



# ***Tacoma Dome Link Extension***

## Draft EIS Comment Summary Report

**April 2025**

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and Individuals

## Acronyms and Abbreviations

Board	Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority Board
CERCLA	Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act
DAHP	Washington Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation
DBM	DBM Contractors, Inc.
Ecology	Washington State Department of Ecology
EIS	environmental impact statement
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
FTA	Federal Transit Administration
I-5	Interstate 5
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
NOAA	National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
OMF	operations and maintenance facility
ROD	Record of Decision
SEPA	State Environmental Policy Act
SF	South Federal Way
Sound Transit	Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority
Sound Transit 3	Sound Transit 3: The Regional Transit System Plan for Central Puget Sound
SR	State Route
TDLE	Tacoma Dome Link Extension
TOD	transit-oriented development
WSDOT	Washington State Department of Transportation

# 1 INTRODUCTION

The Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority (Sound Transit) is proposing the Tacoma Dome Link Extension (TDLE) to expand the regional light rail system south from Federal Way in King County to Tacoma in Pierce County (Figure 1-1). TDLE would construct approximately 8.5 miles of guideway and extend light rail service by approximately 10 miles from the Federal Way Downtown Station to the Tacoma Dome area. The TDLE project would include stations in Federal Way and Fife, as well as two in Tacoma. Within the TDLE corridor, the project travels across the ancestral and reservation lands of the Puyallup Tribe of Indians. TDLE would provide fast, reliable light rail connections to dense residential and commercial areas in the south region of the Puget Sound. TDLE is part of Sound Transit 3: The Regional Transit System Plan for Central Puget Sound (Sound Transit 3) that voters approved funding for in 2016, which also includes extensions to West Seattle, Ballard, Everett, South Kirkland, and Issaquah (Figure 1-2).

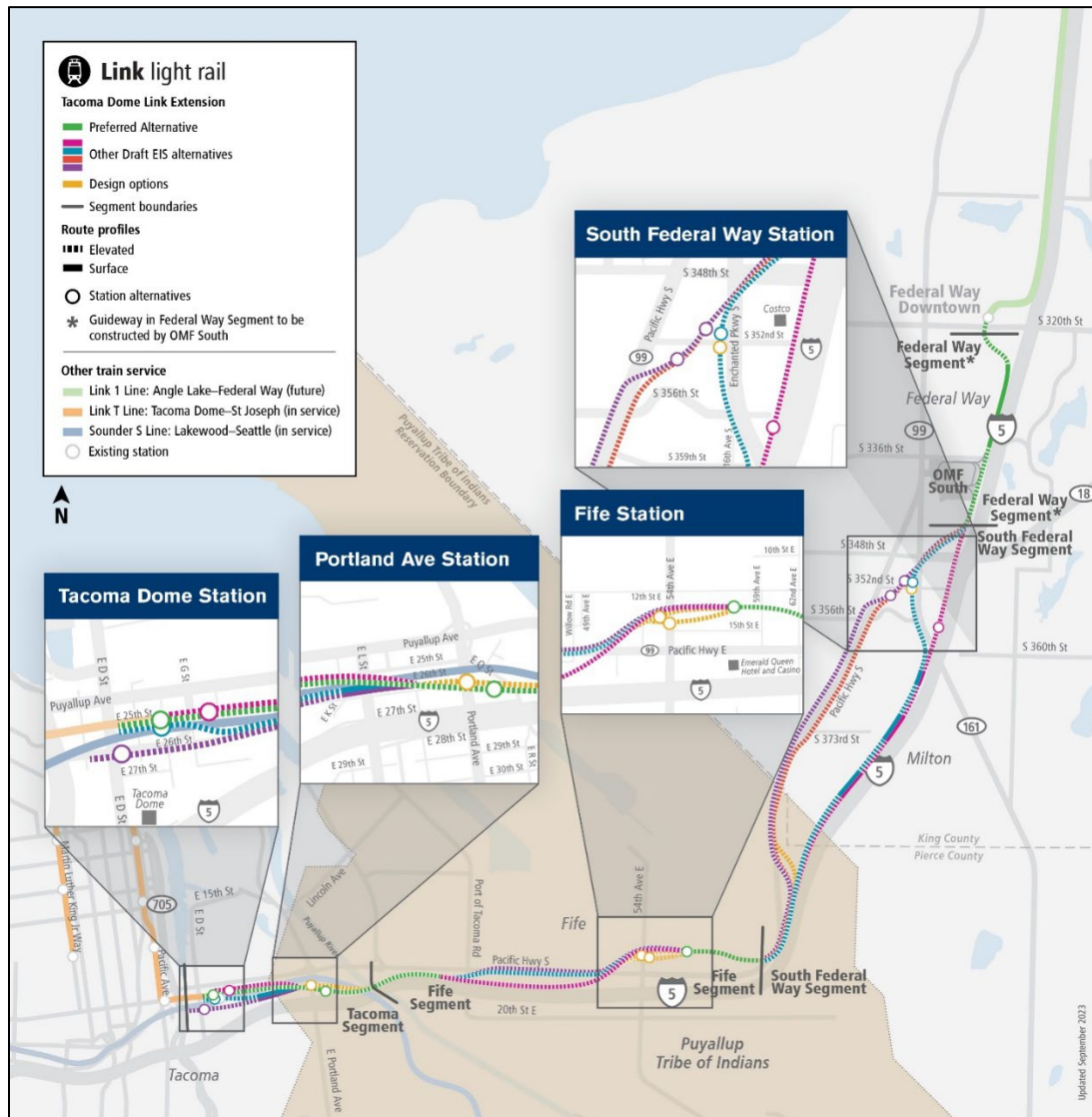
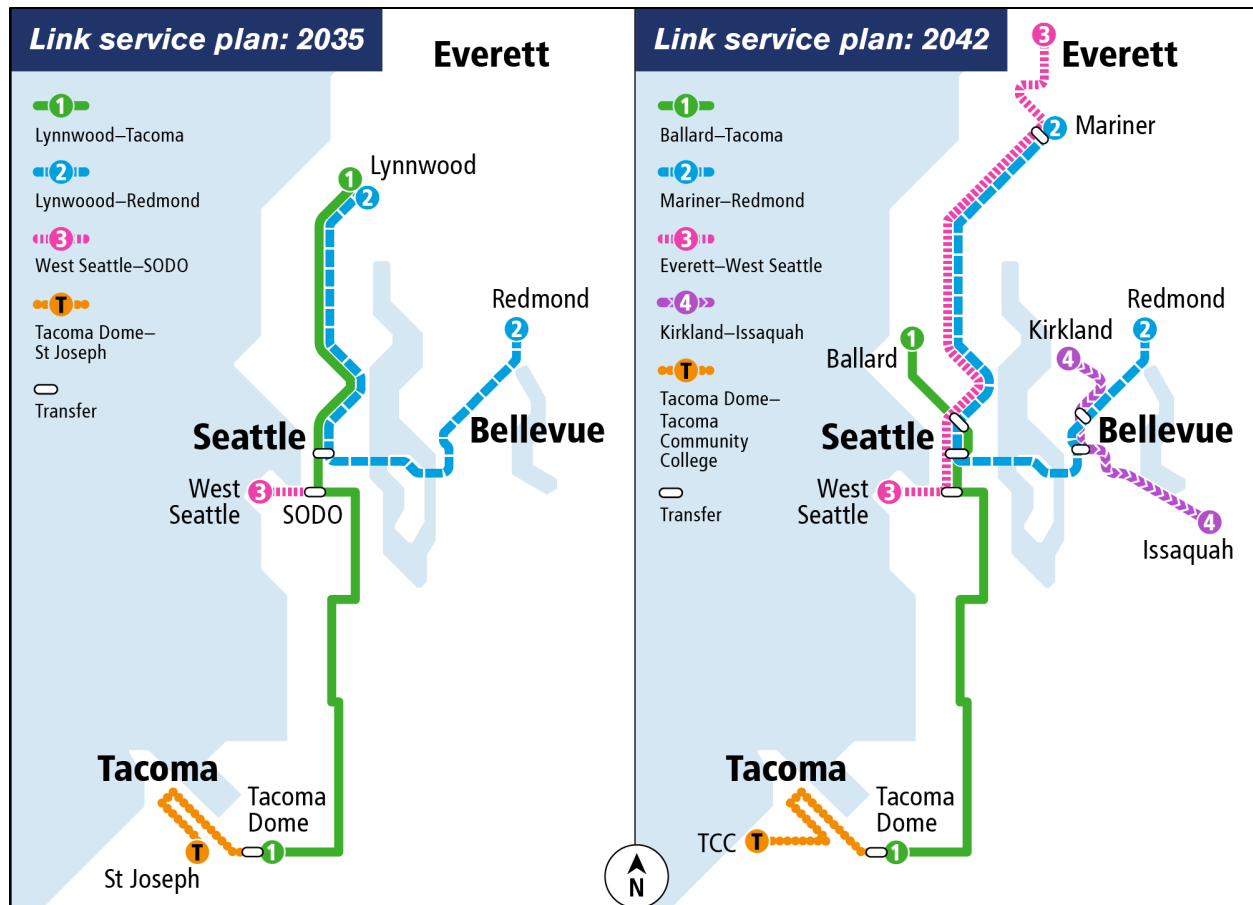


Figure 1-1 TDLE Alternatives



**Figure 1-2 Link Light Rail System Expansion**

## 1.1 Project Update and Purpose of this Report

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and Sound Transit published the TDLE Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) in December 2024. Comments from Tribes, agencies, and the public were requested during the extended 60-day public comment period from December 13, 2024, to February 10, 2025. The input received during the Draft EIS comment period is shared with the Sound Transit Board (Board) for consideration in confirming, modifying, or identifying the Preferred Alternative for evaluation in the Final EIS. The current project timeline is shown in Figure 1-3.

The purpose of this Draft EIS Comment Summary Report is to describe the Draft EIS outreach during the comment period and summarize the comments received during the comment period. Appendix A contains comment letters from Tribes and agencies. Appendix B contains comment letters and communications from businesses, community groups, and the public, including transcripts of spoken testimonies received at public hearings.

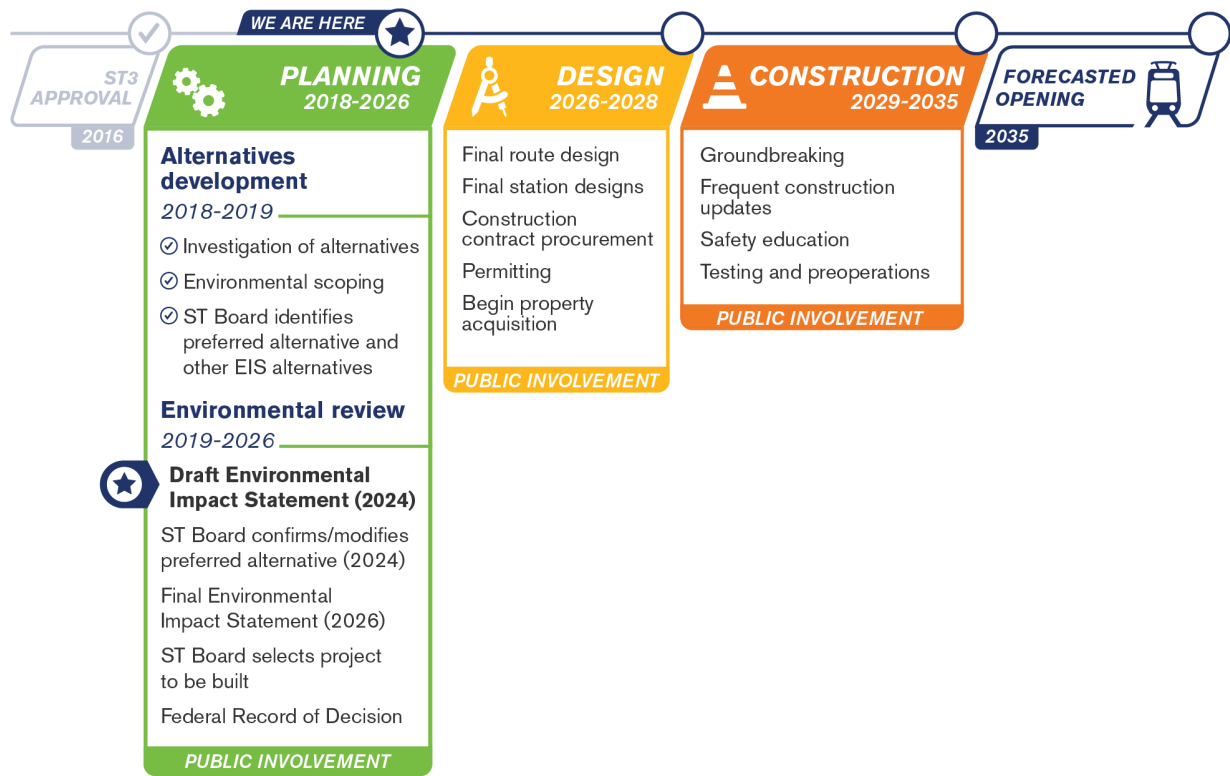


Figure 1-3 TDLE Timeline

Note: Parking facilities assumed to open in 2038, per the realigned capital program.

## 2 COMMENT PERIOD OUTREACH

### 2.1 Draft EIS Comment Period

The 60-day comment period for the TDLE Draft EIS was from December 13, 2024, to February 10, 2025. The following methods for commenting were available:

- Online: [soundtransit.org/tdlink-deis](https://soundtransit.org/tdlink-deis)
- Email: [tdlinkdeis@soundtransit.org](mailto:tdlinkdeis@soundtransit.org)
- Voicemail: (206) 257-2144
- Mail: TDLE Draft EIS c/o Elma Borbe  
Sound Transit  
401 S Jackson Street  
Seattle, WA 98104
- Verbally: Public hearings (virtual and in person)

### 2.2 Summary of Outreach and Participation

Sound Transit used several methods to engage Tribes, agencies, and the public during the TDLE Draft EIS comment period. The methods included in-person and virtual open houses with a public hearing component and an online open house that remained open for the duration of the comment period. Sound Transit also met with agencies, elected officials, stakeholders, potentially affected property owners, local businesses, and community groups to share information about the project and to answer questions. Figure 2-1 summarizes Draft EIS engagement.

During the extended comment period:

- Legal notices were published in *The Seattle Times*, *The News Tribune*, and *The Daily Journal of Commerce*, which provided information about the availability of the Draft EIS and dates for the public hearings. These notices ran between December 13, 2024, and January 1, 2025.
- A notice in the Federal Register was published on December 13, 2024.
- A notice in the Washington State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) Register was posted on December 13, 2024.
- A total of 169 people attended the public hearings held on January 21 (53 participants, virtual), January 23 (37 participants, in person), January 28 (28 participants, in person), January 30 (51 participants, in person).

More than 5,000 people visited the online open house, which was available in English, Spanish, Korean, Russian, Vietnamese, and Khmer.

- The Khmer site received 378 visitors, the Korean site received 67 visitors, the Vietnamese site received 50 visitors, the Russian site received 43 visitors, and the Spanish site received 26 visitors.
- Several posts were published on Sound Transit's Facebook page, including organic and sponsored Facebook posts, reaching over 82,800 people.



- Nearly 14,000 mailers were sent to residences and businesses within a 0.5-mile radius of the TDLE project footprint. The mailer included information in English, Spanish, Korean, Russian, Vietnamese, and a translated note in Khmer on where to access additional information translated in Khmer.
- Four email updates were sent to a mailing list of over 5,900 subscribers. Included was information on the publication of the Draft EIS and the comment period, instructions on how to access the document and submit comments, and dates for the public meetings and hearings.
- Posters were hung in 200 community gathering spaces and other areas where the public is likely to congregate in Federal Way, Fife, Milton, and Tacoma. In addition, the poster was translated into Spanish, Korean, Russian, Vietnamese, and Khmer and shared with community groups and organizations serving non-English constituents.
- Advertisements were placed in 11 local online and print publications, including English, Spanish, Korean, Vietnamese, and Russian publications.



Poster located at the T Line Tacoma Dome Station



Figure 2-1 Draft EIS Engagement

### 2.2.1 Coordination with Tribes

Sound Transit Board members and staff and FTA met with the Puyallup Tribal Council to share information on March 18, 2025. Regular engagement with Tribal staff will continue throughout the TDLE project.

### 2.2.2 Coordination with Jurisdictions, Community Groups, and Organizations

Sound Transit held briefings with a wide range of stakeholders within the TDLE project corridor. These briefings with jurisdictions, community groups, and organizations were tailored to meet the needs of each group and included information on the TDLE Draft EIS findings and process.

Sound Transit met with the following 23 jurisdictions, community groups, and organizations.

#### Jurisdictions

- City of Federal Way
- City of Fife
- City of Milton
- City of Tacoma
- Federal Way City Council
- Pierce County Regional Council Growth Management Coordinating Committee
- Pierce County Transportation Advisory Commission
- Tacoma Planning and Transportation Commission
- South County Area Transportation Board
- Interagency Advisory Group
- Port of Tacoma
- Washington State Department of Ecology
- Washington State Department of Fisheries
- Washington State Department of Transportation
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

#### Community Groups and Organizations

- Downtown on the Go
- Federal Way Chamber of Commerce
- Fife Milton Edgewood Chamber of Commerce
- Kent Chamber of Commerce
- Commencement Bay Trustee Council
- Multi-Service Center for Rainier View Senior Housing
- St. Paul Chong Hasang Church
- Regional Access Mobility Partnership, Tacoma-Pierce County Chamber

### 2.2.3 Public Meetings and Hearings

Sound Transit held four public meetings that included public hearings:

- Online: January 21, 2025, 11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.
- Tacoma (in person): January 23, 2025, 5:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.
- Federal Way (in person): January 28, 2025, 5:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.
- Fife (in person): January 30, 2025, 5:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.

The meetings were held using different platforms (online and in person), on different days of the week, and at different times of day to accommodate varying public and stakeholders' ability to attend and participate.

The online public meeting was held on Tuesday, January 21, 2025, from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. via Zoom and attended by 53 people. The first portion of the virtual meeting consisted of a presentation and a live question-and-answer (Q&A) segment. The presentation included an overview of the TDLE project and information on the Draft EIS comment period. The Q&A segment offered the opportunity to submit written questions and have them answered by a panel of Sound Transit staff who represented different disciplines on the project team, including engineering and design, environmental, and property acquisition and relocation. The second portion of the online meeting consisted of a public hearing where attendees could provide formal public comment. Public hearing comments were captured by a court reporter.

Three in-person meetings/hearings were held in Tacoma, Federal Way, and Fife. The Tacoma in-person meeting was held at the Greater Tacoma Convention Center on Thursday, January 23, 2025, from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. and attended by 37 people. The Federal Way in-person meeting was held at the Federal Way Performing Arts and Events Center on Tuesday, January 28, 2025, from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. and attended by 28 people. The Fife in-person meeting was held at the Fife Community Center on Thursday, January 30, from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. and attended by 51 people.

The in-person meetings included an open house, where members of the public could browse displays with information on the TDLE environmental review process and Draft EIS findings. Sound Transit subject-matter experts were available to answer questions from the public. The in-person meetings also included an overview presentation on the Draft EIS analysis. Following the presentation, members of the public had the option to return to the open house or participate in the public hearing, where attendees could provide formal public comments. A court reporter captured the public hearing comments. Attendees also had the option to fill out a written comment form at the meeting.

All of the public meetings/hearings included accessibility features. The virtual meeting featured live captioning (in English) and was screen-reader accessible. Sound Transit offered interpretation in Spanish, Vietnamese, and Russian at the virtual hearing and Spanish and Vietnamese interpretation at the in-person hearings. Sound Transit staff communicated the languages and accessibility features throughout the public meetings and hearings to ensure all attendees could fully participate. Languages available for interpretation were based on the demographic data of the study area.

### 2.2.4 Online Open House

An online open house was available at [soundtransit.org/tdlink-deis](https://soundtransit.org/tdlink-deis) for the duration of the comment period to inform the public about the project and serve as a platform for the public to submit feedback.

The online open house was available in English, Spanish, Korean, Russian, Vietnamese and Khmer.

Over 5,000 visitors accessed the online open house during the Draft EIS comment period, including more than 550 visitors to the translated language sites (viewing materials in languages other than English). Visitors were given the opportunity to comment on the TDLE Draft EIS findings via a digital comment form. Approximately 245 people submitted comments via the online open house.

### 2.2.5 Outreach to Minority, Low-Income, and Limited-English-Proficiency Populations

Sound Transit made intentional effort to provide information and communicate with minority and low-income populations, and those with limited proficiency in English. This effort included the following:

#### Materials

- The online open house was fully translated in Spanish, Korean, Russian, Vietnamese, and Khmer, which were identified as priority languages in the project area. The website was also screen-reader accessible.
- The project mailer that announced the publication of the Draft EIS included information in English, Korean, Russian, Spanish, Vietnamese, and Khmer.
- A toolkit with draft email, newsletter, and social media content was distributed to over 55 local organizations and government entities to share through their communication channels.
- A document called Alternatives Guide was created to summarize key findings. The document was fully translated to Spanish, Korean, Russian, Vietnamese, and Khmer and was available online and in print. The document was also available at each public meeting in all languages.
- A handout called Guide to the Draft EIS was created to describe how to access the Draft EIS and submit comment. The handout was fully translated to Spanish, Korean, Russian, Vietnamese, and Khmer. The handout was available at each public meeting in all languages.

#### Publications

- Advertisements announcing the Draft EIS comment period were distributed in the *Federal Way Mirror*, *International Examiner*, *El Siete Dias*, *Korean Times Seattle*, *Russian Town Seattle*, *Tacoma News Tribune*, *Weekly Volcano*, *South Sound Biz*, *Tacoma Weekly*, *Tu Decides Newsletter*, and *Northwest Vietnamese*.

### **Events and briefings**

- Offering interpretation and translation services at the online and in-person public meetings/hearings, as discussed in Section 2.2.3, and providing the online open house in five languages in addition to English.
- Briefings were offered to social service organizations and community groups in the project area.

### **2.2.6 Informational Meetings with Property Owners and Businesses**

Outreach and engagement with potentially affected property owners has and will continue throughout the development of the project. Prior to the publication of the Draft EIS, Sound Transit sent letters to potentially affected property owners notifying them of the project. During the Draft EIS comment period, these affected property owners had the opportunity to sign up for virtual property owner briefings with members of the project team through an online scheduling tool. These briefings included an overview of the project, environmental review timeline, and a high-level overview of the property acquisition and relocation process. TDLE staff will continue to offer meetings and additional resources to potentially affected property owners as the project advances.

Leading up to and during the comment period, Sound Transit held four group briefings and 12 individual briefings with private property owners that have residences or businesses in the corridor.

### 3 COMMENT SUMMARY

Sound Transit received a total of 318 communications during the TDLE Draft EIS comment period. A communication is defined as a letter, email, voicemail, transcribed oral comment, or electronic comment form. There are often multiple individual comments within each communication. Most of these communications were from individuals. Several communications were also received from potentially affected businesses, community groups, and organizations, and from local jurisdictions. The rest were from Tribes and federal, state, or regional agencies. Communications received are summarized in Table 3-1 according to their source.

**Table 3-1 Communications Received by Commenter Type**

Commenter Type	Number
Tribe	1
Federal agency	2
State agency	4
Regional agency	6
Local jurisdiction	4
Business	28
Community groups and organizations	9
Individual	264
<b>Total</b>	<b>318</b>

#### 3.1 Summary of Comments from Tribes, Agencies, and Jurisdictions

Sound Transit received 18 communications from the following Tribes, federal, state, and regional agencies and local jurisdictions. Copies of these communications are included in Appendix A.

**Tribes:** Puyallup Tribe of Indians.

**Federal Agencies:** Federal Aviation Administration, Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

**State Agencies:** Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT), Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology), Washington State Department of Archeology and Historic Preservation (DAHP).

**Regional Agencies:** King County Metro, Sound Transit's Pierce County Board Members, Pierce County Planning and Public Works Department, Pierce Transit, Port of Tacoma, Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC).

**Local Jurisdictions:** City of Federal Way, City of Fife, City of Milton, and City of Tacoma.

### **3.1.1 Tribes**

#### **Puyallup Tribe of Indians**

The Puyallup Tribe of Indians communicated that they will submit a detailed comment letter following a leadership meeting. They indicated that it was unclear whether individual Tribal members will have the opportunity to provide input if design changes occur after the Draft EIS comment period closes. They requested that individual Tribal members be given the opportunity to comment on all design elements, including final placement of stormwater ponds.

### **3.1.2 Federal and State Agencies**

#### **Environmental Protection Agency**

EPA comments predominantly focused on recommendations for additional analysis in the Final EIS regarding hazardous materials and contaminated sites, aquatic resources, impacts to the human environment, air quality, and resilience.

EPA comments related to hazardous materials related to Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA) sites, the Commencement Bay Nearshore/Tide Flats Superfund Site, and waters of the U.S. These comments recommend additional analysis of hazardous materials and contaminants near river and stream crossings. They also request the inclusion of a description of specific best management practices to reduce disturbance, prevent the release of potential contaminants, and ensure that contamination does not infiltrate nearby sites and wetlands.

In addition, the EPA comments recommended including additional analysis in the Final EIS on potential habitat sites established by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Natural Resource Damage Assessment (NRDA), receiving waters and downstream waters — including those outside the study area — and additional mitigation measures for impacts to water resources in the Hylebos watershed. Comments specifically discussed the current impacts to the Hylebos watershed stemming from industry and urbanization, which would be increased by TDLE. They recommended additional mitigation, such as credit-to-debit ratios, which could encompass preserving existing aquatic systems, enhancing currently degraded systems, or reestablishing hydrologic connection of isolated wetlands.

EPA comments related to the human environment predominantly concerned the potential effects of displacement as a result of the TDLE project and recommend that the Final EIS include additional mitigation measures. Comments related to air quality predominantly focused on recommendations for additional construction emission estimates in the Final EIS. EPA comments also highlighted resilience planning, recommending an expanded discussion of project design measures to prepare for potential future stressors.

#### **Federal Aviation Administration**

The Federal Aviation Administration stated they had no comment on the TDLE Draft EIS.

#### **Washington State Department of Transportation**

Comments from WSDOT focused on transportation, coordination with the State Route (SR) 167 Completion project, stormwater, and development of a compatibility report.



Transportation comments included concerns about impacts to the quality and operations of Amtrak Cascades service with the Tacoma Close to Sounder Alternative. They requested development of clear mitigation strategies in consultation with WSDOT Rail, Freight, and Ports for this alternative. Other transportation-related comments included questions about traffic analysis, parking facilities, and intersection impacts.

Comments related to the SR 167 Completion Project (which is currently under construction, with an expected completion of 2030) addressed changes in existing conditions and planned future work and recommended close coordination for any work that overlaps the Hylebos Riparian Restoration Program. Of particular concern is appropriate mitigation for TDLE project impacts to the Hylebos Riparian Restoration Program and the need for Tribal coordination regarding mitigation areas that will be deeded back to the Puyallup Tribe of Indians.

WSDOT indicated that they anticipate Sound Transit will follow Ecology's 2024 Stormwater Manual for Western Washington or other manual determined to be equivalent for project elements on WSDOT property. They also indicated that a Compatibility Report is needed to ensure Sound Transit's plans on WSDOT property are compatible with WSDOT's existing and future interests. Additional comments focused on suggested revisions to visual simulations and analysis, project design recommendations, and editorial changes.

### **Washington State Department of Ecology**

Ecology provided comments summarizing the potential wetland impacts in each segment of the TDLE project, with recommended alternatives for each segment based on the fewest wetland and stream impacts. Comments from Ecology also provided information on state requirements for water quality permitting and the need to demonstrate avoidance and minimization of wetland impacts. Ecology comments included descriptions of the shoreline jurisdiction in each segment and a recommendation to add information on solid waste management and potential fill sources during construction.

### **Washington State Department of Archeology and Historic Preservation**

DAHP provided two communications: one focused on the Draft Programmatic Agreement, and one focused on the TDLE Draft EIS. DAHP noted that they had no substantial comments on the Draft EIS at this time and requested additional consultation on the Draft Programmatic Agreement.

## **3.1.3 Regional Agencies**

### **King County Metro**

King County Metro provided comments that predominantly focused on their review of the station design for alternatives located in King County. These comments included concerns that the current design did not accommodate bus circulation and access and comments that addressed specific requirements for transit stations, such as the width of crosswalks and the inclusion of comfort stations for drivers. In addition, King County Metro expressed concerns that station design had not been revised since the previous review and requested additional information on station design.

Other comments from King County Metro included concerns surrounding impacts to the S 320th Park-and-Ride and the South Federal Way Park-and-Ride, which are both owned by WSDOT



but operated and maintained by King County. These concerns specifically focused on a loss of parking or access to these park-and-ride locations during construction.

King County Metro also provided corrections to transit schedules and availability.

### **Sound Transit's Pierce County Board Members**

Sound Transit's Pierce County Board Members provided comments, which highlighted that each future station is surrounded by a unique area and access to the stations must be individualized. They stated that delivering TDLE as expediently as possible with project elements responsive to the unique needs of the jurisdictions throughout the region is matter of equity.

The Pierce County Board Members emphasized the importance of structured parking availability at the South Federal Way and Preferred Fife stations. They stated that parking that is consistent with the City of Fife's plans for a city center is vital to the success of the Fife station area. In addition, they noted that the plans for 500-stall parking garages were included in the original 2016 Sound Transit 3 package approved by voters and structured parking was also included in the Board's realignment action in 2021 (R2021-05). They noted that the parking delay was unavoidable due to the realignment, but that it would result in a strain on existing transit infrastructure in Pierce County.

In addition, they discussed the importance of safe multimodal integration and access at the Portland Avenue and Tacoma Dome stations, noting that this integration would help further the City of Tacoma's goals toward creating more transit-oriented development (TOD) in the station areas.

### **Pierce County Planning and Public Works**

The Pierce County Planning and Public Works Department commented on transportation, including parking, safe multimodal station access, transit, and traffic during construction and operations. The County expressed support for the alternatives and station locations that provide multimodal access and recommended against locations that would limit access for pedestrians and active transportation, specifically the South Federal Way (SF) I-5 Station. The County also requested that the funding Sound Transit had previously committed to jurisdictions for improved multimodal access around stations be included as a mitigation measure in the Final EIS. The County expressed concerns about delayed parking at the Federal Way and Fife stations, noting that there would be a potential increase in emissions due to the increase in driving to and from park-and-rides by passengers. They also expressed concern about a lack of parking provided at the Tacoma Dome Station, which is projected to have the highest level of ridership. The County also requested clarification on potential intersection impacts and roadway closures during construction and operations. Comments mentioned the need for coordination between County departments and Sound Transit during construction planning. They also provided information on changes to transit routes.

In addition, the Pierce County Planning and Public Works Department provided information on Critical Area Ordinances that were revised in February 2025 and offered to coordinate with Sound Transit to integrate these updates into the Final EIS. The County emphasized the importance of evaluating impacts on natural systems that extend beyond the project area and avoiding impacts to natural areas including wetlands, wellhead protection areas, and aquifer recharge areas. They expressed support for the long-span bridge crossing of the Puyallup River and noted the importance of coordinating with Tribes.

Finally, the County offered recommendations for additional engagement with Tribes, noted the importance of mitigating environmental health impacts in the South Federal Way Segment as that portion of the project corridor already experiences poor environmental health, and emphasized the importance of coordination in reference to cultural resources.

### **Pierce Transit**

Pierce Transit focused their review on the Draft EIS Transportation Technical Report (Appendix J1) and the Conceptual Design Drawings (Appendix F). Their comments included concerns and recommendations for station access and design from a transit perspective.

Pierce Transit provided comments on the Tacoma Dome stations, ranking the Close to Sounder Alternative and Station, with proposed adjustments, as their preferred choice and ranking the 26th Street Alternative as their least desirable option.

In addition, Pierce Transit identified that the Board-adopted Destination 2040 Long Range Plan includes level of service. However, these service levels are contingent upon funding. They also recommended that Sound Transit document the need for future parking demand management at the Tacoma Dome Station in the form of a regional parking management facility.

Pierce Transit emphasized the importance of mitigating transit impacts as a result of construction, including potential T Line closures; considering funding for local transit service as potential mitigation; and parking demand management during operations.

### **Port of Tacoma**

The Port of Tacoma provided comments on transportation related to freight and their station and alternative preferences, including recommendations and concerns surrounding station and alternative design.

The Port of Tacoma expressed support for the Preferred Fife Station, noting that it is consistent with the Fife City Center plan and freight movement and industrial interests within the area. They expressed concerns that other station locations or alternatives would cause more impacts to traffic and improvement projects in the area, limiting the flow of freight. They also noted that they are opposed to the inclusion of bus bays on 54th Avenue E, noting that this would increase traffic and cause conflict with freight movement through the area.

The Port of Tacoma expressed strong opposition to the Fife Median Alternative, noting a concern for traffic and freight impacts and the loss of truck queue space in the turning and median lanes of the Pacific Highway.

They expressed a neutral stance on the Portland Avenue stations but noted that they are opposed to bus bays on Portland Avenue. Portland Avenue is a key freight corridor, which needs to be considered during the Final EIS and design. The Port of Tacoma also expressed a desire to coordinate during construction to reduce and minimize impacts to freight.

### **Puget Sound Regional Council**

PSRC provided comments on TOD; travel time; transit access; parking; coordination with Tribes, stakeholders, and the community; and public health and equity.

PSRC emphasized the importance of integrating TOD into the station design and when considering alignments and alternatives, encouraging Sound Transit to continue to include TOD as a central point in their analysis as the Final EIS and design is developed. In addition, the

PSRC encouraged Sound Transit to consider door-to-door travel times in the Final EIS analysis, incorporating the need to transfer between different transit lines and to access elevated station options and guideways. They expressed concern about delayed parking availability at the Federal Way and Fife stations, noting that expanded transit options should be made available to mitigate the delay.

PSRC commended Sound Transit's efforts in coordinating with the public, stakeholders, and the Tribes while offering encouragement to continue this level of clear, transparent, and early engagement.

In addition, PSRC expressed support for TDLE's efforts in improving the public health, equity, and human well-being in historically underserved areas. They recommended that these goals continue to be emphasized during future planning and design phases. Similarly, they emphasized the need for continued development of strategies to minimize or mitigate the impacts of displacement and acquisitions on low- to moderate-income households and small businesses that may be affected by TDLE.

### **3.1.4 Local Jurisdictions**

#### **City of Federal Way**

The City of Federal Way comments focused mainly on transportation. A substantial number of comments focused on the potential parking demand at the South Federal Way station and in the surrounding station area after the garage is constructed and if parking is deferred. They also identified the need to address parking during construction, including provisions for project workers and potential impacts from loss of parking on local businesses. In addition, they expressed concern about roadway closures on SR 99 during construction.

The City of Federal Way identified concerns about displacements and impacts to the business community as well as the corresponding financial effects over the time horizon of the project. The City also conveyed questions and concerns about the displacement of the King County Emergency Shelter, recommending additional analysis, mitigation, and clarification of potential impacts to other residential developments.

Additional comments included the need to update the design and Final EIS to reflect the Federal Way Comprehensive Plan Update 2024 (adopted in December 2024), the need to identify restrictions on properties, and the need to address wetland impacts.

#### **City of Fife**

The City of Fife expressed that the Preferred Fife Station is of critical importance, noting that it is the most supportive of the City Center Subarea Plan and the Fife Comprehensive Plan.

Other comments from the City of Fife focused on transportation. Parking, traffic operations, nonmotorized access, and sight distances on Pacific Highway E are among the common transportation themes.

The City stated that structured parking is critical to efficient land use patterns in the station area. They disagreed with the approach for considering surface parking as an "option" and requested additional comparison of structured and surface parking impacts. The City stated that the Fife Median Alternative is not a realistic alternative due to the left-turn restrictions that would increase U-turn volumes and cause related intersection delays and turn restrictions. The City

also requested clarification on implementation of the system access program and nonmotorized improvements in the station area.

Other comments from the City included consideration of the size of turnback properties to allow for greater economic development opportunities and more affordable housing, the need for coordinating with the WSDOT SR 167 Gateway Completion Project's Riparian Restoration Program, and the need for coordinating with the Port of Tacoma on protecting freight access during construction and operations of TDLE.

### **City of Milton**

The City of Milton expressed concerns with the alternatives that run through Milton on Pacific Highway/SR 99 due to the impacts to residents, businesses, and environmentally sensitive critical areas. The City requested that the Sound Transit Board consider the SF I-5 Alternative. If the SF I-5 Alternative is not an option, the City supports the SF 99-East Alternative because it would have the next to least impacts on Milton and would assist in the City's goal of creating a safer corridor for traffic and pedestrians.

### **City of Tacoma**

The City of Tacoma had comments on potential business impacts, land use, transportation, multimodal access, project design, impacts to Freighthouse Square, the tree canopy, and utilities.

Transportation comments primarily focused on traffic analysis, roadway conditions, and multimodal access to the station. The City of Tacoma asked about potential mitigation for traffic impacts and analysis of multimodal demand after construction as well as access to stations for people walking and biking. In transportation and design-related comments, the City expressed interest in ongoing coordination with Sound Transit on designs above or adjacent to city streets and asked how elements of the guideway and stations may affect surface streets.

Comments from the City of Tacoma related to businesses focused on potential displacement and impacts to small business tenants and patrons at Freighthouse Square due to the Close to Sounder Alternative and potential indirect impacts to businesses and institutions as a result of potential T Line closures from the Tacoma 25th-West and Tacoma 25th-East alternatives. Comments related to land use effects of the project expressed concern for potential impacts to incoming residential and mixed-use development and the potential effects of elevated guideway on surrounding properties. The City of Tacoma noted potential historical considerations for Freighthouse Square and requested analysis in addition to potential business and economic impacts.

Other comments from the City of Tacoma reflected potential utility challenges and noted the locations of existing utilities, which the City and Sound Transit will continue to coordinate in the future.

## 3.2 Summary of Comments from Businesses

During the comment period, Sound Transit received 28 communications from 20 businesses, including:

### South Federal Way Segment

- Arctic Glacier Premium Ice
- Automotive Images
- Costco
- DBM Contractors, Inc. (DBM)
- Holgate Street Properties LLC
- Plant 2 LLC (Heidelberg Materials)
- Tire City (3)
- Walmart

### Tacoma Segment

- Adela's Authentic Mexican Restaurant (Adela Ulmer)
- Bike Box (2)
- Celtic Attic (Kristen Olsen)
- Fastco Inc.
- Tacoma Book Center

### Fife Segment

- Fife Camping World
- Graham Real Ventures
- McDonald's, Local Owner, 1737 51st Avenue E
- O'Brien Auto Group (4)
- Pick-Quick Drive In (3)
- Schnitzer Properties
- Tacoma RV

Copies of these communications are included in Appendix B. The three communications received from Tire City consisted of petitions: one online and one hard copy, with 22 and 91 signatures, respectively, and one comment submitted through the online open house.

### South Federal Way Segment

Five businesses located in the South Federal Way Segment expressed an alternative preference; four of these businesses indicated that they preferred the SF I-5 Alternative and SF I-5 Station Alternative and one expressed a preference for the SF 99-West Alternative. Businesses cited displacement as a predominant concern. Comments from two businesses expressed concern about the potential economic impacts of the SF 99-East Alternative, which would limit left turns on SR 99 in Milton from the county line to just south of Birch Street.

**Walmart** expressed support for the SF I-5 Alternative because it would have the fewest impacts on several resources. They stated that the EIS needs to fully address permanent impacts to businesses that are not fully displaced. This includes impacts to store access and operations, parking during construction as well as long-term, and electric vehicle charging stations. They indicated that it was unclear whether forecasted transit ridership accounts for changes in commute trends resulting from remote work. They also stated that the Draft EIS does not address a broader shift towards electric vehicle systems, the project's impacts to these systems, and the impact of electric vehicle laws. Walmart also identified concerns with safety with

derailments and requested more information on the guideway height and train speeds on their property.

**Costco** expressed opposition to the SF I-5 Alternative because of its impacts to a retaining wall, a stream, and a fire lane on their property. They identified that there would be traffic impacts on S 352nd Street from all alternatives, but the SF I-5 Alternative, in particular, would have severe effects on the property and business operations because it is the primary access point for delivery trucks.

**Plant 2 LLC (Heidelberg Materials)** expressed a preference for the SF I-5 Alternative to avoid displacement of their business and the challenge of reasonably relocating their operations. They also expressed concern about displacement and relocation of other businesses, ecological impacts, and the cost of the other alternatives. They asked for clarification on the evaluation of TOD and requested that the Final EIS provide further analysis of the Plant 2 facility, including the difficulty in relocating.

**DBM** provided comments detailing its preference for the SF I-5 Alternative, stating the SF I-5 Alternative would be less costly and have fewer residential and business displacements, historic and cultural resource impacts, ecosystems impacts, transportation impacts, and visual impacts. While DBM provided a clear preference for the SF I-5 Alternative, they indicated that if one of the SR 99 alternatives were selected, they would prefer the SF 99-West Alternative with the SF 99-Enchanted Station because of cost, number of business and employee displacements, acreage of right-of-way needed, wetland and stream impacts, transportation impacts, noise impacts, and number of utility conflicts. DBM also identified the need for additional information in the Draft EIS including detailed cost, economic impacts of displacing local businesses and employees, employee displacement data, unredacted cultural resources information, and the cost of leasing Tribal lands.

**Tire City** provided two petitions expressing support to save the business and concern about being displaced by the alternatives along SR 99. Their comment included an online petition with 22 signatures and a hard-copy petition with 91 signatures. They also provided a verbal comment at the public hearing, requesting additional information and expressing concerns about displacement of their business.

**Arctic Glacier Premium Ice** and their landowner **Holgate Street Properties LLC** each submitted separate communications. These communications included comments primarily concerned with the economic impacts that the SF 99-East Alternative would have by restricting left turns into their business. Concern was expressed about the columns in the middle lane exacerbating existing safety issues on SR 99. They also expressed concern regarding vibration during construction and operation affecting equipment in their facility. Holgate Street Properties indicated a preference for the SF I-5 Alternative, which would avoid these impacts. Concern about the impacts on business operations as a result of the SF 99-East Alternative restricting left turns in Milton was also shared by **Automotive Images**. Automotive Images advocated for a west alignment to maintain left-turn business access.

## Fife Segment

The 12 comment submissions from businesses in the Fife Segment commonly cited concern about being displaced as a reason for alternative preferences or opposition in their comments. **Schnitzer Properties**, which owns the Fife Business Park, supported the Fife I-5 Alternative due to the business displacements and construction access restrictions from Pacific Highway alternatives. The **Pick-Quick Drive In** also indicated support for the Fife I-5 Alternative. They



noted that the Fife Pacific Highway Alternative would lead to closure of the Pick-Quick which would be a loss to the community, customers, employees, and suppliers. They also stated that the Fife Median Alternative would cause their business to close due to the multiyear construction period impacts that would cause financial challenges. **Tacoma RV** also expressed concern over impacts of the Fife Pacific Highway Alternative on their business.

**Fife Camping World** identified concerns with Fife I-5 Alternative displacing their parking, which is critical to the functionality and operation of the property, and blocking views of the business from I-5. The **O'Brien Auto Group** noted that all alternatives would block visibility of auto dealerships from I-5 or Pacific Highway and limit access. They also stated that use of the property by the project would affect operations of the dealerships and recommended another route along 12th Street to avoid impacts. **Graham Real Ventures** identified the potential inability to relocate in the area if they are impacted and was interested in understanding whether Sound Transit could limit acquisitions to airspace. The owner of the **McDonald's** franchise at 1737 51st Ave E, who noted that it is a minority-owned business, expressed concern that a configuration at 54th Avenue and the I-5 interchange could displace the business and that any impacts to their drive through would be damaging.

### Tacoma Segment

Communications were received from three businesses (**Bike Box**, **Adela's Authentic Mexican Restaurant**, and **Celtic Attic**) in Freighthouse Square — a shopping and dining center located in the Tacoma Dome station area — which expressed concern over potential displacement as a result of the Tacoma Close to Sounder Alternative. These concerns were also reflected in comments received from individuals, as discussed in Section 3.4. Freighthouse businesses expressed a desire for closer coordination with Sound Transit in the future. The **Tacoma Book Center** expressed a preference for the Tacoma 25th Street-East and Tacoma 25th Street-West alternatives. They noted that the Tacoma Close to Sounder Alternative would displace Freighthouse Square and that the Tacoma 26th Street Alternative would displace small, unique businesses, including the bookstore itself and a bakery, and would have more traffic implications due to Tacoma Dome event crowds. **Fastco Inc.**, a business that would be affected by the Portland Avenue Station, expressed concern over displacement from the Portland Avenue Station location and expressed a preference for the Portland Avenue Span Station Option so that they could remain at their current site.

## 3.3 Summary of Comments from Community Groups and Organizations

In addition, Sound Transit received nine communications from nine Community Groups and Organizations, including:

- Downtown on the Go
- Gethsemane Catholic Cemetery
- Multi-Service Center for Rainier View Senior Housing
- Seattle Children's
- Spring Valley Mobile Home Park
- St. Paul Chong Hasang Parish
- The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints
- Tacoma-Pierce County Chamber of Commerce and the Manufacturing Industrial Council for the South Sound
- Transportation Choices Coalition

Copies of these communications are included in Appendix B.

**Transportation Choices Collation** provided comments on TDLE as a whole. They emphasized transportation considerations within their comments, noting that the chosen alternative should prioritize travel time reductions for riders and that stations should be located in areas that maximize seamless multimodal integration and allow for extensive TOD.

### South Federal Way Segment

Community groups and organizations in South Federal Way and Milton that provided comments include Seattle Children's, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Gethsemane Catholic Cemetery, and Spring Valley Mobile Home Park. Each expressed a desire to avoid impacts to their patrons, community, and operations. **Seattle Children's** expressed a preference for the SF 99-Enchanted Station and SF Enchanted Parkway Station because of their close proximity to the South Clinic for use by patrons and employees. They also requested continued engagement on impacts from noise and vibration, maintaining access, safety, security of the construction site, and other potential impacts. **The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints** expressed concern that an alternative on I-5 would result in loss of vegetation as well as cause noise and visual impacts to a planned church, and they requested additional information on impacts to the Church property. They also stated that the SF I-5 Station does not meet statewide and local planning objectives for TOD. **Gethsemane Catholic Cemetery** identified the importance of quiet at the cemetery and of the SR 99 southbound left-turn lane that provides access to the cemetery. They stated that they strongly favor the SF 99-West Alternative if the guideway is going to be located on SR 99 because it appears to not adversely affect the cemetery. They stated opposition to the SF 99-East Alternative due to the access limitation it would cause to visitors from closure of the southbound left-turn lane. They also requested special noise and vibration measures during construction.

Located in the Milton, **Spring Valley Mobile Home Park** identified that the mobile home park is an established residential community of over 45 homeowners that fosters connections and social ties with its residents and provides affordable housing. They expressed concern with the impacts of the SF 99-West Alternative to the community and stated that Sound Transit's relocation would not be able to provide the to the same lifestyle as the residents currently experience.

### Fife Segment

Community groups and organizations in Fife that provided comments included Multi-Service Center for Rainier View Senior Housing and St. Paul Chong Hasang Parish. Multi-Service Center, a nonprofit organization, expressed concern about displacements and impacts to their **Rainier View Senior Housing** community that provides affordable housing for low-income seniors. **St. Paul Chong Hasang Parish** expressed concern for their voices being heard and about impacts as a result of the Preferred Alternative in Fife, which would displace a rectory and convent. St. Paul Chong Hasang Parish also expressed concern over impacts to the church and parishioners during operations and construction, including noise and visual impacts and access disruptions.

### Tacoma Segment

**Downtown on the Go** stated that there was not enough information to make a recommendation on a preferred alternative or station location at Portland Avenue and Tacoma Dome. They requested that multimodal connectivity, safe station access, and mitigation for businesses



impacts by station construction be prioritized. They also provided input and raised concerns about specific alternatives and station locations. Downtown on the Go noted safety concerns surrounding the Portland Avenue Station location and expressed a desire for Sound Transit to include traffic safety improvements in the final design of the station area and to prioritize collaboration with Pierce Transit to provide more frequent local transit service to the station. In addition, Downtown on the Go noted that Tacoma Dome Station should be integrated into the existing multimodal landscape and prioritize proximity to existing bus, T Line, and Sounder service. They identified concerns about Amtrak impacts as a result of the Close to Sounder Alternative and T Line service impacts associated with alternatives along 25th Street. They also encouraged thoughtful engagement with the Freighthouse Square tenants, noting that many are immigrant, refugee, and minority owned.

**Tacoma-Pierce County Chamber of Commerce and the Manufacturing Industrial Council for the South Sound** provided comments that encouraged Sound Transit to emphasize community stakeholder and business engagement to further mitigate impacts. They recommended the creation of a partnering agreement between Sound Transit and key stakeholders during the Final EIS.

In addition, they provided a list of key priorities for the Final EIS, which included establishing a diverse stakeholder group; clarifying the schedule and timing of closures on roads, business access, and the T Line; developing parameters for land acquisitions; and implementing mitigation strategies for T Line service area.

They also highlighted other areas of consideration, including freight mobility; quiet zones along existing sounder rail lines; workforce transportation; displacement; parks, greenbelts, and open space; easement activation; and the timeline and coordination with Fishing Wars Memorial Bridge replacement.

### 3.4 Summary of Comments from Individuals

During the TDLE Draft EIS comment period, Sound Transit received a total of 264 communications (letters, emails, public hearing comments, and online comment forms) from the individuals (see Appendix B). Within the 264 communications, there were approximately 470 individual comments, which are summarized in the following subsections. General or project-wide comment topics are described first, followed by comments about specific TDLE segments.

#### 3.4.1 General or Project-Wide Comments

Overall comments from the individuals indicated general corridor-wide support for TDLE, with very few comments expressing a negative opinion of the project as a whole.

Of the comments from individuals, approximately 41 percent expressed an opinion on the project alternatives or station locations. Many commenters expressed an alternative preference based on the desire to protect Freighthouse Square. Some commenters indicated their preference was due to a perceived ability to complete construction faster for that alternative. Other commenters indicated preferences based on the perceived cost of specific alternatives, especially surrounding acquisition costs.

Comments also expressed a desire to ensure that Sound Transit coordinates closely with the Tribes when identifying the Preferred Alternative and ensuring that cultural resources are not disturbed and/or that impacts are mitigated in coordination with Tribes.

### 3.4.2 Federal Way Segment

Two comments were made regarding the Federal Way Segment, specifically addressing future transit service and expressing preference for the Federal Way Preferred Enchanted Parkway Alternative between the Federal Way Downtown Station and S 344th Street.

#### OMF South and TDLE Federal Way Segment

In August 2024, the Sound Transit Board selected the Preferred South 336th Street Alternative as the Operations and Maintenance Facility (OMF) South project to be built. The OMF South project will construct the approximately 1.4-mile portion of guideway from the Federal Way Downtown Station to near S 344th Street in the TDLE Federal Way Segment.

### 3.4.3 South Federal Way Segment

A total of 110 comments from individuals referenced the South Federal Way Segment and its surroundings. Of these comments, 36 expressed an alternative preference:

- 14 expressed a preference for the SF I-5 Alternative and/or station location.
- 7 expressed a preference for the SF 99-East Alternative.
- 6 expressed a preference for the SF 99-West Alternative.
- 9 expressed a preference for the SF Enchanted Parkway Alternative.

Twenty comments were in opposition to specific alternatives, with 15 commenters opposed to the SF I-5 Alternative.

Comments expressing a preference for the SF I-5 Alternative primarily focused on the fewer number of impacts from that alignment, especially in relation to acquisitions and displacement of residents and businesses. Comments that expressed an opposition to the SF I-5 Alternative primarily focused on a lack of connectivity and the lack of opportunity for TOD in the station area.

Other comments focused on transportation, with a strong emphasis on traffic changes as a result of construction and during operations of the TDLE project. Commenters were primarily concerned with traffic increases in and around the station area causing difficulty navigating to businesses that they frequent. Another common theme was acquisitions and displacements, with commenters concerned about both residential and business displacement as a result of the alternatives along SR 99.

### 3.4.4 Fife Segment

A total of 36 comments from individuals referenced the Fife Segment and its surroundings. Fourteen comments identified a preference for the station and alignment in the Fife Segment:

- 3 comments were in favor of the Fife I-5 Alternative.
- 3 comments were in favor of the Fife Median Alternative.
- 8 comments were in favor of the Preferred Fife Station location.

There were also three comments from individuals in opposition to the Fife Pacific Highway Alternative.

Other comments focused on economics, potential acquisitions and displacements, and concerns about potential impacts to the Pick-Quick Drive In. Transportation was also a common theme, with a focus on multimodal station access and concerns about access along Pacific Highway during construction.

### **3.4.5 Tacoma Segment**

A total of 217 comments from individuals directly related to the Tacoma Segment. Eighty-four comments included an alternative preference for the stations and alignments in the Tacoma Segment, with two comments expressing a preference for an alternative and a Portland Avenue station location:

- 33 expressed a preference for the Tacoma 26th Street Alternative.
- 23 expressed a preference for the Tacoma 25th Street-East Alternative.
- 15 expressed a preference for the Tacoma 25th Street-West Alternative.
- 9 expressed a preference for the Tacoma Close to Sounder Alternative.
- 2 comments expressed a preference for the Portland Avenue Station.
- 4 comments expressed a preference for the Portland Avenue Span Station Option.

A key theme from comments received in the Tacoma Segment was concern about potential impacts to Freighthouse Square. A total of 130 comments from individuals were received surrounding this topic. Of these comments, 49 expressed a preference for alternatives that would not affect Freighthouse Square, while the remaining 81 comments did not specify an alternative or station preference and instead focused on concerns about small business displacement, the building's perceived historic significance and nostalgia, and the building's function as a community gathering place.

Sixteen comments were received about the Portland Avenue Station or Portland Avenue Span Station Option. These comments focused on the safety of the station area and access to surrounding attractions, such as the Emerald Queen Casino.

Transportation was a common theme for public comments in the Tacoma Segment. Transportation-related comments focused on intermodal transit connections at the Tacoma Dome station location and prioritizing a seamless transfer between Amtrak, Sounder, T Line, and the future TDLE light rail service. Other common themes included general comments on alternatives, such as support for a downtown Tacoma station and preferences or recommendations for other design elements of the project.

## 4 NEXT STEPS

- **Identification/Confirmation/Modification of Preferred Alternative:** After consideration of analysis in the Draft EIS, comments received, and other factors, the Board will confirm or modify the Preferred Alternative. In areas where there is not currently a Draft EIS Preferred Alternative, the Board will identify one. The final decision on the alternatives to be built will not be made until after the Final EIS is issued.
- **Final EIS:** FTA and Sound Transit will prepare a Final EIS that analyzes the Preferred Alternative along with the other alternatives evaluated in the Draft EIS. The Final EIS will respond to substantive comments received during the Draft EIS comment period.
- **Project Decision and Approval:** After the Final EIS is published, the Board will consider all the alternatives evaluated in the Final EIS and select the project to be built.
- **Federal Approval:** FTA will then publish the Record of Decision (ROD) for the project, which would document findings that the project has met the requirements of National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and related federal environmental regulations. For this project, the EIS is a joint NEPA and SEPA document that will support decision-making by FTA, Sound Transit, and other agencies.