



Summary Minutes

System Expansion Committee Meeting July 11, 2024

Call to order

The meeting was called to order at 1:44 p.m. by Committee Chair Balducci and was available for viewing in person and online.

The meeting was recorded and can be found at <https://www.soundtransit.org/get-to-know-us/board-directors/livestream-video>.

Roll call of members

Chair	Vice Chair
(P) Claudia Balducci, King County Councilmember	(A) Kim Roscoe, Fife Mayor

Board Members	
(P) Nancy Backus, Auburn Mayor	(P) Bruce Harrell, Seattle Mayor
(P) Angela Birney, Redmond Mayor	(P) Jim Kastama, Puyallup Mayor
(A) Cassie Franklin, Everett Mayor	(P) Dave Somers, Snohomish County Executive
	(P) Dan Strauss, Seattle Councilmember

Alejandro Monzon, Board Relations Specialist, announced that a quorum of the System Expansion Committee was present at roll call.

Report of the Chair

Agency Progress Report

Chair Balducci noted that a link to the May Agency Progress Report was distributed to members and is available online.

CEO Report

Interim Chief Executive Officer Goran Sparrman provided the report.

Lynnwood Link Activation

The Lynnwood Link Extension is currently in the pre-revenue service phase, and simulated service and simulated trials/scenarios are ongoing. Over the next several weeks, the Operations Department will be conducting several scenarios each shift to measure operational readiness. All assets have been transitioned to operations from the project team except for the 185th Street Garage due to weather-dependent finishing work.

Lynnwood Link Opening Day Experience

On August 30, 2024, the Lynnwood Link Extension will open for revenue service with an 11:00 a.m. ribbon cutting ceremony and first ride at 12:30 p.m. Starting at 4 p.m., there will be a station-by-station celebration and community gathering, in the form of a “night market.” This new format is responsive to community feedback, and additional details will be shared as the day approaches.

Downtown Redmond Link Activation

The Downtown Redmond Link Extension is actively in system integration testing, which is scheduled to continue into the fall of this year. The public may notice light rail vehicles along the alignment progressing through live wire testing, which demonstrates that the completed overhead catenary system and traction power system properly interface with the vehicles. The agency expects the transition to operations and the beginning of pre-revenue service by the end of the year in anticipation of a Spring 2025 opening.

Federal Way Link Extension update

As reported in the Seattle Times, construction is progressing on Structure C as part of the Federal Way Link Extension along the I-5 corridor. Three closure pours remain to complete the guideway structure, with two occurring this week and the final one taking place in early August. Upon completion of the pours, stressing of the post tensioning cables will occur, followed by rail and overhead catenary system installation. The project is on track for a mid-2026 opening, and the agency is pushing hard to be open and ready for the World Cup.

Sumner Sounder Garage update

Installation of foundation piles began last week at the Sumner Garage, as part of the Sumner, Kent, and Auburn Station Parking and Access Improvements project. The agency appreciates the cooperation with the City of Sumner to approve these early construction packages as they finalize review of the building permit. The improvements are set to be delivered by Spring 2026.

East Link Board member tour

This past Monday, the East Link team hosted an I-90 site visit with Board members. Representatives from Kiewit were also available and walked Board members down the alignments, showcasing the active work. CEO Sparrman thanked Board members Balducci, Roscoe, and Zahilay for attending.

Chair Balducci added that seeing the work on the I-90 up close was enlightening and noted that they saw the issues the Board has been aware of, but not any new areas of concern.

Public comment

Chair Balducci announced that public comment would be accepted via email to meetingcomments@soundtransit.org and would also be accepted verbally.

Written public comments:

No written public comments were received.

In-person Verbal Public Comments:

Betty Lau
Brien Chow
Liam Fox-McAuliff
Alexander Lam

Virtual Verbal Public Comments:

No individuals signed-up to provide virtual verbal public comments.

Business items

For Committee Final Action

Minutes: June 13, 2024 System Expansion Committee meeting

It was moved by Board member Birney, seconded by Board member Backus, and carried by unanimous voice vote that the minutes of the June 13, 2024, System Expansion Committee meeting be approved as presented.

For Recommendation to the Rider Experience & Operations Committee

Chair Balducci noted that safety concerns with at-grade crossings in the Rainier Valley and across the system have been a key issue that the Board has heard of over the years. She added that while some of the future planning to avoid at-grade crossings is within the System Expansion Committee's purview, much of the work on the current system is the jurisdiction of the Rider Experience and Operations (REO) Committee. Due to the Fourth of July holiday, the System Expansion Committee is meeting first, so any formal action to forward the item would be to send it to the REO Committee for additional discussion. She highlighted that Board member Zahilay is also working on a related motion, and that merging the two motions may be a path forward as well.

Motion No. M2024-39: Directing the chief executive officer to (1) expand the geographic scope of Sound Transit's At-Grade Crossing Program to include all Link light rail at-grade crossings, as well as Sound Transit-owned Sounder, and T Line at-grade crossings; (2) accelerate the execution of current at-grade crossing projects underway to improve near-term safety and expand current projects as needed; (3) incorporate at-grade crossing safety into existing environmental planning to ensure safety elements are included in upcoming system expansion projects; and (4) integrate at-grade crossing safety planning into all long range planning efforts, including assessing the costs and benefits of at-grade crossings as it relates to light rail system service and operations.

Moises Gutierrez, Deputy CEO for Program Oversight, and Victoria Morris, Acting Safety Project Director, gave the staff presentation for this action.

Board member Strauss noted the importance of short-term improvements while recognizing that long-term planning improvements would also be needed, as the fully envisioned Link system continues through the System Expansion program.

Board member Birney asked when the At-grade Crossing safety program began in earnest, noting the Rainier Valley at-grade segment was part of the initial Link line. Anna Huntington, Deputy Project Director, responded that this work kicked-off in late 2021.

Chair Balducci spoke to the motion itself, noting the major components of the action: expanding the scope of the program to all Link, T-Line, and Sounder at-grade crossings, accelerating the ongoing near-term safety projects, incorporating lessons learned from current operations to the planning of future expansion projects.

She noted that she has worked on a potential striker amendment that could combine the current action and Board member Zahilay's action that will be considered by the REO Committee next week. She added that the striker is simply for discussion purposes and would need additional legal review. The main addition to Motion No. M2024-39 that would incorporate the direction from Board member Zahilay's motion would be to bring back a report with information on the progress of current work, opportunities for additional short-, medium-, and long-term improvements, the implications (feasibility, cost, benefits, and impacts) of potential improvements, actions needed to implement improvements, and recommendation for project prioritization.

Board member Birney agreed with the urgency to give direction to staff on the needs for the at-grade safety program but noted that she would like more time to review the actions before deciding today to forward an action. She also concurred on having a single motion.

Board member Somers noted a desire to get additional information on the cost and feasibility of expanding the scope of the at-grade safety program. He added that he would open to consideration of Motion No. M2024-39 and later amendments to incorporate additional direction.

Chair Balducci noted that the scope expansion language is in both Motion No. M2024-39 and the draft integrated motion.

CEO Sparrman thanked Chair Balducci for bringing forward this motion and agreed on the importance of highlighting and executing on the work of the at-grade crossing safety program. He added that staff would bring forward the information related to cost and feasibility in a report, as directed by this action.

Taking stock of the discussion, Chair Balducci stated that she would take the highlights of today's discussion and share them with the REO Committee Chair, with the hope of seeing a unified action at the full Board meeting.

For Recommendation to the Board

Motion No. M2024-40: Authorizing the chief executive officer to amend the 5th Street Crossing Construction and Maintenance Agreement with BNSF Railway Company and the City of Puyallup for additional scope related to rail crossing safety improvements for the Puyallup Station Parking and Access Improvements project in the amount of \$247,900, for a new total authorized agreement amount not to exceed \$1,099,718, all within the Board approved project budget.

Jon Mihkels, Director for Buildings and Infrastructure, gave the staff presentation for this and the following actions.

Board member Kastama thanked Sound Transit staff for their work and coordination with the City of Puyallup during this project.

It was moved by Board member Kastama, seconded by Board member Birney, and carried by the unanimous voice vote of all committee members present that Motion No. M2024-40 be forwarded to the Board with a do-pass recommendation.

Motion No. M2024-41: Authorizing the chief executive officer to amend the 7th Street Crossing Construction and Maintenance Agreement with BNSF Railway Company and the City of Puyallup for additional scope related to rail crossing safety improvements for the Puyallup Station Parking and Access Improvements project in the amount of \$164,300, for a new total authorized agreement amount not to exceed \$982,360, all within the Board approved project budget.

Chair Balducci noted that the information for this action was included in the previous presentation.

It was moved by Board member Kastama, seconded by Board member Birney, and carried by the unanimous voice vote of all committee members present that Motion No. M2024-41 be forwarded to the Board with a do-pass recommendation.

Motion No. M2024-42: Authorizing the chief executive officer to (1) execute an amendment to Task Order B-11 under the Umbrella Agreement GCA 3361 with the Washington State Department of Transportation to provide construction administration and construction services for the East Link Extension rights-of-way adjacent to or within SR-520 in the amount of \$300,000, for a total authorized amount of \$2,076,430, all within the Board approved project budget; and (2) execute future amendments to this task order consistent with current agency delegations of authority detailed in Resolution No. R2023-30, Sound Transit's Procurement, Agreements and Delegated Authority Policy.

Chad Brown, East Link Deputy Executive Project Director, gave the staff presentation for this action.

Chair Balducci noted the importance and success of Sound Transit's relationship with the Washington State Department of Transportation.

It was moved by Board member Birney, seconded by Board member Strauss, and carried by the unanimous voice vote of all committee members present that Motion No. M2024-42 be forwarded to the Board with a do-pass recommendation.

Reports to the Committee

Status of Implementing the Technical Advisory Group recommendations

Terri Mestas, Deputy Chief Executive Officer for Capital Delivery, began the presentation by noting an updated version of the tracking table was included in the member's packets. She added that today's report will include information on the updated TAG Action plan approach and format.

Ms. Mestas briefly provided an overview of the work completed to-date in 2024 in pursuit of implementing the recommendations from the Technical Advisory Group. She highlighted work to reduce the average time taken to process invoices and the retirement of cumbersome change control boards within the agency. She also previewed the main initiatives that the agency will pursue going forward to create lasting change and move Sound Transit to be the owner of choice in the region.

Reviewing the newly unveiled TAG Action Plan table included in the materials for the meeting, Ms. Mestas described that the Action Plan is broken into six initiatives with the applicable TAG recommendations mapped to each, the description of each initiative, followed by targeted outcomes and schedule information at the bottom. She highlighted that these initiatives are supported and delivered by multiple departments within the agency. She noted that the Action Plan will be updated with progress and other key information on an ongoing basis.

The first initiative is the adoption of a Project Management Information System or "PMIS". This technology platform will allow the agency to manage all information, for all projects, from conception to completion, in one place to create a transparent single source of truth. Progress is underway on identifying the PMIS tool that will best fit the agency's needs.

The second initiative relates to Change Management. The agency is currently working on delegations of authority beneath the CEO and executive level staff to create clear and timely decision-making at the lowest possible level. This could also surface additional discussion with the Board on potential updates or additions to the Delegated Authority policy to better support staff in their work.

The third initiative is to better the agency's procurement and contracting methodology. Staff have started a robust training program on collaborative project delivery. There is also an effort underway to look at better utilization of bench contracts or multiple award contracts. These types of contracts can be structured to create more meaningful opportunities for diverse, smaller, local, historically underutilized business as well as create an efficient and nimble contract approach.

The fourth initiative is the restructuring of Sound Transit. At the end of June, the CEO's leadership cabinet completed a full functional analysis of all the departments, resulting in the creation of a functional framework for the future state of the agency. Additional work on the next level of detail is underway so that the implementation of changes can begin over the next few months.

The fifth initiative pertains to Betterments. The Board took action last month to supersede and build upon existing policy with the System Expansion Scope Control and Betterment policy. Staff are now working on reviewing lessons learned from past experiences, developing metrics that will be expressed in the new reporting dashboard, and training on the updated policy.

The sixth initiative is strengthening the partnership with the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). FTA recently joined agency staff in the training on collaborative delivery methods and conversations took place related to improved reporting, the PMIS, quality, and other areas. Additionally, joint offices are being planned to house FTA staff alongside Sound Transit employees and project contractors.

On June 24-25, 2024, Deputy CEO Mestas met with members of the TAG at Sound Transit offices for a Capital Program Workshop. She thanked the members for their time and valuable input over those two days covering the states of the ST2 and ST3 programs, lessons learned from ST2 projects that could be applied to ST3 projects, ST3 readiness for the jump in work expected to delivery those projects, and the tools needed to implement the changes and set the agency up for future success.

Additionally, the discussion included current opportunities and observations on the state of the system expansion program and mapped-out strategies on how to leverage those opportunities to create a more robust path to being the owner of choice. Becoming the owner of choice includes more targeted strategies on how the agency will use the capital program to create opportunities for historically underutilized businesses, job creation, and how exposing local youth to careers in architecture, engineering, and construction through agency procurements and partnerships can be accomplished. Ms. Mestas highlighted the signing of the Equity and Infrastructure Pledge at the end of August which will codify those discussions.

Going forward, Ms. Mestas plans to bring detailed briefings on each of the initiatives over the coming months to demonstrate progress and show a timeline of completion for each. Also included will be information on who to monitor performance and achievement against the planned targeted outcomes.

Board member Kastama asked if there are any external audits planned for this level of change implementation. Ms. Mestas noted that she would welcome external audits to review the implementation of these initiative but added that there is probably some work that should be completed before that engagement could occur. She also hopes that the PMIS would be another step in ensuring transparency of the work being done. Board member Kastama noted that in addition to plenty of private auditors, the Washington State Legislature has established a performance auditor with the Washington State Auditor's office as a potential resource.

Chair Balducci expressed that the calm and steady tone of the report somewhat overshadows the amount of work being accomplished. She agreed with Board member Kastama's recommendation of external auditing. She also expressed interest in a future discussion on the use of bench contracts for a better understanding of what that entails. Chair Balducci also looked forward to seeing how the agency will be restructured to not only deliver better, but also faster outcomes in the System Expansion program.

Board member Backus concurred with the auditing suggestion, noting that the Finance & Audit Committee could discuss this, even if the first result is internal audit direction.

Executive session - None.

Other business

None.

Next meeting

Thursday, August 8, 2024

1:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Ruth Fisher Board Room & Virtually via an online meeting platform

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 3:02 p.m.

ATTEST:

Kim Roscoe
System Expansion Committee Vice Chair

Kathryn Flores
Board Administrator

APPROVED on _____, AJM.