



## Summary Minutes

**Board Meeting  
September 26, 2024**

### Call to order

The meeting was called to order at 1:31 p.m. by Chair Dow Constantine 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/meeting-videos>.

### Roll call of members

| Chair                                      | Vice Chairs   |
|--|---|
| (P) Dow Constantine, King County Executive | (A) Kim Roscoe, City of Fife Mayor<br>(P) Dave Somers, Snohomish County Executive |

| Board members                                   |   |
|---|---|
| (P) Nancy Backus, City of Auburn Mayor          | (P) Roger Millar, WSDOT Secretary                   |
| (P) Claudia Balducci, King County Councilmember | (P) Ed Prince, City of Renton Council President     |
| (P) Angela Birney, City of Redmond Mayor        | (A) Dan Strauss, City of Seattle Councilmember      |
| (A) Bruce Dammeier, Pierce County Executive     | (P) Dave Upthegrove, King County Council Chair      |
| (A) Cassie Franklin, City of Everett Mayor      | (P) Peter von Reichbauer, King County Councilmember |
| (P) Christine Frizzell, City of Lynnwood Mayor  | (P) Kristina Walker, City of Tacoma Councilmember   |
| (P) Bruce Harrell, City of Seattle Mayor        | (P) Girmay Zahilay, King County Council Vice Chair  |
| (P) Jim Kastama, City of Puyallup Mayor         |   |

Katie Flores, Board Administrator, announced that a quorum of the Board was present at roll call.

### Report of the Chair

#### New Community Oversight Panel Leadership

Chair Constantine congratulated Tina Pierce from North King County and Charlotte Murry from Snohomish County on their elections to serve as the Community Oversight Panel Chair and Vice Chair, respectively. He also thanked outgoing Chair Paul Thompson for his continuing service on the Panel.

#### Update on Regional Fare Forum

Since calling for the convening of a regional fare forum in July, Chair Constantine has sent letters requesting delegates to the chair of the transit agency Board and Councils that make up the ORCA pod. Additionally, CEO Sparrman and King County Metro General Manager Michelle Allison have been asked to assign staff to spearhead this effort.

An initial fare forum meeting is anticipated before the end of the year, with the bulk of the work expected to take place over 2025.

#### Monthly Contract Report

The meeting packet included the monthly CEO contract report for August 2024.

## **CEO Report**

Interim CEO Sparrman provided the report.

### Chief Financial Officer Leadership Transition

The agency is kicking off a national search for a new Deputy CEO of Finance & Business Administration. The job was posted earlier this month, and CEO Sparrman hopes to bring a new leader on board before the end of the year.

### Ballard Link Extension NEPA Scoping period

Sound Transit is developing a new Ballard Link Extension Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and recently announced the facilitation of a National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) scoping process in coordination with the Federal Transit Administration. This NEPA scoping period will begin in early October and include an extended 45-day comment period closing in late November and two in-person scoping meetings.

This follow-up environmental review document will carry forward all previous alternatives, analysis, and comments from the 2022 West Seattle-Ballard Link Extensions (WSBLE) Draft EIS. Publication of the new Draft EIS is anticipated in Spring 2025, at which point the agency will facilitate another public comment period. A briefing on this scoping period is planned for the October 10, 2024 System Expansion Committee meeting, and staff will report back to the Board in December with a summary of the feedback received.

### West Seattle Link Extension FEIS and Cost Pressures

CEO Sparrman offered preemptive words on the West Seattle Link Extension presentation that Deputy CEO Terri Mestas will be leading later in the meeting. He noted that many of the strategies stemming from the Technical Advisory Group recommendations are in the midst of being implemented and are already yielding positive results. He added that these reforms will take time to fully bear fruit and that these strategies will be further applied to other projects in the ST3 program.

### Welcoming Capital Delivery Executive Directors

One of the recommendations from the Technical Advisory Group related to the hiring and onboarding of experienced national infrastructure expertise. In addition to DCEO Mestas, three Executive Directors have been hired as part of the Capital Delivery Department and each of them brings a wealth of experience in managing and delivering projects and programs.

Brad Owen joins the agency from LA Metro and will lead the West Seattle Link Extension and Ballard Link Extension projects. Manan Garg arrives from Austin, Texas where he most recently served as Senior Vice President of Delivery and Construction for Austin Light Rail. He will lead the Tacoma Dome Link Extension, Everett Link Extension, and future Link Extension projects, in addition to the Stride BRT program. Michael Morgan served as the Director of the Rail Construction Program in Ottawa, Canada, and led a \$5 billion light rail design and construction program. He will lead the East Link Extension, Federal Way Link Extension, and Downtown Redmond Link Extension projects, as well as the Operations and Maintenance Facility South project and other ST3 projects.

## **Public Comment**

Chair Constantine announced that the Board was accepting public comment via email and verbally through the virtual meeting platform.

The following people provided written public comment to the Board:

Steve Botkin

Joshua Smith  
Will Tomasini  
Bill Hirt  
Ryan Glant on behalf of Pacific Iron & Metal  
Stephen A. Fesler  
Jan Roberts, Marilyn Kennel, Clint Barefoot, Martin Westerman, and an unnamed commenter  
Maggie Fimia

The following people provided in-person verbal public comment to the Board:

Keith Edwards  
Ted Lehman  
Joe Kunzler  
Lisa Nitze  
Donna Popich  
Michael Woodward  
Kathleen Barry Johnson  
Isabelle Heeler  
Brien Chow  
Betty Lau  
Marilyn Kennel  
Martin Westerman  
John Niles  
Kirk Hovenkotter

The following people provided virtual verbal public comment to the Board:

Paul Heise  
Gary Reifel  
Paul Haury  
Linda Braddock  
Jan Roberts  
Alicia Freyman  
Kirk McDonald  
Kim Schwarzkopf

## **Consent Agenda**

Voucher Certification: August 2024

Minutes: Minutes for the August 22, 2024, Board of Directors Meeting

Resolution No. R2024-19: Authorizing the chief executive officer to acquire certain real property interests, including acquisition by condemnation to the extent authorized by law, and to reimburse eligible relocation and reestablishment expenses incurred by affected owners and tenants as necessary for the construction, operation, and maintenance of the Operations and Maintenance Facility South project.

Motion No. M2024-57: Approving Sound Transit's annual 2024 Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan submittal to Washington State Department of Transportation's State Safety Oversight Office.

Motion No. M2024-58: Adopting the permanent station names for all Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) stations included as part of the I-405 and SR522/NE 145th Street Stride BRT Projects.

**The consent agenda was moved by Board member Walker and seconded by Board member Birney.**

**It was carried by the unanimous vote of the 14 Board members present that the Consent Agenda be approved as presented.**

## **Business items**

Resolution No. R2024-20: Authorizing the chief executive officer to acquire certain real property interests, contingent on receipt of any necessary federal approvals, including acquisition by condemnation to the extent authorized by law, and to reimburse eligible relocation and reestablishment expenses incurred by affected owners and tenants as necessary for the West Seattle Link Extension project.

Chelsea Levy, Acting Capital Delivery Executive Director, and Clint Dameron, Acting Real Property Director, gave the staff presentation.

Board member Balducci asked about the guiding procedures and policies that the agency follows when it comes to hardship acquisitions, so as to not count every property owner in the potential path of a project as a potential hardship. Mr. Dameron noted the Federal Transit Administration criteria and explained that once the request from the property owner with their documented hardship is received, there is an internal staff group that evaluates the request against the criteria before seeking both FTA concurrence and Board approval. Board member Balducci inquired about whether Sound Transit proactively offers this path to property owners. Mr. Dameron confirmed that the property owner must initiate the process by submitting their request to the agency. Ms. Levy also elaborated that in addition to the FTA criteria, there is an aspect of imminence that must be met.

Board member Balducci noted that the System Expansion Committee considered this action earlier this month and forwarded the item without recommendation. The decision to forward without recommendation was to respect the timeliness of the hardship request while also digging deeper on the guardrails around hardship acquisition, which she added is not a common occurrence in Sound Transit's history.

**It was moved by Board member Balducci, seconded by Board member Birney, and carried by the unanimous vote of the 14 Board members present that Resolution No. R2024-20 be approved as presented.**

Motion No. M2024-55: Extending the appointment of Goran Sparrman as Sound Transit's interim chief executive officer until May 15, 2025.

Chair Constantine introduced the motion by noting that interim CEO Goran Sparrman has agreed to extend his contract by a few months to allow for continued agency reform and for the Board to kick-off the CEO selection process. Chair Constantine has tasked select Board members – the Snohomish and Pierce County Executives and the System Expansion Committee Chair – to help the procurement process for retaining the hiring consultant team. Other Board members will have many opportunities to engage in the selection process.

**It was moved by Board member Birney, seconded by Board member Millar, that Motion No. M2024-55 be approved as presented.**

**Chair Constantine called for a roll call vote on Motion No. M2024-55.**

### Ayes

Nancy Backus  
Claudia Balducci  
Angela Birney  
Christine Frizzell

### Nays

Ed Prince  
Dave Somers  
Dave Upthegrove  
Peter von Reichbauer

Bruce Harrell  
Jim Kastama  
Roger Millar

Kristina Walker  
Girmay Zahilay  
Dow Constantine

**It was carried by the unanimous vote of the 14 Board members present that Resolution No. M2024-55 be approved as presented.**

Interim CEO Sparrman thanked the Board for their confidence in his leadership.

## **Reports to the Board**

### Sound Transit Recent Accomplishments and Lookahead

Luke Lamon, Executive Director of Communications and Marketing, began the presentation by noting the progress made within the agency and its expansion program over the past year. The work of the Board and staff has delivered three light rail openings within the last year, with 76% more stations and Link's reach extending 60% farther than a year ago. In just one year, 173,000 more people now live within one mile of a Link station. Link Service is now available in all subareas of the Sound Transit District.

Through the expansion program, 3,470 homes have been built or are in process at Sound Transit stations, with 75% of those marked as affordable units. The agency's first integrated joint development, an office building above U District Station, is set to be completed this fall. From just the Lynnwood Link Extension alignment, 10,000 homes are either in the development pipeline, under construction, or complete.

Efforts are also improving access to the stations, with new secure, hourly bike lockers at all new stations and seamless access to Eastrail at Wilburton Station thanks to partnerships with King County and City of Bellevue. Partnerships with Community Transit, Pierce Transit, and King County Metro have led to designs for integrated bus infrastructure to maximize access to Link stations and bus-rail connections. New parking garages/lots have been opened in Bellevue, Redmond, Shoreline, Mountlake Terrance, Puyallup, and Lynnwood, with approximately 5,600 new parking stalls for those who park and ride.

Progress of fare payment over the last year has seen the implementation of \$1 ORCA Lift fares and a \$3 flat fare on Link for adult riders which has eliminated the need to tap-off the system. The cost of a regional day pass was lowered from \$8 to \$6, and mobile ORCA payment has been introduced for Android devices while planning is in progress for additional payment options.

While expanding the system, Sound Transit has also worked to improve the passenger experience. Real-time arrival information at all Link stations was launched with updated digital signage. With the opening of Lynnwood Link and the opportunity to update all signage, University Street Station was renamed to Symphony to eliminate passenger confusion and stations pictograms were replaced with stations code to follow global best practices for secondary stations identifiers. Investments in safety and security have almost doubled the number of staff in the field focusing on the well-being of riders and employees.

These investments into the system are paying off with record-breaking ridership, having surpassed the impacts from the COVID-19 Pandemic. The 1 Line regularly exceeds 100,000 daily boarding in summer and during special events, with more than 85,000 daily riders year-round. As noted earlier in the meeting, 71,000 people boarded Link from the four new stations.

With the expansion projects, Sound Transit is also creating high quality, family-wage careers across skilled trades. The Lynnwood Link Extension project hired 8,500 union construction workers, including 1,500 apprentices, who worked more than 6 million labor hours. Twenty percent of those apprentices

were women, and 44% were people of color. Similar results are being realized on the Federal Way Link Extension and the I-90 East Link completion.

Pivoting toward internal agency improvements, Mr. Lamson highlighted the hiring of Deputy CEO Terri Mestas and the megaproject expertise she brings and is actively recruiting to lead the agency's capital program. In addition to signing the Equity in Infrastructure Pledge during a ceremony in the Great Hall, Sound Transit is building a talent pipeline to meet regional needs by partnering with schools and apprenticeship programs.

Consistent throughout all the recent work is the importance of our partnerships with both private and public businesses. Along with King County Metro and Community Transit, Sound Transit is working to maximize 1 Line service frequency while work on the I-90 segment of East Link continues. Strong partnership with contractors has overcome construction challenges by designing a new long-span bridge for the Federal Way Link Extension and replacing plinths and other elements along East Link.

Looking forward to the next 24 months, Mr. Lamson noted that openings are planned for the Downtown Redmond Link Extension, I-90 segment of the East Link Extension, and the Federal Way Link Extension, in addition to the NE 130<sup>th</sup> St Infill Station. These will bring 8 new Link stations and extend Link with 18 new miles of track to serve three new cities. Service will also double between Lynnwood and downtown Seattle once the full 2 Line can cross Lake Washington.

Chair Constantine reminisced on the early designs of U-District Joint Development and remarked that the end product is very much similar to what was initially envisioned.

#### Report from the Technical Advisory Group

Grace Crunican, Technical Advisory Group (TAG) Chair, began the presentation and introduced the other member who would be available to answer questions and provide insights later in the presentation.

The TAG believes that the agency is moving in the right direction. Ms. Crunican highlighted efforts to build a more effective capital delivery structure, cultivate a stronger relationship between the Board and staff, approve a new Betterments policy, and engage with partners in ownership of choice conversations. She noted that change is difficult and can cause pinch points and encouraged the Board to stand behind the improvements being advanced by executive leadership.

She re-iterated the importance of building momentum to sustain and solidify the improvements, as well as the essentialness of keeping projects moving as delays will cost money as costs escalate nationally for all capital infrastructure projects. Ms. Crunican pointed out that service expansion to new areas of the region could help bolster future support as lives are improved by greater access to Sound Transit services.

Ms. Crunican concluded by thanking the Board, executive leadership, and staff for their openness and willingness to meet the big issues and work on the necessary improvements to better the agency.

Board member Balducci expressed her appreciation and gratitude for the TAG's partnership over the recent years.

CEO Sparrman echoed similar sentiments.

#### Capital Delivery Program Update

Terri Mestas, Deputy Chief Executive Officer for Capital Delivery, began the presentation and explained that the report will cover progress on ST3, the current construction environment, opportunities for the capital program, and an update on work related to the TAG recommendations.

Briefly summarizing the size and scope of the ST3 system plan, Ms. Mestas noted that the projects in the portfolio are still predominantly in the planning phase and environmental review process. She added

that she will cover opportunities available in the planning and design phases to tackle some of the pressures noted by the TAG members.

Board member Balducci briefly interjected to request that Stride BRT projects are also included in future slides summarizing the full ST3 program.

Adding to the list of accomplishments presented earlier in the meeting, Ms. Mestas highlighted progress already made on ST3 projects, including the groundbreaking on Stride BRT construction, the opening of RapidRide G, the selection of the project to be built for the Operations and Maintenance Facility South, and the recent publication of the Final Environmental Impact Statement for the West Seattle Link Extension.

Ms. Mestas summarized a graphic showing projected infrastructure expenditures in the region from Sound Transit, WSDOT, Port of Seattle, and City of Seattle. There remains continued strong demand for contractors across the agencies and the demand will continue to strain the capacity of regional contractor and professional service firms. She noted that the constrained contractor labor market is one factor that contributes to the cost pressures in the national construction market. She also highlighted rising costs of materials – asphalt, cement, and concrete – and sustained growth in non-residential infrastructure projects as impactful to the construction market as well. Using an example from the East Link Downtown Bellevue to Spring District segment, reinforced concrete accounted for 56% of construction materials costs. With the expectation is that materials costs will continue to grow, Ms. Mestas noted that the agency is developing strategies to respond to these cost pressures.

In the Pacific Northwest, there is an additional constraint on the number of large builders that are working in the transportation sector with the capacity to support projects with scopes surpassing \$1 billion. She mentioned that while some contractors may pursue joint ventures to accept Sound Transit work, the agency will also look at sizing contracts appropriately for regional contractors.

Looking ahead to the Board Annual Program Report that will be published in the fall, Ms. Mestas pointed out that cost trends indicators will be added to visually represent the need to take early actions, including the strategies that she will outline over the next slides.

The opportunities to confront these challenges have been ranked by the agency in terms of high, medium, and low control by agency decisions. High control strategies related to scope control, risk allocation, and indirect costs. Ms. Mestas highlighted offsite construction, alignment of indirect costs, reduction of overhead costs, collaborative delivery methods, bundling contracts and alternate work into contracts as incentives, and target value design as potential strategies that the agency has a high degree of control over as projects advance. In the medium control category, strategies include implementing the new Betterment policy, engaging earlier on permitting conditions, entering into memoranda of understandings, rallying the construction industry, and earlier investment in gathering site conditions. While the agency has less control over the low range strategies, Ms. Mestas highlighted the use of prefabricated elements, early procurement and buying materials in volume, and specific vendor agreements with fixed unit pricing.

Walking the committee through the work and opportunities in the Planning and Design phases of projects, Ms. Mestas pointed out key decision points, such as selecting the project to be built, that allow staff to dive into implementing the strategies above to a given project. As design progresses, conversations occur with finance to assess capacity and what tool can be leveraged as the agency prepares to bring the action to set a baseline budget for the construction phase.

Tying together improvements in the Capital Delivery program and implementation of the TAG recommendations, Ms. Mestas spoke to an inaugural Cost Estimating Summit between agency staff and 15 companies that produced new frameworks and optimism.

Board member Birney inquired into strategies to bring on contracting partners earlier, with an eye toward

ensuring minority and women-owned businesses don't get left behind. Ms. Mestas elaborated that using the smaller projects in the State of Good Repair program could act as a pipeline for smaller firms to get used to Sound Transit work.

#### Presentation on West Seattle Link Extension Final Environmental Impact Statement

Terri Mestas, Deputy Chief Executive Officer for Capital Delivery, invited Jason Hampton, High-Capacity Transit Development Manager, to join her for the presentation on the Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the West Seattle Link Extension (WSLE) project. The presentation will cover project background, the results and alternatives in the Final EIS, cost evolution, and next steps for the project.

Looking ahead, Ms. Mestas noted that after today's presentation, staff expect to bring an action to the October System Expansion Committee and Board meetings with a staff recommendation on the project to be built. Should that be successful, staff anticipate the Record of Decision (ROD) from the FTA in late 2024.

Included as part of the voter-approved ST3 program, the WSLE project will reduce transit travel time from Alaska Junction to Westlake Station by 50% once the Ballard Link Extension is complete, improve service frequency, reliability, and capacity, facilitate redevelopment near stations with a focus on affordable housing, provide travel alternatives should the West Seattle Bridge be congested or closed, and facilitate future expansion to the south. Ms. Mestas summarized the complex environment which has impacted the project's development, including rapid growth over the last decade, varied topography and critical infrastructure, and the need for a high-level fixed bridge over the Duwamish waterway.

Mr. Hampton summarized the key planning milestones that have already occurred for the project, including the 2022 publication of the Draft EIS and Board action to advance the WSLE project to the Final EIS, which was recently published. Through the planning phase, Sound Transit has engaged with the community through stakeholder and community advisory groups, community briefings, public meetings, online mechanisms, community liaisons, door-to-door business outreach, fairs, festivals, and other large events. Translated materials and interpretation services have also been developed and utilized. He provided a brief snapshot of engagement numbers across the project's planning. In partnership with the Seattle of City, the project has been utilizing the Racial Equity Toolkit throughout the environmental review process.

Noting that the WSLE project is part of the full ST3 program, Mr. Hampton demonstrated the regional connection West Seattle would enjoy once the full suite of Link Extension projects is complete. The existing transit travel shed from the Delridge Station greatly expands 1-hour access to Redmond, Des Moines, Lynnwood, Renton, and Northwest Seattle. Similarly, Westwood Village, which would not have a unique station as part of the WSLE project, also would see a greatly expanded transit travel shed with the implementation of the full regional expansion program. Based on current analysis, the WSLE project has the potential to facilitate construction of over 1000+ units of transit oriented development near the future stations.

Mr. Hampton walked through a series of slides covering the alternatives studied in the Final EIS for each of the four segments of the project – SODO, Duwamish, Delridge, and West Seattle Junction. Each segment will include a table comparing the alternatives' comparative cost estimates, displacements, transportation effects, construction effects, and other considerations.

In the SODO segment, the preferred alternative is the At-Grade Lander Access Station, which is similar in cost to the At-Grade alternative and is cheaper than the At-Grade South Station and Mixed Profile alternatives. All the alternatives have similar business displacements (31-35), and the preferred alternative also avoids relocation of a United States Postal Service facility.

In the Duwamish segment, all alternatives include an elevated guideway that crosses the Duwamish Waterway via high-level bridge and a connection to the Operations and Maintenance Facility Central.



The preferred alternative is the South Crossing, which is similar in cost to the South Edge Crossing Alignment option and sees slight fewer residential displacements. The South Crossing alternative has the fewest maritime business displacements, while the North Crossing alternative would have the most. The preferred alternative would also not have in-water piers, which was an outcome of the environmental review process. The South Edge Crossing Alignment would require in-water columns and the North Crossing would need piers on current Port of Seattle sites.

Noting an interconnectedness of the West Seattle Junction and Delridge segments, Mr. Hampton explained that the next two slides will show the impacts of couplets of alternatives. The preferred alternatives are Medium Tunnel 41<sup>st</sup> W. Entrance and Andover St. Lower Height South in the West Seattle Junction and Delridge segments, respectively. Mr. Hampton clarified that the Medium Tunnel 41<sup>st</sup> W. Entrance is a refinement from the initial Draft EIS preferred alternative. The preferred alternative does have the lowest number of residential displacement and a higher number of business displacement, while maintaining no permanent park impacts. On the second slide of alternatives, Mr. Hampton specifically addressed the No Avalon Station alternative that the Board requested. It is comparable in cost to the Preferred Alternative, while having lower residential and business displacements.

In reviewing ridership numbers, Mr. Hampton stated that the SODO station would see about 12,400 daily riders as a key transfer station. The Delridge station would see 5,300-5,400 daily riders. The Alaska Junction and Avalon stations have a larger range given the No-Avalon Station option studied, with 5,300-7,500 and 1,200-2,300 daily riders at the respective stations. This totals to 24,000-27,000 daily riders on the alignment.

Ms. Mestas began the portion of the presentation on cost evolution. In the 2023 Finance Plan and based on the 2022 Draft EIS, the cost estimate for the WSLE project was \$4 billion in 2023\$. This was completed at a less than 10% design level and with a comparative cost estimated methodology. The Final EIS cost estimate is \$5.1-5.6 billion in 2024\$. This estimate was also completed using comparative methodology and includes design progression and refinements, as well as updated Right-of-Way information, at the 10% design level. The 2024 Preliminary Engineering estimate shows a total cost of \$6.7-7.1 billion in 2024\$. Completed using a bottom-up methodology, the estimate was conducted around the 30% design level and reflects market conditions, additional site data, and known constraints. Ms. Mestas briefly summarized the differences between the methodologies and their use at different stages of the project lifecycle.

The 2024 comparative estimate reflected design progression, including moved Duwamish Crossing piers out of the waterway, enhanced access to Delridge Station, shifted Alaska Junction Station entrance and deepened station depth, and accounted for additional environmental mitigation.

The most recent 2024 Preliminary Engineering Estimate reflected the 30% design level and a methodology shift to a preliminary bottom-up estimate. The inclusion of a cost range at this stage (\$6.7-7.1B) is consistent with industry practice and Triunity recommendations. The estimate also includes an array of potential value engineering ideas and agency initiatives.

Ms. Mestas walked through a chart showing the drivers of the cost growth on the project. 13% was attributed to higher indirect inputs – professional service and owner requirements, 22% was attributed to market conditions – limited labor and contractor pools, 39% was attributed to design progression, cost escalation, estimating methodology, and pandemic impacts, and the final 26% was attributed to delays in project development and the environmental process.

Ms. Mestas walked through the potential project-level opportunities, broken in to high, medium, and low agency control categories, that would build upon the general strategies reviewed in the previous report.

Regarding next steps after selecting the project to be built, Ms. Mestas noted that staff would return with

a request for design funding to continue the project work, with project updates occurring as design progresses and this would allow the agency to enter the project into the federal funding pipeline. The final request to baseline the project with construction dollars would come further down the line around 80% design. She noted that the project is hosting drop-in sessions on the Final EIS in advance of the October meetings.

Board member Birney inquired if the shift in estimating methodology is standard and asked how confident staff are with the current numbers. Ms. Mestas responded that the 30% design level is still considered largely schematic but the estimate was developed with a trusted firm who has worked with the agency before and has crafted accurate estimations. She noted that there is still plenty of work to do in regard to site specifics, but that she feels confident given the information known at this time. Additionally, use of the bottom-up methodology will be rolled-out earlier on projects going forward, although previous projects have also used both methodologies through project development.

Board member Frizzell inquired into the large difference between the estimates produced by the two methodologies. Ms. Mestas responded that the comparative estimate utilized a Unit Cost Library which is developed through historical trends and standard indices for inflation and other factors but may not take into consideration site-specific conditions. The comparative methodology is best used for comparing the alternatives to each other through the environmental process. The bottom-up methodology starts from the specific concepts of each station, applies site-specific condition, and attempts to account for risk, including market conditions. Board member Frizzell asked if all the estimates for ST3 projects could go the same way as the WSLE project. Ms. Mestas responded that it is premature to speculate at this point, since many of the other projects are less developed and could see the mitigation strategies discussed applied at an early point, which will then better inform future estimates. Board member Frizzell asked if the contractor market strain is unique to the area or a nationwide issue, and what can the agency do to respond. Ms. Mestas noted that there are examples of contractors turning down work around the nation and elaborated that Sound Transit is working to better size each contract package to account for reduced capacity.

Chair Constantine also added that not all the Link Extension projects are on the same planning and construction schedule, so it may be that time will smooth out some of the labor and material constraints that are directly leading to increased costs. Ms. Mestas concurred.

Board member Walker asked how the action to select the project to be built doesn't impact other projects at this time and how can we ensure that remains the case. Ms. Mestas answered that the action doesn't commit funding but would allow Capital Delivery staff to dive in with new tools to mitigate the escalations seen. She added that there is a presentation on the Finance Plan scheduled for next month. She also noted the importance of subarea equity and how dollars are allocated for capital projects.

## **Business items (continued)**

Motion No. M2024-59: Directing the chief executive officer to develop a workplan on measures the agency will pursue to address rising project costs and inform future baselining decisions on the West Seattle Link Extension project.

Chair Constantine introduced the motion noting he expressed his intent at the Executive Committee last week. He noted that the action would direct staff to bring a workplan to the October System Expansion and Board meetings to help inform the Board on the levers that could be pulled to address the cost increases.

**Motion No. M2024-59 was moved by Board member Balducci and seconded by Board member Birney.**

**Amendment 1 to Motion No. M2024-59 was moved by Board member Birney and accepted as friendly by Board member Balducci.**

## Amendment 1 – offered by Board member Birney

On page 1 of Motion No. M2024-59, amend the action language as follows:

It is hereby moved by the Board of the Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority that the chief executive officer is directed to develop a workplan on the programmatic, financial, and project level measures and opportunities the agency will pursue to improve the agency's financial situation and move WSLE through design to inform a financially sound project to be baselined, including timelines, ~~and~~ and scale of potential benefits for each measure, [and whether each measure is WSLE-specific or also applies more broadly to future projects.](#) The workplan will be submitted for consideration at the October 10, 2024 System Expansion Committee meeting and the full Board on October 24, 2024. Programmatic and project level measures and opportunities should be inclusive of the strategies presented to the Executive Committee on September 19, 2024, and financial opportunities should include, but not be limited to, accelerating grant revenues, pursuing additional and lower cost federal loans, improving cost efficiencies, additional revenue sources, strategic property acquisition, partnerships, and value capture programs.

**It was carried by the unanimous vote of the 13 Board members present that Motion No. M2024-59 be approved as amended.**

CEO Sparrman noted that he appreciates the Board's direction with this motion.

## **Reports to the Board**

### Presentation on the Annual Safety Report

Branden Porter, Acting Chief Safety Officer, began the presentation noting that the Annual Safety Report includes information from 2023 and the first half of 2024. He first addressed questions that came up during the report to the Rider Experience and Operations Committee earlier this week. He noted that a full report is included in the materials for the meeting that provides additional detail.

He clarified that reportable incidents referenced throughout this presentation means incidents that required transport to the hospital and that, going forward, the agency will report metrics in the context of incident per 100,000 revenue vehicle miles, if appropriate. He also noted that information related to At-grade crossings will not be included in today's presentation, as the program will return to the Board in October and November as directed with recent work.

Mr. Porter briefly reviewed the three divisions within the Safety Program – Employee & Construction Safety, Transportation Safety & Security, and Public Safety & Emergency Management. While the Safety Program is charged with oversight of safety procedures and policies, safety is a core value engrained in every Sound Transit project and employee. Mr. Porter distinguished between Safety and Security incidents, both of which have reporting criteria under federal agencies.

Safety Reporting is fully compliant with Federal, State, and agency requirements, with reports developed for the FTA, Federal Railroad Administration, State Safety Oversight Office, US Department of Labor, and the Board, specifically a monthly report cadence to the Rider Experience and Operations committee.

Major reportable events have dropped roughly 68% between Q2 2023 to Q2 2024, mostly due to a decrease in collisions through the first half of this year. Mr. Porter cautioned that this may not hold as the second half of 2023 saw an increase in collisions compared to the first half of that year. Left-turns across the tracks continues to be the greatest cause of collisions. Emergency Door evacuations have also dropped, in part due to be better allocated safety personnel on the Link system.

In 2023, considerable effort was devoted to implementing training modules for all staff and training on use of the Employee Safety Reporting Tool. Also, additional and improved training was provided during the onboarding process for Fare Ambassadors. This has led to a significant reduction in employee injuries in the first half of 2024.

On the capital project and construction safety side of things, both the Reportable Injury and Lost Time Injury rates over the last year are below the agency's Capital Program goal, as well as national and state averages.

In public safety, Mr. Porter noted that the trends show more reportable assaults against passengers and transit workers but noted that this is largely due to changes in the Federal Register's reporting guidelines. Increased security presence on the systems will be maintained, and the safety program is working to update passenger-facing awareness campaigns. Specialized training to aid in identifying individual in crisis has been rolled out to security and fare ambassador personnel and a partnership with King County Department of Human Services for a dedicated outreach team has been implemented.

Mr. Porter laid out next steps for the safety team to continue to prioritize the use of data to strategically deploy resources to support public safety, refine clear goals and objectives for the Public Safety Program, and restructure Public Safety to better align with data points and industry and community feedback.

Chair Constantine noted that he had greenlit a King County initiative called Operation Safe Transit to better organize law enforcement agencies to address concerns on transit systems. He added that data on that operation is set to be released soon and acknowledged the general strain on law enforcement hiring.

Board member Harrell asked about the definition of non-physical assaults and asked if it would be possible to further parse safety and security data around whether the incident is a structural issue, occurs on the train, or occurs leaving the train and station. He noted that those buckets may help to inform the City of Seattle in its partnership with Sound Transit around safety and security. Mr. Porter noted that non-physical assaults include verbal altercations in which a transit work feels threatened and agreed that further the parsing the data is a goal of the agency.

Interim CEO Sparrman concurred with Board member Harrell's requested and noted that the agency is working to improve that level of specificity in its reporting.

Board member Walker thanked the staff for their presentation today and at the Rider Experience & Operations Committee. She noted that the Committee could be a viable venue for that increased reporting unless the full Board takes special interest.

### **Executive Session to discuss litigation to which the Agency is, or is likely to become, a party as authorized under RCW 42.30.110(1)(i)**

Chair Constantine advised that the Board was going into executive session to discuss litigation in which the agency is, or is likely, to become a party. He introduced Desmond Brown, Sound Transit General Counsel, who explained that the Board was allowed to enter into executive session under RCW 42.30.110(1)(i) to discuss litigation to which the Agency is, or is likely to become, a party.

Chair Constantine explained that the Board would be in executive session for 20 minutes. The executive session began at 4:17 p.m. and was scheduled to end at 4:37 p.m.

At 4:37 p.m., the executive session was extended by 8 minutes to end at 4:45 p.m.

The executive session ended at 4:45 p.m. At 4:45 p.m., Chair Constantine called the meeting back to order.

**Other business**

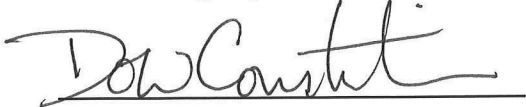
None.

**Next meeting**

The next regular Board meeting would be held on October 24, 2024, 1:30 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. in the Ruth Fisher Board Room and as a virtual meeting via Zoom.

**Adjourn**

The meeting adjourned at 4:46 p.m.



Dow Constantine  
Board Chair

ATTEST:



Kathryn Flores  
Board Administrator

APPROVED on October 24, 2024, AJM.