



Motion No. M2021-56

2022 State Legislative Program

Meeting:	Date:	Type of action:	Staff contact:
Executive Committee	10/07/2021	Recommend to Board	Ann McNeil, Chief Government & Community Relations Officer
Board	10/28/2021	Final action	Alex Soldano, State Relations Director

Proposed action

Adopting the Sound Transit 2022 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.

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 the target delivery dates for Sound Transit projects and services.
 - 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.
 - Continue to work collaboratively with the State Legislature to support the public’s desire to base vehicle taxes on a vehicle’s true current value, in a revenue neutral manner that does not unconstitutionally impair bondholder contracts.

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 the target delivery dates for Sound Transit projects and services.**

As directed by Motion No. M2020-37, the Sound Transit Board is seeking new, flexible revenue to achieve target schedules for delivery of Sound Transit's capital program. As Washington State looks toward investing 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.

- As the State undertakes discussion of new transportation funding options, Sound Transit asks to be included in those revenue packages.
- Sound Transit asks that the Legislature allows Sound Transit to receive state transportation grant funding, which is currently prohibited.

- **Streamline permitting for some Sound Transit projects 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 partnered to approve or complete more than 1,500 housing units with many more on the horizon as light rail expands. Sound Transit supports legislative efforts to support transit-oriented development, expand Washington State's Housing Trust Fund, creation of Housing Benefit Districts, 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 projects.**

Sound Transit has historically supported the efforts of our partners and others 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.

- **Continue to work collaboratively with the State Legislature to support the public’s desire to base vehicle taxes on a vehicle’s true current value, in a revenue neutral manner that does not unconstitutionally impair bondholder contracts.**

The Board, through Motion No. M2017-37 directed Sound Transit staff to engage with the State Legislature and pursue options to address public concerns about Motor Vehicle Excise Taxes and the depreciation schedule in use for Sound Transit 3. Sound Transit will continue to work with the Legislature to develop solutions that seek to implement the public’s desire to base vehicle taxes on a vehicle’s true current value in a revenue neutral manner, provided that such solutions must not unconstitutionally impair bondholder contracts.

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 2022 legislative session that begins January 10, 2022. Delaying adoption would harm effective advocacy by eliminating opportunities offered by pre-session meetings and work sessions.

Environmental review – KH 9/22/21

Legal review – SS 10/01/21



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A motion of the Board of the Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority adopting the Sound Transit 2022 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.

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Motion

It is hereby moved by the Board of the Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority that the Sound Transit 2022 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 October 28, 2021.



Paul Roberts
Board Vice Chair

Attest:



Kathryn Flores
Board Administrator