

2026 *Service Plan*

Executive Summary



The background image shows the interior of a transit vehicle, likely a bus or train. It features rows of blue seats with metal handrails. A window is visible with a blue sign that reads: "PLEASE DO NOT STORE LUGGAGE IN THIS AREA. THIS AREA IS RESERVED FOR SENIOR CITIZENS AND PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES. STORE LUGGAGE UNDER YOUR SEAT OR IN YOUR LUGGAGE." The text "Executive Summary" is overlaid in a large, bold, blue font on the right side of the image.

Executive Summary

The 2026 Service Plan consists of two parts: Part One (Rail Plan), published in fall 2025, and Part Two (Bus Plan), published in winter 2026. The Bus Plan was presented to the Sound Transit Board of Directors in spring 2026, where the proposed service changes were approved. Most bus changes are scheduled for fall 2026. Some rail changes outlined in the plan began in spring 2026.

Link light rail expansion and related bus changes

As part of the Federal Way Link Extension, three new 1 Line stations opened at the end of 2025. In spring 2026, the 2 Line Crosslake Connection opened with two new stations. Link light rail will connect people across Lake Washington thanks to this expansion. In summer 2025, two Board resolutions amended the 2025 Service Plan to include these two major service changes (Resolution No. R2025-12 and Resolution No. R2025-17). Therefore, the 2026 Service Plan does not include these changes.

The approved ST Express bus service changes integrate with these Link expansions to create a more connected regional transit network. In previous planning efforts related to the Link expansions (2022-2024), we shared service concepts that resulted in new transfers and longer travel times. These concepts assumed we would reduce, remove, or truncate all ST Express routes operating in the same corridors as light rail. Riders expressed concerns about travel time, access to destinations not well-served by Link, and network resiliency. In response, we prepared more modest service changes in this plan. These service changes allow riders to explore new trip options while still having familiar routes available. In turn, we will monitor how people modify their trips in response to new transit options. Future planning efforts will consider how riders use our system and how our network should change in response.



FIFA World Cup 2026

While Sound Transit is not proposing bus service changes specifically for FIFA World Cup 2026, we are undertaking multiple initiatives to prepare for the tournament. These plans include piloting a temporary ST Express overnight service between SeaTac/ Airport Station and downtown Seattle, preparing to run increased service on Link and the T Line, offering revised Sounder service, and preparing for increased demand on ST Express bus routes.

Rail service changes

Rail service changes from the 2026 Service Plan include opening Pinehurst Station in North Seattle on the 1 Line and 2 Line, and several minor service changes to Sounder N Line and S Line. We extended an afternoon trip to and from Lakewood to serve additional passengers traveling south of Tacoma Dome Station. We also adjusted Sounder N Line afternoon northbound departures, so passengers can leave downtown Seattle earlier.



Bus service changes

In this plan, we share approved bus service changes to ST Express routes that simplify the network, capitalize on high-capacity transit investments, and improve regional connections. These changes include:

- New overnight service in Pierce, Snohomish, and King counties.
- Adding bi-directional service to Route 513 and discontinuing service to Eastmont Park & Ride.
- Rerouting Route 522 to Shoreline South Station instead of Roosevelt Station.
- Enhancing Saturday service and adding Sunday service to Route 535.
- Shortening Route 556 to Bellevue Downtown Station and increasing service frequency.
- Shortening the northern end of Route 574 to end at Federal Way Downtown Station while the 1 Line is running. Increasing the frequency to every 15 minutes for most of the day. Replacing the southern terminus of the route, Lakewood Transit Center, with a new stop at Lakewood Station.
- Discontinuing routes 515, 550, 554, 580, and 586.

The implementation of these approved service changes is subject to operational capacity at our partner agencies and may be partially implemented or deferred.

Public engagement summary

During the first engagement phase for the 2026 Service Plan (April 2025), we asked the public about service priorities. The feedback informed our bus service change proposals. Through the second engagement phase (summer 2025), we shared rail changes for 2026.

In the third phase (October/November 2025), we presented our draft bus service change proposals, and we heard:

- Strong support for proposed overnight routes between Everett-Seattle, Lakewood-Seattle, and Redmond-Seattle.
- Support for proposed changes to routes 513, 535, and 550.
- Mixed reactions for proposed changes to routes 522, 574, and 580.
- Opposition to proposed changes to routes 515, 554/556, and 586, with the top reasons being travel time and access to destinations.

During the fourth phase, we shared the final 2026 Service Plan ST Express bus service proposals and the additional proposed service change for Route 574: Replacing the Lakewood Transit Center stop with a new stop at Lakewood Station.

Title VI service equity analysis summary

As part of the annual Service Plan, Sound Transit conducts a service equity analysis to ensure that changes to transit service are consistent with Title VI policies defined by the Federal Transit Administration and the Board. The individual route analysis for bus changes identified disparate impacts or disproportionate burdens on protected populations for some of the now-approved bus service changes. The mitigations include new 1 Line service to Federal Way, 2 Line service across Lake Washington to Seattle and Lynnwood, improved service levels on ST Express routes 574 and 556, and new overnight service. The systemwide analysis did not identify any disparate impacts or disproportionate burdens on protected populations from September 2023 through September 2026.



Next steps

While the Sounder S Line and N Line changes were implemented in spring 2026, we are working to open Pinehurst Station (1 Line and 2 Line) later in 2026. We will also begin to implement the approved bus changes in fall 2026. We will continue to monitor system performance and observe how ridership patterns change to inform future planning efforts. We are also supporting the agency's Enterprise Initiative to ensure we are well-positioned to provide a connected, financially sustainable transit network for the Central Puget Sound region now and in the future.

