

Sound Transit Community Oversight Panel Hybrid Meeting Summary

Date: January 14, 2026

Time: 5:30 – 7:30 p.m.

Location: Hybrid/Teams/In-person (Union Station)

Attendees

Present:

- Charlotte Murry
- Linda Dorris
- Paul Thompspon
- Scott Lampe
- Tina Pierce
- Tom Norcott

Absent:

- Mark Lewington
- Lorenzo Frazier
- Trevor Reed
- Zak Osborne

Staff

- Adam Montee
- Katie Flores
- Love Lee

Meeting Overview

The Community Oversight Panel (COP) heard presentations covering updates for the FIFA World Cup, Crosslake, and Passenger Impact Program. The panel also discussed member reports and adopted the previous meeting's minutes.

Meeting Summary

The chair began the meeting. The COP administrator took roll.

Presentation:

2026 World Cup Update

The COP received an overview of Sound Transit's preparations for the FIFA World Cup 2026. After reviewing lessons learned from the FIFA Club World Cup 2025, the agency resolved to bring back the weekday Sounder pilot, 8-minute service times, and on-site engagement. Sound Transit will also provide ample advance notice and information ahead of the events.

A chart explained how partners coordinate for the tournament. Sound Transit will provide mobility and safety/security services to move fans and visitors to and from their destinations. They'll also deliver regional plans to the Local Organizing Committee (LOC) who is the point of contact between FIFA and regional agencies.

The next slide showed a calendar of all the scheduled matches, celebration activities, local events, major construction work, and cruise ship sailing. Days are marked by intensity levels.

Sound Transit has earmarked match days and major festivities in preparations.

The agency will run 8-minute Link service on game days, provide special Sounder and ST Express service, increase staffing, deploy temporary wayfinding, and implement demand management and parking strategies. In the event of any rail contingencies, the agency has secured temporary charter bus support. They will also address passenger experience and communications by expanding multilingual communications, activating stations with ambassadors and community partners, and strengthening safety and emergency response.

To move crowds efficiently, Sound Transit is implementing a destination-based approach. Depending on where riders are traveling from, they will be assigned a route that will direct them to a specific entrance. Riders traveling north of downtown will use the Pioneer Square station, those traveling east of downtown will use International District/Chinatown Station, and those traveling south of downtown will use Stadium Station. Riders coming from within downtown will use a shuttle or regular bus service.

Next, Sound Transit will finalize plans, continue coordination with partners and prepare a communications campaign “Know before you go” beginning in late Q1 or early Q2.

Questions:

Panel member: How are we determining which languages to focus on?

Presenter: That was dependent on which teams were coming to Seattle. Now that ST knows which teams are coming, those are the languages we will focus on. Wayfinding will focus more on pictures and graphics to communication information.

Panel member: I want to acknowledge that ST did a really good job at dispersing after the games in 2025. The crowds dispersed in under 30 minutes. I was very pleased to see that and experienced that firsthand. A lot of the stations were clean and pleasant to travel through. That along with additional staffing to direct people was spot on so I appreciate that.

Presenter: Thank you for the feedback.

Presentation

2 Line Cross-Lake Connection Update

The Community Oversight Panel received an update on the Crosslake Connection and East Link I-90 project, including project completion and pre-revenue operations. The Crosslake Connection is a 7-mile link between South Bellevue and International District/Chinatown Station that adds two new stations and will provide 8-minute peak service. The project is currently in pre-revenue operations.

Currently, the East Link Extension is now 99.8% complete. Sound Transit has opened the starter 2-Line segment (6+ of 14 miles and 8 of 10 stations), started pre-revenue service, and remains on track to open the full Crosslake Connection in May 2026 (The agency has since announced that the opening date is March 28, 2026).

The team recently completed floating bridge cathodic protection, system integration testing, and the first light-rail vehicle (LRV) crossing on May 21 and the first electrified LRV crossing of the floating bridge on September 8.

After pre-revenue operations conclude in February, the next phase is simulated service which will conclude in May. During pre-revenue operations, Sound Transit continues operator training and

qualification. Four-car trains now run between South Bellevue and International District stations, and simulated service will begin in the next month. During simulated service, 1 Line and 2 Line trains will run every four minutes between Lynnwood City Center and International District Station. In this next phase of the activation process, contractors complete final work and transfer care and custody of the system to Sound Transit. Sound Transit then conducts training, safety certification, emergency drills, and system validation before starting revenue service.

Questions:

Panel member: Cathodic protection received a lot of attention in the press. Can you explain what happened and where things stand now?

Presenter: The cathodic protection system protects the floating bridge. We polarize the bridge structure and measure electrical potential in the cables and concrete to keep them within a target range. We use rectifiers to maintain those levels. Because the system is highly interactive, adjusting one cable affects others. It takes time to stabilize the system. After each adjustment, we wait about three days for the structure to fully polarize. Over several months, we made ongoing rectifier adjustments to reach stable conditions. The system also responds to stray current and environmental conditions and protects the bridge from both light rail operations and the natural environment. The system is complex, and it took time to find the right balance. We have now maintained protective criteria since September, when light rail began operating on the bridge.

Panel member: I understand WSDOT still needs to sign off on the system.

Presenter: This system differs from those on the SR 520 and Hood Canal bridges, and we will maintain it differently. Sound Transit and WSDOT agreed that Sound Transit will maintain and refine the system for 6–9 months. During that time, we will update manuals, training, and procedures. WSDOT will then shadow Sound Transit, followed by Sound Transit shadowing WSDOT, before we formally transfer long-term maintenance responsibility to WSDOT.

Panel member: What happens during a lightning storm? Do we have a protocol to shut down service?

Presenter: We asked WSDOT this same question. Their procedures focus more on wind and heavy rain, and we follow a similar approach. We would stop operations under those conditions. We do not currently have a specific protocol for lightning.

Panel member: If lightning struck our lines, what would happen to the system?

Presenter: The system includes insulators and is designed to handle events like that.

Panel member: Have you worked with first responders to practice what would happen if an incident occurred on the bridge?

Presenter: Yes. We meet with first responders regularly, conduct drills and tabletop exercises, and provide walkthroughs. We continuously prepare and coordinate with them.

The chair called for a break and the panel reconvened at 6:45 p.m.

Adoption of previous meeting summary and member reports

The meeting ran ahead of schedule. While transitioning to the next presentation, the Chair invited the panel to discuss outstanding agenda items. A motion was made to adopt the previous meeting summary and it passed unanimously.

Presentation

Passenger Impact Program

The Community Oversight Panel received an update on the Passenger Impact Program, which prioritizes rider service while coordinating construction and minimizing the impact of planned service disruptions. The program focuses on strategic scheduling, coordinating projects, maximizing the benefits of disruptions, and providing program-level oversight during major events.

Sound Transit completed several Downtown Seattle Transit Tunnel signal upgrade-related disruptions in late 2025 to support the East Link connection. These included multiple extended night closures and a full weekend tunnel closure in early January.

The agency outlined upcoming disruptions in early 2026. Crews will continue Downtown Tunnel signal upgrades between SODO and Capitol Hill, including extended night closures in mid-January and a full weekend closure from January 23–26, with potential adjustments to accommodate a Seahawks game.

Pinehurst Station construction will continue with weekday nighttime single tracking, resulting in up to 12-minute headways from 7 p.m. to the end of service. Sound Transit will pause disruptions for East Link testing from January 29 to February 2 and delay disruptions during Lunar New Year to reduce impacts. The agency will also continue avoiding disruptions on nights with major regional events.

The monthly maintenance program will continue rotating 11 p.m. closures across the system. Sound Transit completed work in several segments in late 2025 and early 2026 and scheduled additional work through April, including segments between Tukwila International Boulevard and Mt. Baker, Northgate and Lynnwood City Center, and BelRed and Redmond City Center.

Questions:

Panel member: Have you experienced any issues during these closures? What challenges have come up?

Presenter: Yes. The biggest challenge is coordinating all the moving pieces. We often need to reach out to different teams to identify projects that can be completed during each disruption window. There is a lot happening at once, so fitting everything together can be complex but it can also be fun.

Panel member: Last June or July, there was discussion about completing work ahead of the World Cup. How are we progressing on that list?

Presenter: We're making strong progress. Each month, we complete three extended nightly closures and rotate the closure segment. This approach helps us complete the needed work while creating predictable closure patterns so riders know what to expect.

Other business

COP Retreat

Members of the COP asked about plans for the upcoming retreat and the agency representative clarified that it is likely to take place in late February or early March, and to expect a poll to help coordinate schedules.

Crosslake Section Opening

A panel member asked about the timing of the Crosslake section opening. The agency representative said that the exact date was not confirmed but the timeline would be clearer by the February meeting.

Field Trip

A panel member asked about planning for the next field trip and the Agency representative agreed that planning could start but that identifying the location may be challenging. Possibilities include a tour of the Tacoma Dome station, sites related to I-405 rapid transit work, and the maintenance facility. The team is aiming for something in early June. A panel member recommended inviting Sound Transit Board members to the field trip and the Agency representative agreed to extend the invitation to them.

Panel Vacancies

The Agency representative noted that Sound Transit has received several applications to fill the vacant seats and asked panel members to amplify the opportunity through their social media and other networks. The agency will send applications to Boardmembers to review in the coming weeks.

Kudos to Sound Transit

A panel member commended Sound Transit for the strong security presence at FWLE around 6 a.m. They shared that the station felt safe, although the distance between the station and parking lot is long and could benefit from a covered walkway.

The meeting adjourned at 7:30 p.m.