

Link Noise Mitigation Policy

This Link Noise Mitigation Policy (“Policy”) establishes Sound Transit policies intended to guide both the assessment and mitigation, as appropriate, of noise impacts associated with Link Light Rail project components.

I. ASSESSMENT OF LINK NOISE IMPACTS

As a general matter, the assessment of potential Link noise impacts will occur as part of the environmental review process. The following policies shall guide Sound Transit’s assessment and control of potential Link noise impacts:

- A. Sound Transit shall comply with applicable federal, state, and local noise requirements in evaluating noise impacts, determining appropriate mitigation measures, and implementing Link projects;
- B. Sound Transit will seek to identify potential noise impacts and potential mitigation measures early in the project development process, as practicable;
- C. Sound Transit will seek to reduce expected noise impacts, as practicable, through reductions in source emissions and project design;
- D. Sound Transit will seek to work with local jurisdictions to provide that development occurs which is compatible with expected or existing project operational noise.

II. GENERAL MITIGATION POLICIES

A. Consistency with Sound Transit Scope Control Policy

In implementing noise mitigation for each Link project, Sound Transit shall comply with the Scope Control Policy (Board Motion M2002-121) for both construction-related and operational mitigation.

B. Construction Noise Mitigation

Sound Transit will seek to limit construction noise impacts associated with the development of the Link projects. To this end, Sound Transit will meet applicable federal, state, and local construction noise regulations and requirements, including any requirement to obtain required noise variances. Project-specific efforts to minimize construction noise impacts may include: the use of noise barriers between major construction sites and nearby noise-sensitive uses; restricting the use of noise generating equipment during nighttime hours unless appropriate mitigation is in place; the use of truck haul routes that will serve to minimize potential noise impacts; and temporary relocation of sensitive receptors, where appropriate.

C. Operational Noise Mitigation

Sound Transit will assess whether a Link project will result in operational noise impacts in accordance with applicable federal, state, and/or local law, and relevant guidance. Source treatment measures, which serve to prevent noise impacts, shall be the preferred means of mitigation. After the implementation of source treatment operational measures, the use of path measures (between the source and receiver) shall be the preferred method of mitigating noise impacts. This will primarily consist of noise barriers, alignment modifications, acquisitions or buffer zones. Sound insulation of buildings will be used to mitigate noise impacts only where path measures are ineffective, unreasonable and/or infeasible forms of mitigation.

D. Final Identification of Project Noise Impacts

Sound Transit shall continue to reevaluate project noise impacts associated with Link projects, as appropriate, during project design. The final identification and design of noise mitigation measures will occur preferably between the 60% to 90% design level, taking into account the implementation of source treatment operational measures and other means of noise reduction, as appropriate. This will ensure that noise impacts associated with Link are accurately characterized and mitigated as appropriate.

E. Community Outreach

A noise mitigation community outreach program, that addresses both construction and operational noise impacts, will be included in the community outreach plan for relevant Link projects or project segments prior to the start of construction. Each plan shall identify effective means of raising public awareness and providing information regarding Sound Transit's Link Noise Mitigation Policy, expected noise impacts, and associated mitigation efforts. The plan shall further provide for regular communication between Sound Transit's Link Community Outreach staff and affected property owners, business owners, and tenants regarding the implementation of the Link Noise Mitigation Policy. Sound Transit's Link Community Outreach program shall develop these noise mitigation community outreach plans, including all written materials, under the direction of the Link Director, or designee, and in coordination with Link Project Development, Real Estate, and Legal. The plans shall reflect applicable Sound Transit policies, as well as any ROD and/or other project requirements.

III. NOISE BARRIERS

The following policies shall govern Sound Transit's implementation of permanent noise barriers as a form of operational noise mitigation for Link projects. This section does not apply to the use of temporary noise barriers used during construction.

A. Criteria for Noise Barrier Use

Noise barriers may be considered as a form of noise mitigation for Link projects when justified by the scope of an identified noise impact that cannot be reduced or eliminated through operational or other source reduction measures. Noise barriers will be used only along elevated and at-grade trackway and only where the use of such barriers is reasonable and feasible. Whether the use and location of such barriers is reasonable and feasible will be determined in consideration of the following: noise reduction; limits to effectiveness (e.g., the existence of a multi-story building); whether the use of a noise barrier would result in potential safety, visual, or other impacts; cost-effectiveness; or other factors as appropriate.

B. Coordination with Affected Property Owners

Sound Transit decisions to use noise barriers, as well as barrier locations and designs, will be made in consultation with affected property owners, as appropriate. This coordination will be implemented under the direction of the Link Director, or designee, jointly by Link Project Development and Link Community Outreach, in consultation with Real Estate and Legal. Final decisions on noise barrier use and location in consideration of property owner interests and the criteria described in Policy IIIA, Criteria for Noise Barrier Use will be made under the direction of the Link Director, or designee.

IV. RESIDENTIAL SOUND INSULATION

The following policies shall guide Sound Transit's implementation of residential sound insulation program (RSIP) as a form of noise mitigation for Link projects. The RSIP manager, responsible for managing the RSIP contracts, shall be the designee of the Link Director.

A. Criteria for Residential Sound Insulation Use

Sound Transit shall implement residential sound insulation as a noise mitigation measure when justified by the scope of an identified impact that cannot be reduced or eliminated through source control or other operational measures. Residential sound insulation shall be used only when the use of source or path treatments, such as noise barriers is ineffective, unreasonable, and/or infeasible.

B. Noise Reduction Levels

Unless otherwise required, sound insulation will use the Housing and Urban Development (HUD) interior 45 dBA Ldn as the reference value for interior noise level reduction of light rail impacts and WSDOT's 51 dBA peak hour Leq criteria as the reference value for traffic noise impacts. For those locations where both light rail and traffic noise impacts are identified, the interior noise levels will meet whichever criterion achieves the greatest level of noise reduction.

C. Scope of Required Improvement

The scope of required residential sound insulation improvements will be determined on a case-by-case basis. Improvements will be based on the need to meet the noise reduction levels in policy IV.B. Improvements will be limited to those necessary to install the required sound insulation measures and that are consistent with the Scope Control Policy (Board Motion M2002-121). Potential measures may include, as appropriate: the installation of replacement windows and doors and, if required, added insulation. Required improvements shall not include major structural improvements/modifications, property upgrades or any other improvements not required to meet applicable noise reduction levels.

D. RSIP Contracting

Sound Transit shall provide for the installation of required residential sound insulation and related work in affected buildings through the use of qualified contractors and subcontractors. In addition to providing for the completion of the residential sound installation in accordance with stated requirements, the contractual documents shall provide for the following:

1. Appropriate coordination of installation of required improvements with affected property owner/tenants, in consultation and coordination with Sound Transit;
2. The implementation of practicable measures to minimize inconvenience to affected property owners and tenants during the installation process, such as the use of dust-proofing measures and limiting work to daytime hours only; and
3. Reference of inquiries regarding the scope of required residential insulation measures to the RSIP manager.

E. Coordination with Affected Property Owners/Tenants

Sound Transit shall coordinate testing associated with the residential sound insulation, the identification of appropriate residential sound insulation measures, and the installation of sound insulation measures with affected property owners. This coordination will be implemented under the direction of the Link Director, or designee, and jointly by the RSIP manager and Link Community Outreach manager. Final decisions relating to the scope of required residential sound insulation measures for all affected properties in consideration of property owner interests and the criteria described in Policy IV.A, Criteria for Residential Sound Insulation Use will be made under direction of the Link Director, or designee.

F. Documentation

The Link RSIP manager, in consultation with Legal and in coordination with Link Community Outreach and Real Estate shall provide for the development of appropriate documentation associated with installation of residential sound insulation as a form of Link noise mitigation. Such documentation should include the following: the use of

written access agreements for testing and installation with property owners; written agreements with property owners providing for the installation of required insulation measures; written documentation from the contractor installing the mitigation and the property owners indicating the completion of required insulation measures; and liability releases as appropriate.

G. Homeowner Elections to Forego Improvements

The decision to permit Sound Transit's installation of residential insulation measures designed to mitigate noise impacts is within the discretion of affected property owners. Property owners may, accordingly, elect to forego recommended improvements. However, Sound Transit shall not provide monetary or other forms of compensation to property owners as an alternative to providing recommended noise mitigation measures.