hard copies, information on public meetings, and how to comment on the Draft EIS, and whom to contact for further information.

Sincerely,

Signed by:  
  
Erin Green  
C2707795F35745D...

South Corridor Environmental Manager

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## **Commitment to Accessibility**

Sound Transit and the United States Department of Transportation - Federal Transit Administration are committed to ensuring that information is available in appropriate alternative formats to meet the requirements of persons who have a disability. If you require an alternative version of this file, please contact [FTAWebAccessibility@dot.gov](mailto:FTAWebAccessibility@dot.gov).

**TACOMA DOME LINK EXTENSION  
KING AND PIERCE COUNTIES, WASHINGTON  
DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT**

Submitted pursuant to  
the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) (42 United States Code 4321)  
and the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) (Ch. 43.21C Revised Code of Washington)  
by the

**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
FEDERAL TRANSIT ADMINISTRATION  
and  
CENTRAL PUGET SOUND REGIONAL TRANSIT AUTHORITY  
(Sound Transit)  
in cooperation with  
FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION  
BUREAU OF INDIAN AFFAIRS  
U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS  
WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
CITY OF FEDERAL WAY  
CITY OF MILTON  
CITY OF FIFE  
CITY OF TACOMA**

10/31/2024  
Date of Approval

Signed by:  
  
F6BB9953F95147F...  
Susan Fletcher, Regional Administrator  
NEPA Responsible Official  
For Federal Transit Administration, Region 10

10/31/2024  
Date of Approval

Signed by:  
  
6F2812D72BD5439...  
Perry Weinberg  
Deputy Executive Director  
Office of Environmental Affairs and  
Sustainability  
SEPA Responsible Official  
For Sound Transit

## **Acknowledgement**

*As we plan and build one of the largest transit expansions in North America, which includes the first light rail transit extension on reservation lands in the history of the United States, we are dedicated to our Tribal partners. We would first like to acknowledge the people who have been here since time immemorial: the Puyallup Tribe of Indians, the Muckleshoot Indian Tribe, the Nisqually Indian Tribe, and the Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation. The relationships with these Tribes are imperative for success and to keep our commitment to uplifting Tribal communities with every step we take.*

# FACT SHEET

## Proposed Action

The Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority (Sound Transit) is proposing to expand the regional light rail system south from the City of Federal Way to Tacoma, Washington. The proposed light rail extension, called the Tacoma Dome Link Extension (TDLE), would be within the cities of Federal Way, Milton, Fife, and Tacoma in King and Pierce Counties. The project travels across the ancestral and reservation lands of the Puyallup Tribe of the Puyallup Reservation (Puyallup Tribe of Indians) and a small portion of unincorporated Pierce County.

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and Sound Transit are consulting with four Tribes for the TDLE project: the Puyallup Tribe of Indians; the Muckleshoot Indian Tribe; the Nisqually Indian Tribe; and the Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation.

The proposed project is part of the Sound Transit 3 Plan, funding for which was approved by voters in 2016 (Sound Transit 2016). TDLE would begin at the future South Federal Way Station in Federal Way and end in the Tacoma Dome area of Tacoma. The nearly 10-mile-long project corridor would have four stations and generally parallel State Route (SR) 99 and Interstate 5 (I-5), which are the major north-south routes.

FTA is the lead federal agency under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and Sound Transit is the lead agency under the Washington State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA). This Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) has been prepared consistent with NEPA and SEPA. The analysis is designed to help Tribes, elected officials, agency decision-makers, community leaders, and the public understand the range of environmental impacts that could result from the proposal. The Draft EIS describes potential adverse impacts of each alternative and describes proposed measures to avoid, minimize, or mitigate potential adverse impacts. The Draft EIS identifies a preferred alternative for a portion of the project, with the exception of sections through Federal Way and Fife. The Sound Transit Board will identify a preferred alternative for the remaining portion through Federal Way and Fife and confirm or modify the preferred alternative after publication of the Draft EIS.

This Draft EIS evaluates several build (light rail) alternatives and a No-Build Alternative, which considers how the transportation system would operate if the proposed project were not built. The No-Build Alternative also provides a baseline against which to measure the impacts of the build alternatives. The build alternatives include at-grade and elevated light rail alignments with different station configurations.

## Project Proponent

Sound Transit  
401 S Jackson Street  
Seattle, WA 98104-2826  
[www.soundtransit.org](http://www.soundtransit.org)

## Dates of Construction and Opening

Sound Transit proposes to begin construction of TDLE in 2028 and forecasts an in-service date of 2035. Parking facilities at the South Federal Way and Fife stations would open by 2038 per the system expansion realignment plan adopted by Sound Transit Board Resolution R2021-05.

## NEPA Lead Agency

Federal Transit Administration  
915 2nd Avenue, Suite 3192  
Seattle, WA 98174-1002  
[www.fta.dot.gov/about/region10](http://www.fta.dot.gov/about/region10)

## NEPA Responsible Official

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Federal Transit Administration Region 10  
915 2nd Avenue, Suite 3192  
Seattle, WA 98174-1002

## SEPA Responsible Official

Perry Weinberg, Deputy Executive Director, Office of Environmental Affairs and Sustainability  
Sound Transit  
401 S Jackson Street  
Seattle, WA 98104-2826

## Contacts for Additional Information

### Federal Transit Administration

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Mailing Address:  
Sound Transit  
401 S Jackson Street  
Seattle, WA 98104-2826

## Anticipated Permits and Approvals

### Tribes

#### Puyallup Tribe of Indians

- Land use and environmental review and approvals in accordance with Puyallup Tribal Code Chapter 15.16
- Clean Water Act Section 401 review of Water Quality Certification
- Intergovernmental Agreement

### Federal Agencies

#### Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)

- Air Space Lease for Use of Interstate Right-of-Way
- Limited Access Break
- Operations and Maintenance Agreement
- NEPA Record of Decision (ROD)
- Design Deviation Approval
- I-5 Compatibility Report

#### Federal Transit Administration (FTA)

- NEPA Final EIS and ROD
- National Historic Preservation Act Section 106 Review
- United States Department of Transportation Act Section 4(f) Review
- Land and Water Conservation Fund Section 6(f) Review

#### Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)

- Conditional Letter of Map Revision (CLOMR), if needed
- Letter of Map Revision (LOMR), if needed

#### U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

- Clean Water Act, Section 404 Permit: Wetlands Approval
- Rivers and Harbors Act, Section 10
- United States Code Title 33 Section 408 (Section 408 Review)

#### U.S. Coast Guard

- Rivers and Harbors Act, Section 9 (Bridge Permit)

#### U.S. Department of the Interior

- Bureau of Indian Affairs, record Tribal easements
- National Historic Preservation Act Section 106 Review
- U.S. Department of Transportation Act Section 4(f) Review
- Land and Water Conservation Fund Section 6(f)

#### U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

- Sole Source Aquifer, project review



U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

- Federal Endangered Species Act Review

National Parks Service

- U.S. Department of Transportation Act Section 4(f) Review

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Fisheries Service

- Federal Endangered Species Act Review
- Essential Fish Habitat Review
- Marine Mammal Protection Act Review

**State, County, and Regional Agencies**

Sound Transit

- SEPA Project Approval

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife

- Hydraulic Project Approval

Washington State Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation

- National Historic Preservation Act Section 106 Review

Washington State Department of Ecology

- Clean Water Act Section 401: Water Quality Certification
- Coastal Zone Management Consistency Certification
- National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Stormwater Discharge Permit, Clean Water Act Section 402
- Underground Storage Tank 30-Day Notice
- Wastewater Discharge Permit

Washington State Department of Ecology and Puget Sound Clean Air Agency

- Notice of Construction (Air Quality)

Washington State Department of Natural Resources

- Aquatic Lands Lease

Washington State Department of Transportation

- Air Space Lease: State Transportation Routes and Interstate Right-of-Way (with FHWA)
- Construction Oversight Agreement
- Utility Franchise
- Design Documentation Package
- General Permits
- Limited Access Break (with FHWA), if needed
- Operations and Maintenance Agreement (with FHWA)
- Survey Permits
- I-5 Compatibility Report (with FHWA)

## Local Jurisdictions

### Federal Way, Milton, Fife, Tacoma, and/or Pierce County

- Land Use Approvals, such as zoning code amendments, zoning code divergences (variance and/or various administrative processes), Hearing Examiner approval, conditional use permits, special use permits, design review approvals, site plan approvals, lot boundary adjustment/elimination, and development agreements
- Building Permits, such as building, mechanical, plumbing, electrical, sign, fence, awning, and conveyance (elevators and/or escalators) permits
- Construction Permits, such as clearing and grading, demolition, drainage, driveway, haul route, sanitary sewer, side sewer, street use, and tree protection permits
- Environmental Critical Areas/Sensitive Areas Review and Approvals, including wetlands, streams, steep slopes, flood zones, critical habitat, and buffers
- Shoreline Approvals, such as substantial development permits, exemptions, or other approvals
- Noise Variances
- Permanent, Interim, or Temporary Right-of-Way Permits or Franchises (utilities)
- Street and Alley Vacations
- Access or Use Easements for City-Owned Properties
- Floodplain Development License

## Other

### Utility Providers

- Pipeline and Utility Crossing Permits
- Easements and Use Agreements

Other permits and approvals to be determined.

## Principal Contributors

This Draft EIS was prepared by Sound Transit and consultants at the following firms: HDR Inc., Parametrix, Aqua Terra Cultural Resource Consultants LLC, Casseday Consulting, Cross-Spectrum Acoustics LLC, Heffron Transportation Inc., Historical Research Associates, ECONorthwest, EnviroIssues Inc., and TwoHundred. See Appendix A for a detailed list of preparers.

## Date of Issue

December 13, 2024

## Commenting on the Draft EIS

The public is encouraged to comment on the Draft EIS; substantive comments will be responded to in the Final EIS. The Draft EIS will be available for a comment period of 60 days, beginning December 13, 2024. Comments on the Draft EIS can be made in writing, by email, voicemail, or at the public hearings. All comments are due by close of business February 10, 2025. Send written comments to the following address:

Attention: Elma Borbe, Senior Environmental Planner  
Sound Transit  
401 S Jackson Street  
Seattle, WA 98104

Email comments should be sent to [tdlinkdeis@soundtransit.org](mailto:tdlinkdeis@soundtransit.org). Written or emailed comments should include your name and return address. Comments may also be submitted on voicemail at 206-257-2144, online in the project's Open House ([soundtransit.org/tdlink-deis](https://soundtransit.org/tdlink-deis)), and at a public hearing/open house:

### **Tuesday January 21, 2025 – ONLINE OPEN HOUSE**

Time: 11:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m.

Online: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85314895495>

### **Thursday January 23, 2025 – TACOMA**

Time: 5:30-7:30 p.m.

Location: Greater Tacoma Convention Center  
1500 Commerce Street, Tacoma, WA 98402

### **Tuesday January 28, 2025 – FEDERAL WAY**

Time: 5:30-7:30 p.m.

Location: Federal Way Performing Arts and Events Center  
31510 Pete von Reichbauer Way S, Federal Way, WA 98003

### **Thursday January 30, 2025 – FIFE**

Time: 5:30-7:30 p.m.

Location: Fife Community Center  
2111 54th Avenue E, Fife, WA 98424

## Next Actions

Following publication of this Draft EIS and the close of the public comment period, the Sound Transit Board is expected to consider the comments received and confirm or modify the Preferred Alternative for evaluation in the Final EIS, as well as identify a Preferred Alternative for the portion of the project in the cities of Federal Way and Fife, where none has been identified. The Final EIS will analyze the Preferred Alternative along with the other proposed light rail alternatives and the No-Build Alternative. The Final EIS will also respond to substantive Tribal, agency, and public comments on the Draft EIS. Following issuance of the Final EIS, the Sound Transit Board will select the project to be built, including the route and stations.

The FTA will then issue a ROD describing the project Sound Transit will build and how it will avoid, minimize, and mitigate environmental impacts.

## Related Documents

- Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement, Long-Range Plan Update (Sound Transit 2014)
- Sound Transit 3: The Regional Transit System Plan for Central Puget Sound (Sound Transit 2016)
- Tacoma Dome Link Extension Early Scoping Information Report (Sound Transit 2018a)
- Tacoma Dome Link Extension Early Scoping Summary Report (Sound Transit 2018b)
- Tacoma Dome Link Extension Pre-Screening and Level 1 Alternatives Evaluation Report (Sound Transit 2019a)
- Tacoma Dome Link Extension Scoping Information Report (Sound Transit 2019b)
- Tacoma Dome Link Extension Scoping Summary Report (Sound Transit 2019c)
- Tacoma Dome Link Extension Level 2 Alternatives Evaluation Report (Sound Transit 2019d)
- Tacoma Dome Link Extension Screening for Fife Station Options (Sound Transit 2023a)
- Tacoma Dome Link Extension Screening for Additional Alternatives in South Federal Way to Milton (Sound Transit 2023b)

All the above Sound Transit documents are available on the Sound Transit website, [www.soundtransit.org](http://www.soundtransit.org).

## Cost of Document and Availability for Review and/or Purchase

This Draft EIS is available for public review in locations listed below. It is available on the Sound Transit website (<https://www.soundtransit.org/system-expansion/tacoma-dome-link-extension/documents>). Paper copies are available for the cost listed below, which does not exceed the cost of reproduction:

- Executive Summary – free
- Draft EIS – \$25
- Technical Reports – \$15 each
- Conceptual Design Drawings (Appendix F) – \$15

To request paper copies or a flash drive of the documents, please contact Dominique Jones at 206-689-4783 or email [dominique.jones@soundtransit.org](mailto:dominique.jones@soundtransit.org). To review the documents at the Sound Transit Office, please call the Sound Transit librarian at 206-398-5344 weekdays from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. to arrange an appointment.

Paper copies of the Draft EIS documents are also available for review at the following public places:

King County Library System:

- Federal Way 320th Library, 848 S 320th Street, Federal Way
- Federal Way Library, 34200 1st Way S, Federal Way

Pierce County Library System

- Fife Pierce County Library, 6622 20th Street E, Fife
- Milton/Edgewood Library, 900 Meridian E, Suite 29, Milton
- Tacoma Public Library, Mottet Branch, 3523 East G Street, Tacoma

Government and Community Centers

- Federal Way City Hall, 33325 8th Avenue S, Federal Way
- Federal Way Community Center, 876 S 333rd Street, Federal Way
- Milton City Hall/Milton Activity Center, 1000 Laurel Street, Milton
- Fife City Hall, 5411 23rd Street E, Fife
- Puyallup Tribe of Indians Tribal Headquarters, 3009 Portland Avenue E, Tacoma
- Tacoma City Hall, 747 Market Street, Tacoma
- Eastside Community Center (East Tacoma), 1721 E 56th Street, Tacoma

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