

## Sound Transit Community Oversight Panel Hybrid Meeting Summary

**June 11, 2025**

**COP Members Present:** Charlotte Murry, Paul Thompson, Tom Norcott, Scott Lampe, Linda Dorris, Lorenzo Frazier, Diana Cambronero Venegas, Mark Lewington, Donia Zaheri, Lucas Simons, James Peyton

**COP Members Absent:** Zak Osborne, Trevor Reed, Tina Pierce

**Others Present:** Adam Montee, Katie Flores, and Nancy Thai

### **At-Grade Crossing Master Plan Update**

- Andrea Trepadean – Director of Construction & Employee Health and Safety
- Victoria Morris – Director-Hazard Mitigation Implementation

Staff presented an update on the At-grade Crossings Program. Staff are currently seeking Board approval on the master plan and additional budget at the end of the month. The at-grade program launched in 2021 with a focus on Rainier Valley as it has the highest concentration of collisions and near misses. The program priorities include reducing collisions and near misses with vehicles and pedestrians, a safe passenger experience, reliable service, increasing accessibility, and building positive relationships with surrounding communities. Between 2021 and 2024, staff have completed 10 at-grade projects in partnership with SDOT, including signage enhancement, pavement markings, traffic signal enhancements, and train enhancements.

The At-grade Crossings Plan is in alignment with Board motion No. M2024-45 and lays out objectives to identify and prioritize enhancements to improve safety throughout the system. Project identification and prioritization considers data, research, community engagement, and collaboration with regional partners. Potential projects go through an assessment tool that evaluates safety impact and regulatory compliance, identifies challenges and risks, and ranking to prioritize the most effective solutions using a weighted evaluation criterion. Staff then develop projects to bundle for faster delivery and efficiencies. Once safety enhancement projects are implemented, staff complete data monitoring and collection for pilot projects and additional enhancements. Of the current projects, there were originally 17 projects, but they were bundled, condensed, and optimized to 10 projects; no projects were removed. Of the current project, four are in the Rainier Valley (the highlighted projects on slide 6 of the At-Grade Crossing Draft Master Plan presentation). Nearly all projects need third party concurrence and are in collaboration with partner agencies.

Staff shared key takeaways of the connections between the current projects and data type. Six of the ten projects were informed by rail – pedestrian incidents at Columbia City, Othello, Rainier Valley stations, and Graham St. Four of the projects were informed by rail-vehicle incidents where most collisions resulted from prohibited left turns when trains and vehicles travelled in the same direction.

Staff are working with regional partners on safety enhancement projects as partners are responsible for implementing roadway changes and traffic signal operations, permitting, and maintenance and operations agreements. There is also internal collaboration as staff from other Sound Transit projects share lessons learned, identify project efficiencies and opportunities to streamline, and develop design requirements.

There are three focus areas for the three-year communications and engagement plan. The first focus area is around the Master Plan, where staff will continue dialogue with disability communities. The second focus area is ongoing safety education and awareness, which will include languages other than English, canvassing, briefings with community partners, mailers, and social media in multiple languages. The third focus area is project development and construction which began in spring 2025 with a community safety fair at Odessa Brown clinic and best practices for staying aware and staying safe. Staff hosted a youth poster contest partnered with Southeast Seattle Education Coalition and selected three winners. Summer through winter 2025 engagement will focus on the LOOK safety education and awareness campaign which will coincide with the Club World Cup, Stadium station domination campaign during rail safety week, and presence at fairs and festivals.

One member asked who decides on priorities of the projects they work on. Staff work with communities and internally and have used data over the years to create the assessment tool that is used for safety enhancement project identification and prioritization. The master plan has more details on this prioritization process – looking at emerging best practices, operator and community ideas, and what peers are doing. The member followed up to ask if operators and staff have a way to communicate issues they see. Operators have different methods to report safety issues or concerns and staff do track that data to see where risk areas are. Operators can share anonymously or share their name and receive a follow-up.

Another member asked how near misses are defined since operators are required to report these. Near misses are events that require action from an operator to avoid an incident.

A member asked if there is training for operators on how to handle near misses. Yes, that training is included in their overall training.

One member asked if there are reviews of the enhancements and how they are performing. Looking back at data from 2009 to 2021, staff have seen reductions in incidents since the implementation of safety enhancements. This is a short timeframe to evaluate the projects, but they will continue to be monitored. The preliminary report is nearly complete, and there is also public data on SDOT's website.

A member asked if there are any current lawsuits for safety infractions. Staff are not made aware of lawsuits related to at-grade crossings; would need to ask legal counsel to answer this question.

Another member asked if there is any data yet on the Bellevue at-grade crossings. For Eastlink it is too early to have collected data. However, those stations have been built to most recent design standards with pedestrian gates.

One member commented that some of the current projects seem very expensive and wondered about the reason for that. Those are total project costs, including staff time, construction, cost of materials, design, etc. Additionally, staff are installing new pedestrian automatic gates and are developing a new system. Staff are striving to be as least disruptive as possible, which takes additional time and planning, and so the Sound Transit system can tie into the SDOT system.

A member asked what staff are doing now to mitigate current safety concerns as some of these projects are two to four years out. These are safety enhancements, the systems are currently built to safety standards. These safety enhancement projects are not tied to a specific safety issue. Staff are regularly monitoring to see if an earlier intervention is needed sooner for mitigation. Staff review if safety elements are working as intended, like safety and pavement markings.

One asked if there have been incidents of people attempting to commit suicide via Link, as has been the case with Sounder. Yes, suicide incidents must be declared by a coroner, but they are an intentional act and are counted differently from safety incidences.

### **Discussion with Boardmember Kristina Walker**

- Kristina Walker – Boardmember, Tacoma City Councilmember

Boardmember Walker serves on the Tacoma City Council and was first appointed to the Sound Transit Board in 2021. She chairs the Rider Experience and Operations (REO) committee, as of this year she serves on the executive committee and participated on the CEO search committee. This has been a big year as the agency moves from a capital building agency to a system delivery agency. As COP members are aware, there have been challenges with multiple outages in the system. Boardmember Walker lives in the Pierce County subarea and there are two new Board members from Pierce County. There have been big decisions around the Tacoma Dome Link Extension and Sound Transit has been in partnership with the Puyallup Tribe of Indians. Boardmember Walker's previous job was running Downtown On the Go – a transportation and pedestrian advocacy group.

COP members introduced themselves and which areas they represent.

One member attended the Fife city council meeting last night and the council voted on their preferred alternative along I-5. The member asked when Tacoma will put in their recommendation. The Tacoma Council made their decision as City Council with City staff input and submitted their letter in mid-May. They changed from the preferred Tacoma 25th Street-West to Tacoma Close to Sounder. City Councilmembers were concerned about the survival of close by restaurants and businesses, especially Freighthouse Square. They are working with the city to put aside budget to support the displaced businesses and partnering with the Chamber and economic development organizations for support. The city selected the preferred Portland Ave Station to provide better connection to the Puyallup Tribe of Indians' Emerald Queen Casino and administration headquarters. This option also has a good connection to transit, which will be critical as there will be no parking at these stations. Sound Transit staff continue to have conversations with the Tribe on which option is best to cross the river.

A member commented that it has been a challenging year for rider experience. The member has been attempting to ride home to northeast Bellevue on the #545, and it has not been possible yet in the past two months because of missed trips or inaccurate data on One Bus Away. When the member has spoken to staff, it's reported as an "outage," but the rider alert about "trip cancellations due to bus system issue" has been a constant problem for more than a year, which is not a mere "outage." The rider alert is not useful since it does not say which trips are canceled. The member asked how staff can work to create schedules that riders can depend upon. Another member shared their experience as a part-time operator for nine years and shared insights that some routes are low priority and there may not be enough operators to cover all routes. Boardmember Walker acknowledged that Sound Transit partners with other agencies to operate buses and can be a frustration point, in Pierce and Snohomish counties as well. Things are getting better, but there is still room for improvement as the agency is not yet at an acceptable level of reliability. The member shared that Metro is adding a new class of operators and is working to staff up and hopefully that will help.

One member commented that their ride on Link has been safe and clean.

A member commented that a large portion of the agency's budget is federal money, which may not be as secure as before with the current administration. CEO Constantine has shared that the agency is not relying as heavily on federal funding for the next two to four years. The Board looking for other funding

sources. The agency advocated in the last legislative session to increase their bonding capacity, but that did not get added to the transportation package. The agency will try again next year and is also looking at the financial plan for other options.

Another member asked what the increased bonding capacity proposal was. The failed extended bond repayment was to extend repayment terms up to 75 years in certain cases. Staff are not sure if the ask will be the same next year.

A member shared that they heard there were likely Indian artifacts south of Wild Waves that may prevent pursuing an alternative along I-5 as part of the Tacoma Dome Extension analysis. Yes, staff did identify an area that is likely to contain significant artifacts, but the new preferred alignment avoids that area and staff have worked closely with the Tribe.

A member asked if the completion date for Tacoma Link is still 2035. Yes, it is still scheduled for completion in 2035.

One member asked how Board processes are going and what conversations are going on to help the Board operate effectively and efficiently. There is high Board engagement compared to past years, and the content of the retreat was resetting and grounding around the system as it is and setting up for financial conversations. Board processes have been on many Board members' minds in order to make informed decisions and also reconsidering how often they need to meet and what data they need.

Another member asked how it has been having a former Board member as the CEO now. It's felt incredibly smooth and Boardmember Walker has been impressed with CEO Constantine's transition and showing up to ask what board members need to make decisions.

Boardmember Walker shared she is open to hearing more from COP members and their thoughts or ideas on processes or questions after the financial presentation at next month's meeting.

One member shared appreciation for Boardmember Walker's attendance, the second in the entirety of their time on the COP.

Another member commented that they support Tacoma's decision on the alignment closest to Sounder.

### **Asset Management Program Update**

- Vivian dela Rosa – Director, Asset Management Headquarters
- Stephanie Ratko – Director, Business Transformation
- Vivian Wei – Deputy Director, Transit Assets

Staff provided an overview of agency's Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) and Enterprise Asset Management (EAM) systems. Staff acknowledged the questions that the COP sent ahead of time and that they will be covered in the presentation. Sound Transit is in the process of replacing the ERP and EAM systems. The current ERP system will no longer be supported beginning 2031 and EAM is not meeting current agency needs. The EAM and ERP systems are both critical to support the agency's functions.

Staff selected an experienced strategy consultant to support the transition of the ERP and EAM systems. The EAM request for proposals (RFP) was released in early May, and the ERP RFP will be released at the end of the month (June). The EAM system is anticipated to be selected at the end of the year and implemented in 2026. Staff are working now to understand what is needed to prepare for the transition and the current functions that are in scope now.

The EAM system functions are management of work, asset lifecycle, labor, MRO, contract, financial, and analytics and reporting. The ERP system functions are finance and procurement, human resources, capital programs, asset management, and materials management. Both systems will help boost public trust as they improve efficiency and oversight. Stakeholders in this process are all Sound Transit departments and King County Metro. Staff are working to train change champions and help people through the transition and not just launching the systems. Staff will request additional budget from the Board in the 2026 budget process for ERP and EAM systems implementation. System implementations are anticipated from 2026-2029.

The Asset Management Division was created in January 2025 with the organization restructure to focus on assets. In this structure, asset owners are able to manage assets closely. The verticals (i.e., departments) are enterprise asset management, facilities and systems maintenance, infrastructure, asset management engineering, rolling stock (light rail vehicles), and transit technology. In 2026 there will be a new asset-based service project prioritization, with the new asset-based budgeting model. Asset program budgets will be informed by asset condition assessments (for state of good repair (SOGR or SGR)) and replacement and improvement requests (for capital improvement project (CIP)) to the Project Review Board (PRB). Staff are tracking facilities deterioration rates and have a visual heat map of the deterioration distribution based on each facility. The structure evaluation program conducts regular assessments of pedestrian bridges every five years and parking garages inspected every three years. This assessment cycle is aligned with agency peers and supports a proactive renewal strategy.

Conducting facility renewal needs forecasting allows staff to quantify future needs to share with the financial planning and long-term planning teams. For bridges and tunnels inspection, staff developed a structural inspection standard for consistent condition assessment of critical infrastructure. Stage 1 condition is low deterioration, while stage 4 indicates a need for more urgent attention. This system allows critical assets to be monitored more closely.

For light rail vehicles, staff have established a repeatable process for monitoring. It is important to be proactive as parts may have a long procurement lead time. Staff conducted a preliminary analysis in February 2025 on average deterioration rates.

The track SOGR framework was developed using useful life benchmarks and inspection data. This ongoing inspection and condition data will help with modeling and help staff move from reactive to proactive work.

Roadmap is focused on three core task areas: 1) comprehensive asset inventory, 2) asset health assessment and risk-based prioritization, and 3) SOGR analysis improvements and asset to project mapping. The 2025 priorities are traction electrification, overhead catenary system, track, and electrical systems.

A member asked if staff will still be able to report on historical data with the transition to the new systems. Yes, and they will be better able to report out of the new, more modern systems.

Another member asked if staff will share this data back to finance department so they can plan ahead with more accurate data. Yes, the plan is to do just that. The current system Sound Transit has is 25 years old. The new systems will improve efficiency of gathering data. The asset team does work with long-range planning team as well.

The member also asked since there are two different procurements, will those potentially be two different vendors. Yes, they may be.

One member asked if the useful life of an asset is a part of the conditions assessment. For different asset types there are different outcomes. For example bridge and tunnel are not tracked by age, but by inspection condition since bridges and tunnels can last for a long time if maintained properly. The member commented that many of the stations in the downtown tunnel are red on the heat map. So, if tunnels can theoretically last for infinity, does that mean the stations are not maintained as they should be. Not necessarily, the tunnel structure refers only to the structural shell of the tunnel station. However, tunnel stations, as well as elevated stations, include a variety of asset classes such as electrical systems, elevators, and HVAC. These components typically have much shorter lifespans compared to the structural elements. This is why we still expect to see tunnel stations with lower overall condition ratings.

A member asked where in the organization chart asset management sits. Partly in finance and business administration and in service delivery. The member asked if there are substandard stations or structures and if that is documented, would that lead to legal risk. The agency's bi-annual inspections follow FTA guidelines; staff must report bridge and tunnel conditions to FTA and WSDOT.

A member asked why the current EAM system (Trapeze) is not meeting current needs. How it was originally implemented was fine, but it didn't scale up well as the agency grew. New modern systems will be very scalable and will integrate with ERP systems. Trapeze is about 8 years old, and it was not set up to be able to expand with the amount of assets with ST2 and ST3. Staff are tracking ST2 and ST3 assets now, but it takes a lot of manual time. Staff are documenting Link data in Trapeze, while bridge, tunnel, and track are different systems.

Another member commented on the light rail vehicle deterioration slide (slide 20 of the Asset Management Program Update presentation) that some vehicles are older, but the average percentages of deterioration are similar between newer and older vehicles. Sound Transit has been actively monitoring the LRV system and performing overhauls once vehicles reach the recommended mileage thresholds. This proactive approach helps ensure the LRVs remain in a state of good repair.

One member asked if one of the criteria for the new ERP and EAM systems will be that they are able to integrate and communicate with one another. Yes, the modern systems are software to service versus the older on-site systems.

A member asked if the light rail data go down to the car level. Yes, the inspector does a detailed visual inspection and there is a more detailed level of the report than was included in this presentation so staff could see if there is a specific car that may need repair or maintenance.

### **Adoption of Previous Meeting Summary, Member Reports**

Motion to adopt May notes, seconded, and approved.

One member attended the first part of the Board retreat on May 29 (Board presentation [here](#)). CEO Constantine shared about the Enterprise Initiative and acknowledged the big challenges the agency faces. There is a consultant with financial expertise that has been working with the Board for the past few months and the member found that encouraging. The new CEO is looking to maintain the program, improve efficiencies, and look for different funding sources for projects. The new approach is taking a more holistic view at ways to keep delivering the program in the face of financial challenges rather than extending project timelines, pushing projects out, or cancelling them.

Another member asked if there are any projects that have been paused due to finance constraints. Not for current projects that are funded, but there is more concern for future projects and that will be impacted by

the debt capacity. One member commented about Stride and its continuing progress, but the project is baselined and it is funded.

A member expressed appreciation for the financial update next meeting.

The Sound Transit Board will hear a recap of what happened at the retreat at the June 26 meeting and hear about the roadmap. Staff will strive to present an overview of the Board retreat in July to provide a briefing to the COP on the retreat and what's to come.

Staff shared an update on upcoming term ends for some members at the end of August. The COP administrator will reach out in mid-June to those members to check in if they would like to continue serving on the COP.

**Next Meeting:** Wednesday, July 9, 2025, 5:30 – 8:15 PM

- Finance Division Review
- TBD
- TBD