



Summary Minutes

System Expansion Committee Meeting October 10, 2024

Call to order

The meeting was called to order at 1:37 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	(P) Kim Roscoe, Fife Mayor

Board Members	
(P) Nancy Backus, Auburn Mayor	(P) Bruce Harrell, Seattle Mayor
(A) Angela Birney, Redmond Mayor	(A) Jim Kastama, Puyallup Mayor
(P) Cassie Franklin, Everett Mayor	(A) 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

West Seattle Link Extension Project to be Built

Chair Balducci noted that the Committee has a major action before it today to recommend to the full Board a Resolution to select the Project to be Built for the West Seattle Link Extension. Public Comment today may be fairly robust in the lead up to this action.

CEO Report

Interim Chief Executive Officer Goran Sparman provided the report.

Activation Update

The agency remains on track to open the Downtown Redmond Link Extension in spring 2025. Track and station punch list inspections are currently underway, and the extension will be tied into the Link Control Center and network later this month. Systems Integration Testing is progressing and lessons learned from the Link openings earlier this year are being applied to optimize the pre-revenue service schedule. Station art is also being installed.

The East Link Extension remains on track to complete all weather-sensitive work on the I-90 floating bridge before the rainy season ramps up, which is improving the probability that the agency will meet the target opening date in Q4 2025.

The Federal Way Link Extension is on track to open the bus loop at the Federal Way Downtown station next spring, roughly a year before train service is expected to begin. The project has begun Systems Integration Testing and is evaluating a newly optimized testing schedule that could allow the agency to begin pre-revenue service up to 3 months ahead of the current schedule. In addition to completing the structural work on the long span bridge at Structure C, the project recently celebrated the College Way connection opening at a ribbon cutting ceremony with the City of Des Moines and Highline College. Deputy CEO Mestas also joined WSDOT to celebrating the groundbreaking of their SR509 Gateway project which runs parallel to the extension.

Capital project updates

The Stride BRT Bus Base North project has completed design and permit applications have been filed with the City of Bothell. The South Renton Transit Center has also reached 100% design completion with permits filed with the City of Renton.

The Everett Link Extension has completed a compatibility report that is now under review by WSDOT's Northwest Region.

In Pierce County, outreach for the Tacoma Dome Access Improvements project has begun with expected completion this Friday. The team has received valuable input from the community to inform project development and the ultimate objective of improving access to the Tacoma Dome Station area, including parking and transit-related options. The project will begin assessing State Environmental Policy Act requirements.

At-Grade Crossings Safety update

CEO Sparrman noted that the Board-directed Rainer Valley portion of the At-Grade Crossings Master Plan will be presented at the Board meeting later this month.

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:

Marcia Kato
Joyce Aoyama
Marilyn Kennell
Maren Costa
Pamela Adams
Matt
Johannes Heine
Paul Haury
Robert McCall
Mary Heinze
Mary Ellen Cunningham
Ryan Hink
Leah Hammack
Steven Zsitvay

Lucy Barefoot
Gary Reifel
Chad Hembrow
Myra and Vince Ferriols
Bill Hirt
Miriam Chilton and Darcell Slovek-Walker, on behalf of Transitional Resources
Wilson Bailey
John Niles
Maggie Fimia
Gavin Yehle
Scott Smith
Tanya Hurst

In-person Verbal Public Comments:

Gary Reifel
Isabelle Heeler
Betty Lau
Brien Chow
Erin Goodman

Jen Osborn
Paul Haury
Brandon der Blatter
Kirk Hovenkotter

Virtual Verbal Public Comments:

Darcell Slovek-Walker
Jan Roberts
Stephen Fesler
Kim Schwarzkopf

Martin Westerman
Marcy Miller
Marilyn Kennell
Judah Stevenson

Business items

For Committee Final Action

Minutes: September 12, 2024 System Expansion Committee meeting

It was moved by Board member Backus, seconded by Vice Chair Roscoe, and carried by unanimous voice vote that the minutes of the September 12, 2024 System Expansion Committee meeting be approved as presented.

For Recommendation to the Board

Resolution No. R2024-22: Selecting the route, profile, and stations to be built for the West Seattle Link Extension project.

Terri Mestas, Deputy CEO for Capital Delivery, presented an update on the workplan directed in Motion No. M2024-59. She was joined by Brian McCartan, former CFO and currently a consultant for the agency. After reminding the Committee of the direction to staff to develop a workplan, Ms. Mestas laid out the framework that the workplan would be developed under three main categories – Team, Tasks, and Timeline.

Ms. Mestas explained that “Team” is broadly defined and includes not just the individual project team, but also relevant federal, local, and industry partners. The project team will also be tied in with Sound Transit finance staff to assess needs and identify opportunities, all under the general direction of the CEO and Executive Leadership. The Board and the System Expansion Committee will also play key oversight roles of the project and the System Expansion project.

Shifting to “Tasks”, Ms. Mestas noted that opportunities are being evaluated on a program, project, and finance level and are expected to be implemented in phases over the next six months then continuously monitored for ongoing improvements. For the finance tasks, Mr. McCartan added that the agency’s banking team and financial advisors are pulling together information that will be provided to the Board early next year to help lay the land for tools and options that the Board and agency may consider. Following that, the process also becomes iterative with project decisions and financial actions working together.

Ms. Mestas walked through a general timeline by phase of activities and outcomes related to the West Seattle Link Extension, including when the Board will receive updates and be asked to make decisions. She gave examples of the work that would be performed by staff in each phase to prepare the Board for project decisions, such as baselining, and contract approvals.

All of the opportunities being explored to reduce project cost are rated on a high, medium, low impact scale, which will be further monitored through the development of a tracking tool called the opportunity

register. The register will include accountable teams, expected timelines, and measurable impacts for each opportunity.

Ms. Mestas laid out a brief summary of expected West Seattle Link Extension actions and updates in Q1 2025, including a progress report on the workplan, an award for a design contract, and strategic right-of-way acquisitions.

Mr. McCartan highlighted key financial considerations and flagged that an ongoing discussion on System Expansion program affordability is likely to be a 2-3 year effort. At this time, a program realignment is not appropriate as a full picture of the program is needed to inform such a decision. He also advocated for retaining some financial capacity to respond to future risks.

Board member Franklin asked about the operational implications of the West Seattle Link Extension, aside from providing Link service to the West Seattle peninsula. Jason Hampton responded that the West Seattle Link Extension will eventually interact with transfer points for the 1 and 2 Lines to connect people to both West Seattle and Everett along the future 3 Line. Chair Balducci noted that an additional presentation specifically on the West Seattle Link Extension project to be built action is up next to dive into those questions. Board member Franklin agreed that her question is more likely relevant during or after that presentation.

Chair Balducci noted that the presentation on the workplan laid the groundwork for understanding how opportunities would be pursued and asked when the Board would be receiving further details on those opportunities. Ms. Mestas and Mr. McCartan responded that more specific project and financial information would be brought forward in Q1 2025. Chair Balducci noted that she feels like additional follow-up is needed to draw the line more concretely between the opportunities staff sees and the expectations of the Board and the public have on managing project and program cost. CEO Sparrman added part of bring these plans forward now was to help level-set and receive input from the Board to better inform those 2025 discussions. Chair Balducci noted that it is possible that the Capital Delivery staff is giving information in a way that Board members are having difficulty applying to the requested workplan.

Jason Hampton, High-Capacity Transit Development Manager, gave the staff presentation for both West Seattle Link Extension actions.

Noting the updated cost estimates, Board member Franklin asked how today's action would not impact the agency's ability to continue to advance other system expansion projects. Ms. Mestas responded that advancing into the design phase would unlock the opportunities to clarify the final financial impact of the project to better understand the potential strain on the full expansion program. Board member Franklin also posed her initial question on the operational impacts. Ms. Mestas responded that the assumed service levels on the full 3 Line (Everett-West Seattle) accounts for operations on the West Seattle Link Extension. She committed to bringing back more information on the interplay of not building the extension with the other projects.

Chair Balducci added that it feels like this is where a fuller understanding of the staff's intended cost-savings work and the Board decision points would be helpful to help orient the Board to where it will be able to retain control over the project. She noted the questions being raised are reminiscent of the previous realignment decisions.

Chair Balducci and Board member Franklin asked for more specifics on the assumed Board decision points related to advancing the West Seattle Link Extension beyond this month's action. Following the Q1 2025 progress updates, Ms. Mestas noted that staff may bring further recommendations, including potential scope refinements. The most significant financial decision will be when the project comes for Baselineing, many months away.

Chair Balducci sought assurance that, while selecting the Project to be Built is a major milestone, the Board retains some control to grapple with the project's costs and pull levers to direct staff on how to

proceed. Ms. Mestas confirmed that there are Board actions that will be needed to commit dollars to design contracts, but the bulk of project funding will come in the Baseline action when design is mostly complete.

Board member Franklin asked how many dollars are being committed by today's action. Ms. Mestas responded that selecting the project to be built has no dollars attached to it, and that staff are actively working on preparing a design contract procurement which will have to be approved by the Board before committing design dollars. Chair Balducci offered additional feedback on what information would be useful to Board members to understand the timeline and types of decisions that will be coming.

Board member Strauss thanked staff for their time at the meeting today and through numerous meetings over the past months. He noted he will be learning more over the next few weeks in advance of the Board meeting. He added that Seattle's industrial sector in SoDo has raised concerns that he intends to learn more about before casting a final vote.

Chair Balducci noted that she is also interested in hearing more about the concerns raised in public comment and added that more concrete knowledge on mitigation would be developed through the final design process. She expressed her support to advance the action to the Board. She also clarified that Chinatown-International District is not a part of the West Seattle Link Extension, but a presentation on that area is expected at the Committee soon.

It was moved by Boardmember Franklin, seconded by Board member Backus, and carried by the unanimous voice vote of all committee members present that Resolution No. R2024-22 be forwarded to the Board with a do-pass recommendation.

Motion No. M2024-62: Authorizing the chief executive officer to (1) execute a Section 106 Programmatic Agreement with the Federal Transit Administration, Washington State Historic Preservation Officer, City of Seattle, the Muckleshoot Indian Tribe, the Suquamish Tribe, and the Stillaguamish Tribe of Indians for the West Seattle Link Extension project, and (2) to execute amendments, including adding consulting parties and addressing newly identified adverse effects, that are consistent with processes outlined in the Section 106 Programmatic Agreement and with Sound Transit Policy and Procedures.

Information on this action was included in the previous presentation.

It was moved by Board member Backus, seconded by Vice Chair Roscoe, and carried by the unanimous voice vote of all committee members present that Motion No. M2024-62 be forwarded to the Board with a do-pass recommendation.

Resolution No. R2024-23: Amending the East Link Extension project baseline budget to settle certain delay claims and to provide funding to complete the extension by the forecast revenue service date by increasing the authorized project allocation by \$80,000,000 from \$3,677,150,000 to \$3,757,150,000.

Randy Harlow, East Link Executive Project Director, gave the staff presentation for this action and the following three actions, all related to the East Link Extension project.

It was moved by Board member Backus, seconded by Vice Chair Roscoe, and carried by the unanimous voice vote of all committee members present that Resolution No. R2024-23 be forwarded to the Board with a do-pass recommendation.

Motion No. M2024-63: Authorizing the chief executive officer to increase the contract contingency with Mass Electric Construction Company for the East Link Systems Construction contract in the amount of \$30,000,000 for a new total authorized contract amount not to exceed \$468,450,000, contingent upon approval of Resolution No. R2024-23.

Information on this action was included in the previous presentation.

It was moved by Board member Backus, seconded by Vice Chair Roscoe, and carried by the unanimous voice vote of all committee members present that Motion No. M2024-63 be forwarded to the Board with a do-pass recommendation.

Motion No. M2024-64: Authorizing the chief executive officer to increase certain East Link Extension contract and/or agreement amounts as necessary, for a total authorized cumulative increase not to exceed \$50,000,000, contingent upon approval of Resolution No. R2024-23.

Information on this action was included in the previous presentation.

It was moved by Board member Backus, seconded by Vice Chair Roscoe, and carried by the unanimous voice vote of all committee members present that Motion No. M2024-64 be forwarded to the Board with a do-pass recommendation.

Motion No. M2024-65: Authorizing the chief executive officer to (1) execute an amendment to Task Order B-12 under the Umbrella Agreement GCA 3361 with the Washington State Department of Transportation to provide continued construction administration and construction services for the East Link Extension construction contracts in the amount of \$950,000, for a new total authorized task order amount not to exceed \$7,648,683, 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.

Information on this action was included in the previous presentation.

It was moved by Board member Backus, seconded by Vice Chair Roscoe, and carried by the unanimous voice vote of all committee members present that Motion No. M2024-65 be forwarded to the Board with a do-pass recommendation.

Motion No. M2024-66: Authorizing the chief executive officer to execute an amendment to the Construction Agreement with the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) related to WSDOT's Phase 1 SR 509 Completion Project to extend the time period for the Federal Way Link Extension contractor to work on WSDOT right-of-way and authorize Sound Transit to pay WSDOT contractor claims including paying \$345,000, if required, for impacts to WSDOT's project after May 30, 2025.

Linneth Riley Hall, Federal Way Link Extension Executive Project Director, and Beth Blair, Light Rail Development Manager, gave the staff presentation for this action.

Chair Balducci thanked Ms. Blair for her first presentation to the Committee. She also spoke to the work by the project team to recover the project timeline following the issues stemming from Structure C.

It was moved by Board member Backus, seconded by Board member Strauss, and carried by the unanimous voice vote of all committee members present that Motion No. M2024-66 be forwarded to the Board with a do-pass recommendation.

Motion No. M2024-67: Authorizing the chief executive officer to execute a funding agreement with the City of Tacoma for the design and construction of non-motorized improvements that are part of the South Tacoma Station Access Improvements Project in an amount not to exceed \$42,310,763.

Mark Johnson, Project Director, gave the staff presentation for this action.

Chair Balducci recalled meeting a Tacoma city staffer who mentioned their excitement for the project.

It was moved by Board member Backus, seconded by Vice Chair Roscoe, and carried by the unanimous voice vote of all committee members present that Motion No. M2024-67 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 CEO for Capital Delivery, began the presentation and noted that the update would focus on the agency's momentum on becoming an Owner of Choice. Ms. Mestas explained the holistic procurement approach that is set to scale for the scope of work expected to deliver ST3 and noted the metrics used to determine success in each of the 7 steps from defining the requirements to reviewing lessons learned.

In establishing requirements, Ms. Mestas covered noted that updated and completed scope documents are essential to having a clear industry response to contracts. This includes updating relevant contract and procurement templates and revisiting the metrics used to evaluate proposals. The Capital Delivery Department is also working on how exactly to bundle specific contracts, so they are at a manageable size to encourage competitive bidding.

Under Industry Outreach, Ms. Mestas noted that Sound Transit has participated in over 20 industry events this year. She added that relevant metrics to track the agency's success in industry outreach will include the number of outreach events, project workshops, engagements with historically under-utilized businesses, and new firms that attend outreach events. Industry outreach is also expected to take place well ahead of procurement solicitations. Using an example from a September 24, 2024 industry event, Ms. Mestas explained that 32% of attending firms were potential new vendors for Sound Transit work and 64% of attending firms were classified as historically under-utilized businesses.

Regarding procurement strategy, the agency will begin issuing 2-year procurement forecasts to prepare the industry for upcoming work, and Requests for Information will be issued to receive feedback prior to publish solicitations for proposals. Project workshops will also allow the contracting community to hear more about projects and offer input before submitting proposals. For example, a recent West Seattle Link Extension workshop saw 22 companies attend.

When evaluating the success of a solicitation, the agency will be measuring the number of proposals submitted and the number of Requests for Information received. Moreover, the agency hopes to provide more time to proposers to craft high-quality bids and will track the costs of bids received against target budgets. Through Sound Transit's procurement vendor portal (Biddingo), the agency has 6713 total registered vendors, with 423 having registered since May.

Coming to the awarding of the contract, Ms. Mestas noted that the goal will be to streamline the process as much as possible and track the time required for an individual contract award against the assumed time needed to maintain the project schedule.

Pivoting to delivery, Ms. Mestas explained that annual performance reviews of all contracts will be including the new Project Management Information System (PMIS). Additionally, there will be quarterly industry roundtables and annual meetings with contracted firms for feedback and mutual performance reviews.

Wrapping up with lessons learned, the Lynnwood Link Extension contractors provided valuable feedback which the agency aims to begin applying to procurements, including the need to earlier engagement and information to help companies understand the solicitations.

In concluding, Ms. Mestas highlighted that next month's presentation will focus on the implementation of the Project Management Information System.

Chair Balducci noted that she is excited to hear about the PMIS at next month's meeting.

Ballard Link Extension NEPA Scoping update

Sandra Fann, Acting Executive Corridor Director, began the presentation by noting that today's presentation is informational, and no action is requested from the Committee today.

Initially intended to kick-off today, Ms. Fann noted that the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Scoping public comment period has been slightly delayed. The Federal Transit Administration hopes to issue the Notice of Intent soon so that the period can begin and extend into late November and possibly early December. The feedback from the comment period will be brought back to the December Board meeting and the System Expansion Committee, if feasible. In 2025, staff expect to publish a standalone Ballard Link Extension (BLE) Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and launch another public comment period with the Board having the opportunity to confirm or modify the alternatives. The Final EIS is then expected to be published in 2026, which will then have the agency in position to select the Project to be Built. Ms. Fann briefly showed that the project is still in the planning phase and is expected to complete construction and begin service in 2039.

The BLE project began early scoping in 2018 and the Board identified the alternatives for study in a combined West Seattle and Ballard Link Extensions (WSBLE) Draft EIS in 2019. In 2022, the combined Draft EIS was published, and the Board directed staff to conduct further studies and community engagement on the Ballard Link Extension alternatives. In March and July of 2023, the Board modified the preferred alternatives for study.

Ms. Fann explained that Sound Transit will need to prepare a new NEPA Ballard Link Extension Draft EIS that builds upon the previous work and analysis from the 2022 WSBLE Draft EIS, and the first step in that process is a scoping comment period to collect public feedback. She stressed that this does not mean the project is starting over, and all analysis already completed and comments previously received are being carried forward. The new BLE Draft EIS is expected to be published next year. The Board would have an opportunity to confirm or modify the alternatives for study in a Final EIS, which is expected to be published in 2026.

Ms. Fann noted that both NEPA and SEPA require the preparation of Environmental Impact Statements to analyze the potential impacts of a project to the natural and built environment. The scoping period allows the public to provide input on the scope of the EIS, including the project's purpose and need, topics or issues to study, and the route and stations alternatives.

Ms. Fann concluded by reminding the Committee of the current alternatives being studied and informing the public of the methods by which comments can be provided during the scoping period, which staff hope to formally begin shortly. She provided a preview of upcoming presentations that will be brought to the Committee or to the Board on this topic.

Executive session - None.

Other business - None.

Next meeting

Thursday, November 14, 2024
1:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.
Ruth Fisher Board Room & Virtually via Zoom

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 4:22 p.m.



Kim Roscoe
System Expansion Committee Vice Chair

ATTEST:



Kathryn Flores
Board Administrator

APPROVED on November 14, 2024, AJM.