



Motion No. M2024-71

Adopting the 2025 State Legislative Program

Meeting:	Date:	Type of action:	Staff contact:
Executive Committee Board	11/07/2024 11/21/2024	Recommend to Board Final action	Andrew Austin, Chief Government and Community Relations Officer Alex Soldano, State and Federal Relations Officer

Proposed action

Adopts the Sound Transit 2025 State Legislative Program and directs staff to evaluate and engage in issues that impact the agency as it continues to implement a regional high-capacity transit system.

Key features summary

- This action would authorize Sound Transit staff and consultants in Olympia to advocate and/or pursue the following positions during the upcoming state legislative Session:
 - Seek state funding to support delivery of Sound Transit projects and services.
 - Consider policies that enable Sound Transit to move toward the leading edge of contracting and finance methods nationwide.
 - Streamline permitting for some Sound Transit projects in state right-of-way.
 - Develop and expand availability of affordable housing and support Sound Transit’s transit-oriented development program.
 - Develop and retain a vibrant, diverse workforce in Washington State.
 - Collaborate with partner agencies and others on efforts that enhance access to Sound Transit services.
 - Support partner efforts to ensure the safe and cost-effective delivery of transit projects.
 - Oppose legislation that increases the costs of transit improvements and services or otherwise impairs the agency’s ability to deliver the voter-approved regional high-capacity transit program.

Background

The Board annually considers a State Legislative Program. The program captures agency priorities for Board members engagement in Olympia on behalf of the agency as well as policy guidance to staff and contract lobbyists to assist them in representing the agency’s interests during the legislative session.

This action would authorize Sound Transit Board members, staff, and consultants to advocate and/or pursue the following positions during the upcoming state legislative session:

- **Seek state funding to support delivery of Sound Transit projects and services.**

As Washington State invests in transportation infrastructure with a focus on equity and combating climate change, we acknowledge that the leading contributor to greenhouse gas emissions is the transportation sector. Building out Sound Transit's light rail system combats climate change while building back our economy and creating thousands of jobs. The Sound Transit Board asks that the Legislature partner with Sound Transit in combatting transportation emissions in the Puget Sound by eliminating the prohibition on competing for state grant funds.

- **Adopt policies that enable Sound Transit to move forward the leading edge of contracting and finance methods nationwide.**

As Sound Transit delivers its capital program, the agency must remain a leader in innovative delivery methods, contracting models, and financial management. As creative solutions and best practices constantly change, in the future the Sound Transit Board will investigate and possibly seek authorization to modernize contracting methods and financial management.

- **Streamline permitting for some Sound Transit project in state right-of-way.**

When constructing projects in state right-of-way, the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) is not subject to certain local permit requirements, a policy that saves tax-payers money through streamlined processes. The Sound Transit Board of Directors asks that the Legislature expand this policy to apply to Sound Transit while constructing transit infrastructure within WSDOT right-of-way. This change would expedite planning and development of light rail, bus rapid transit, and fish passage barrier corrections.

- **Develop and expand availability of affordable housing and support Sound Transit's transit-oriented development program.**

The Puget Sound is facing a shortage of available, affordable housing creating an obstacle for residents to access jobs, education, and essential services. To date, Sound Transit has nearly 3,500 housing units, including almost 2,700 units as affordable, in various stages of creation with its development partners. Sound Transit supports legislative efforts to support transit-oriented development through zoning and parking reforms, expanding affordable housing resources like Washington State's Housing Trust Fund and the federal Low-Income Housing Tax Credit program, resourcing building local infrastructure to support redevelopment, and other solutions to support efforts to meet the Puget Sound region's housing and community development needs.

- **Develop and retain a vibrant, diverse workforce in Washington State.**

As Sound Transit continues to implement the most ambitious transit expansion in the United States, there is a need for a trained workforce to sustain the development, operations, and maintenance of the agency's infrastructure and service through both workforce development and retention. Sound Transit will work alongside our labor partners to support protection and expansion of funding for pre-apprentice and apprenticeship programs, as well as proposals that foster and retains a more inclusive and diverse work environment.

- **Collaborate with partner agencies and others on efforts that enhance access to Sound Transit services.**

Sound Transit supports legislative efforts to grow access to regional transit, including support for greater availability of reduced fare programs including ORCA Lift and programs for local jurisdictions to improve infrastructure and services around transit stations.

- **Support partner efforts to ensure the safe and cost-effective delivery of transit service and projects.**

Sound Transit has historically supported efforts that facilitate the efficient, safe, and cost-effective delivery of transit projects and services. Sound Transit will work in collaboration on efforts aimed at improving the transit system, including proposals impacting transit operations and proposals which would either increase funding or reduce costs for transit agencies.

- **Oppose legislation that increases the costs of transit improvements and services or otherwise impairs the agency’s ability to deliver the voter-approved regional high-capacity transit program.**

The Sound Transit Board opposes legislation that would negatively alter the oversight, planning, financing, construction, delivery and operation of Sound Transit projects and services.

Fiscal information

This proposed action does not have a budget or financial impact to the agency or any of its programs. Advocacy of the State Legislative Program is fully funded through the annual Executive Department budget.

Disadvantaged and small business participation

Not applicable to this action.

Public involvement

Not applicable to this action.

Time constraints

Sound Transit’s interests are better served at the State Legislature if the Board of Directors adopts a State Legislative Program as early as possible in advance of the 2025 legislative session that begins January 13th, 2025. Delaying adoption would harm effective advocacy by eliminating opportunities offered by pre-session meetings and work sessions.

Environmental review – KH 10/21/24

Legal review – [MT 11/01/24](#)

Motion No. M2024-71

A motion of the Board of the Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority adopting the Sound Transit 2025 State Legislative Program and directing staff to evaluate and engage in issues that impact the agency as it continues to implement a regional high-capacity transit system.

Background

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Motion

It is hereby moved by the Board of the Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority that the Sound Transit 2025 State Legislative Program is adopted, and staff is directed to evaluate and engage in issues that impact the agency as it continues to implement a regional high-capacity transit system.

APPROVED by the Board of the Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority at a regular meeting thereof held on _____.

Dow Constantine
Board Chair

Attest:

Kathryn Flores
Board Administrator