



Operations and Maintenance Facility South

Community
Engagement Guide

Spring 2021



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Overview

Introduction

With the November 2016 voter approval of **Sound Transit 3 (ST3)**, Sound Transit will undertake an ambitious mass transit system expansion. The Operations and Maintenance Facility (OMF) South is one piece of the expansion plan that will add a new OMF in the South Sound. An OMF is where trains go for cleaning, storage and maintenance, and operates 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. The regional light rail can't operate effectively without an additional OMF in South King County.

Planning for this project is underway and your participation is important. To advance the project toward construction, the project must adhere to an aggressive planning and environmental analysis schedule. Throughout the **alternatives development** phase, staff engaged the public in an intensive public involvement process that led to the Sound Transit Board identifying three site alternatives to evaluate in an **Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)**.

Now, during the **environmental review** of the project, we will evaluate these three site alternatives based on their environmental impacts, conceptual design for each and input from the public, local stakeholders, elected officials, and local governments. We strive to create outreach opportunities that are inclusive and meaningful and will announce these opportunities to provide public input through a variety of communications channels. We hope that you will join us at one or more of our OMF South events, and provide your valuable input to assist with project planning.

This plan is your guide to engaging the project. It explains:

- Sound Transit's goals and guiding principles for external engagement.
- How you can get involved.
- Sound Transit's methods for gathering feedback during this project phase.
- Roles, responsibilities and timing for when decisions will be made.
- Based on continued public health recommendations and guidance, one of our strategies to engage with you is replacing in-person events with online meetings and provide more opportunities to connect with us digitally.

This plan will be updated as the project completes the planning phase and proceeds on to future phases.

See a word in **bold**?

Find it in our glossary (page 17) for more information about that term.

**CHECK OUT THE GLOSSARY
PAGE 17 >**

Project background

Sound Transit is a public transit agency that plans, builds and operates express bus, light rail and commuter train services in the urban areas of King, Pierce and Snohomish counties. The OMF South will be located in the South Sound and will support extended light rail system functionality. It will ensure thousands of passengers have clean, well-maintained trains. The OMF South will also enable nightly safety inspections of light rail tracks. When the OMF South opens, it will create high-quality jobs for more than 470 people. Sound Transit currently operates a central OMF at South Forest Street in Seattle. The agency is building a second facility in Bellevue and plans to build an additional OMF in the north corridor as part of system expansion plans.

Looking for more information?

Looking for a full history of and details about the ST3 plan? Visit <http://soundtransit3.org/>

GET INVOLVED

Visit the project webpage and sign up for project news <http://soundtransit.org/omfs>

Email OMFSouth@soundtransit.org

Call 206-398-5453

**COVID-19 is impacting Sound Transit, our city partners, agencies and Tribes to varying degrees. The pandemic will have both financial and schedule impacts for Sound Transit projects across the Region. The specifics of these impacts are not fully known yet. Sound Transit staff are continuing to advance the environmental review for Tacoma Dome Link Extension and OMF South projects and are committed to communicating specific impacts as they become known.*



Realignment

Impact of COVID on the project

The COVID-19 crisis is greatly reducing the revenues Sound Transit relies on to expand our regional transit system. As businesses remain closed and people stay home, sales tax revenues critical to funding transit construction have declined rapidly. We don't know how long or damaging the current recession will be.

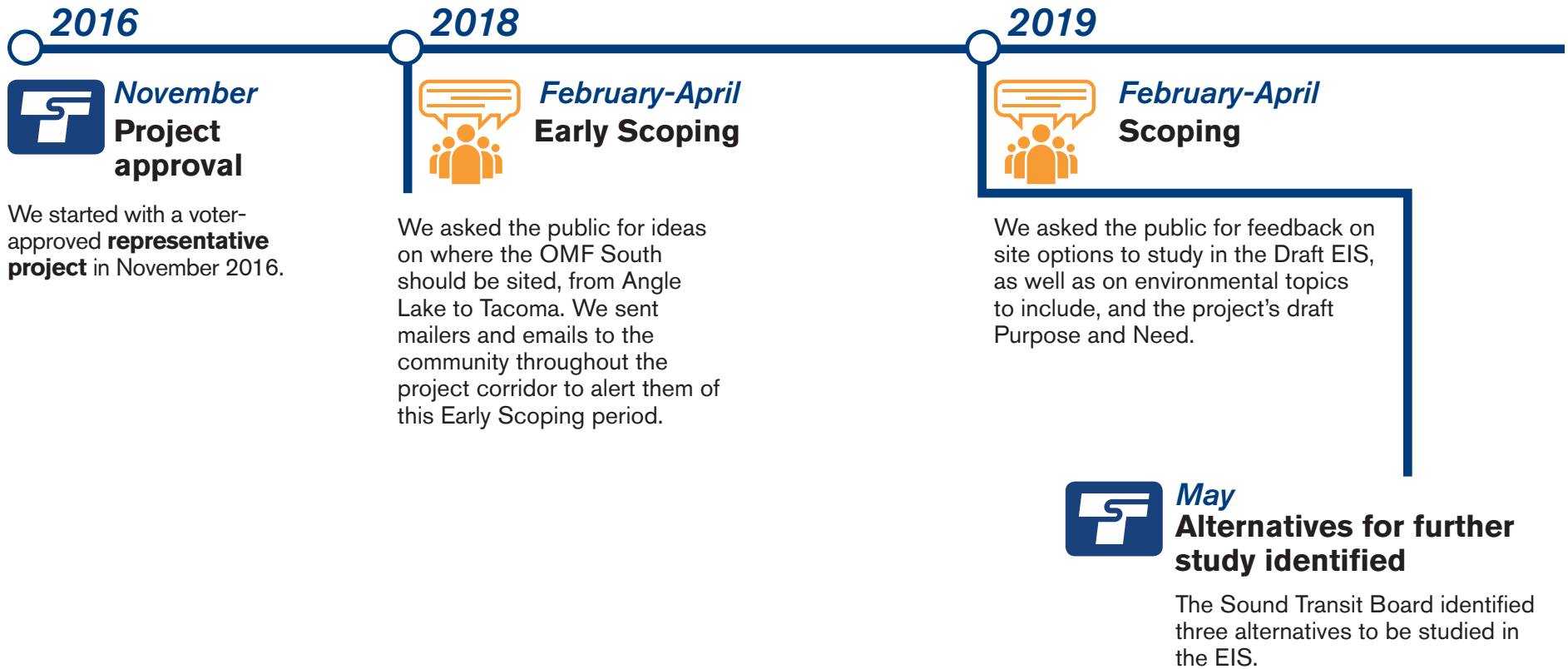
With greatly depleted revenues, Sound Transit may not be able to deliver many expansion projects on their original timelines unless we receive alternative revenue from federal or state sources. The Sound Transit Board has undertaken a process called realignment to determine which plans and timelines for voter-approved projects will need to change due to lower revenue projections, absent receiving alternative revenue. The realignment will establish clear expectations about project delivery timelines by summer 2021. At this time, planning and design work on the OMF South project continues, although the project schedule may change.



Looking for more information?

For more on the agency's realignment process, visit <https://www.soundtransit.org/realignment>

How did we get here?



Anticipated project schedule*



Engagement goals



Be proactive

Engage audiences, including the communities most affected by the project, in conversations that lead to the identification of a Preferred Alternative, a completed EIS and a Sound Transit Board decision on the project to be built.

Our commitment to you: Through a wide range of communications channels, Sound Transit will let you know about opportunities to engage in the project as it progresses.



Be transparent

Foster public trust through transparent communication, meaningful and inclusive **public engagement**, and timely responses to project questions and feedback.

Our commitment to you: Sound Transit will continue to use strategies that ensure timely communication and provide accessible information to all audiences, including in-person, print and online methods.



Encourage awareness

Encourage awareness of the benefits, improvements and progress the project will bring.

Our commitment to you: Sound Transit will use a variety of communication tools to share information about the project and opportunities to be updated and informed throughout.



Be accountable

Ensure accountability by clearly communicating when and where there are opportunities to provide feedback and how public feedback will be used to make project decisions.

Our commitment to you: Sound Transit will ask communities, including those most impacted by the project, to provide feedback and input throughout the planning phase and environmental process leading up to key decision-making milestones. Sound Transit will review and analyze this feedback and report back on how it was considered and incorporated into the decision-making process.



Ensure accessibility

Ensure accessibility by presenting project information that emphasizes accessibility for all audiences; easy-to-read and understandable formats, including in-language documents.

Our commitment to you: Opportunities and methods for engagement shall be accessible and thoughtful of the needs of communities where they are held; responsive online tools, translated materials, holding events at convenient times

Community snapshot

The three OMF South site alternatives under consideration are in the cities of Kent and Federal Way. The snapshots below explore these areas in further detail.

Federal Way

Federal Way is the tenth-largest city in the state of Washington, with a population of over 96,000. Federal Way is home to natural beauty, found in lush gardens, coastal views of the Olympic Mountain range, and the nationally recognized Pacific Bonsai Museum and Rhododendron Species Botanical Garden. The economic diversity of Federal Way spans retail and accommodation, private business services, healthcare, and construction. Because of the city's location, residents of Federal Way have access to employment and resources in neighboring cities like SeaTac, Kent, Tacoma, Bellevue, and Seattle. If sited in Federal Way, the OMF South would be in the top ten employers for the city with over 470 living wage jobs at over \$40 per hour.

Federal Way has a diverse population, with a foreign-born segment that accounts for 23 percent of its more than 96,000 residents. The largest representative groups within this population are of Korean, Hispanic, Russian and Ukrainian descent. Over 100 languages are spoken at home by local students.

Kent

Kent is the sixth-largest city in the state of Washington, with a population of over 120,000. Kent has a mix of tourist attractions, including award-winning beer and wine, live concerts and festivals, and outdoor recreational activities. Kent's economic base revolves around manufacturing and distribution while also providing space for professional services and retail. If sited in Kent, the OMF South would be one of the top employers, with over 470 living wage jobs at over \$40 per hour.



Kent is diverse, with a population that is close to 20 percent Asian, 16 percent Hispanic or Latino, 11 percent African American and 1 percent American Indian or Alaska Native. Close to 6 percent of Kent residents identify as two or more races.

Equity and inclusion

Sound Transit is committed to delivering projects that support an equitable transportation system. We partner with other regional agencies to improve racial equity and social justice via the Transportation Equity Program, created to provide safe, environmentally sustainable, accessible, and affordable transportation options for communities of color, low-income communities, immigrant and refugee communities, people with disabilities, people experiencing homelessness or housing insecurity, LGBTQ people, women and girls, youth, and seniors to mitigate racial disparities and the effects of displacement. The OMF South, like many ST3 projects, is large and impacts the community where it operates. During environmental review, Sound Transit will analyze project impacts and evaluate whether the project would result in disproportionately high and adverse effects on minority and/or low-income



populations. If there are disproportionately high impacts, Sound Transit will look for ways to mitigate those impacts and/or offset them with community benefits. We strive to engage the public and underserved populations throughout the public involvement process.

In order to gather your ideas and feedback during the environmental review phase, Sound Transit will provide meaningful engagement opportunities that are designed to meet the unique needs of low-income, minority and non-English speaking groups. Some of those opportunities include:

- Conducting interviews with social service providers to better understand various populations in the project area.
- Providing translators at public meetings and community gatherings.
- Translating key materials into languages spoken along the project corridor.
- Holding smaller meetings focused on individual communities.
- Meeting communities where they gather, like online, houses of worship

In addition, Sound Transit will conduct an **environmental justice analysis** in compliance with federal regulations. The analysis will describe the demographics of the project corridor, evaluate whether the project would disproportionately impact minority and low-income communities, and document our efforts to involve minority and low-income populations in the planning process.

If you are interested in learning more about this project and how it may benefit and/or impact your community, please contact us at 206-398-5453 or omfsouth@soundtransit.org. We will work with you to find an appropriate opportunity for providing project information.

Audiences

In engaging our project audiences, we have broken them down into four key categories: community stakeholders, property owners, general public and the media. Roles for elected officials serving on the Sound Transit Board and Elected Leadership Group are described in the roles and responsibilities section.



Neighborhood and community stakeholders

- Advocacy groups
- Local residents (property owners and renters)
- Businesses, including small and minority-owned businesses
- Cities or authorities having jurisdiction
- Communities of color
- Community-based organizations
- Cultural groups
- Current and future transit riders
- Immigrant and refugee populations
- Limited-English-speaking populations
- Low-income households
- People with disabilities
- Social service organizations
- Schools
- Transit Partners
- Tribes



Property owners

- Homeowners
- Condominium owners
- Apartment complex owners and their tenants and staff
- Business owners, including small and minority-owned businesses
- Commercial property owners and their tenants
- Schools



Public

People who live, work and commute in, through and around the Puget Sound region.



Media

Print, digital and broadcast media, including community, local and ethnic media sources.



Engagement tools

Online

Website

The [project webpage](#), within the Sound Transit website, provides the hub for all up-to-date project information. The webpage will be updated frequently with the latest project information, opportunities to be involved, upcoming events and meetings, project materials and more.

E-newsletters

E-newsletters will be sent on a regular basis to the project's e-mail subscriber list. E-newsletters will include up-to-date information on the project and be sent to people who have opted-in. [Sign up](#) on the project webpage.

Social media

Sound Transit will utilize existing social media platforms (Facebook, Twitter and Instagram) to share news and updates about the OMF South. You can find us at [@SoundTransit](#).



In person

Open houses (in-person and online open houses)

Open houses will be held at key milestones and decision points during the entirety of the project, including when updated project information is available, public feedback is sought to help inform key decisions. If they are able to follow health and safety guidelines for COVID-19, in-person open houses will take place in various locations and will be accompanied by online open houses for those who can't or choose not to attend a meeting.

Briefings and meetings

Sound Transit will proactively reach out to community, business and interest groups to offer project updates. Any community, business or interest group may request a briefing from the project team by emailing omfsouth@soundtransit.org or calling 206-398-5453. We will prioritize traditionally underrepresented groups and can join you online via a remote meeting platform, in your workplace or training events to give quick project updates.

Fairs and festivals

As a result of the COVID pandemic, we are unable to take part in traditional fairs and festivals. However, the outreach team will identify opportunities to participate in virtual gatherings.

Property owner outreach and field visits

As environmental review begins, the project team will work with local property owners to understand potential impacts. The team will also begin data collection efforts, including geotechnical borings, surveys, environmental investigations, or other fieldwork.

Property visits

In lieu of in-person visits, outreach staff will contact residences, businesses, and other entities along the project corridor by phone or e-mail to share information.

Mailers

To advertise information about online open houses and public meetings, the outreach team will send mailers to homes, apartments, and businesses located across the project corridor.

Letters

Prior to the publication of the Draft EIS, property owners will be sent formal letters notifying them that their parcel may be potentially impacted under one or more site alternatives being considered.

Other ways to engage

Existing community engagement efforts

Sound Transit recognizes that there are many ongoing efforts to engage communities on a variety of topics. To make the best use of time, we will join existing efforts already underway to provide project updates, including working with community organizations and social service providers and attending community events.

Translated materials

Fact sheets, infographics, presentations and other printed materials will be developed as needed throughout the project. Key materials will be translated into multiple languages with a focus on the needs of communities impacted by the project. Materials may also include mailed notifications such as postcards or flyers. Streaming and interactive tools may also be used to enhance project reach.

Media

Media coverage can help reach audiences that might not otherwise know about the project or have an opportunity to be engaged through other means. Sound Transit will engage community, local, regional and multicultural media sources to ensure that project information is effectively shared and distributed via a variety of media outlets.



How do I engage?

Q How do I share my opinion?

There are many ways to share your opinion, including:

- Calling the project line at 206-398-5453.
- Emailing the project team at omfsouth@soundtransit.org.
- Attending an open house or drop-in session.
- Visiting the [website](#), responding to online surveys and following Sound Transit on social media.

Sound Transit provides involvement opportunities in conjunction with key project milestones, such as at the publication of the Draft and Final EIS. We strive to create outreach opportunities that are inclusive and meaningful, and will announce these opportunities through a variety of communications channels.



Q How can I request a briefing from project staff for my organization?

If your organization is interested in a project briefing, you can email the team at omfsouth@soundtransit.org or call 206-398-5453.



Q What role does public input play in selecting the project to be built during this phase?

Numerous opportunities will be identified for elected officials, community and business groups, and the public to weigh in with their priorities and feedback on the EIS during the environmental review process. After the Draft EIS is issued and comments are received, the Sound Transit Board will select a preferred alternative. After the Final EIS is issued, the Sound Transit Board will select the project to be built.

Q Why is it important for me to engage now?

Environmental review is a critical time in which to engage because it is during this phase that the preferred alternative and other alternatives will be studied in the EIS.

Q What type of feedback are you looking for during the environmental review phase?

In early 2021, we asked for comments on the findings of our Draft EIS and the assessment of the impacts and benefits for each site alternative. The Board will then identify a preferred alternative, which we will evaluate along with the other alternatives in the Final EIS. The Final EIS, which will include responses to Draft EIS comments and evaluation of the preferred and other alternatives, is scheduled to be issued in mid-2022. After the Final EIS is published, the Board will select the project to be built.

Q Can you provide information about this project in other languages?

Yes, we have translated materials on the [website](#). If we are missing your language, please call our project line at 206-398-5453 and we will do our best to meet your needs. We will also provide translation services over the phone and at meetings if requested in advance.

Q What can I expect as a project neighbor?

If you are a resident, business or property owner near an OMF South site, we encourage you to sign up for project email updates. The Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) will evaluate the property impacts of potential sites in detail. You will have opportunities to comment on the Draft EIS.

The Sound Transit Board will select a location for the OMF South following issue of the Final EIS.

Roles and responsibilities

Implementing this and other projects within the scope, budget and schedule approved by the voters will take extraordinary effort by Sound Transit and its federal, state and local partners. To meet the challenge of delivering projects as quickly as possible, Sound Transit developed a **System Expansion Implementation Plan** that embraces new ways of working together. This plan includes internal changes at Sound Transit, as well as new approaches to working with project partners, local jurisdictions, elected officials, community members and the public.



As a member of the public, your job is to communicate your ideas, concerns and questions about the project through a variety of communications channels:

- Learn about the project and ask questions.
- Provide feedback on topics and issues that interest you.
- Communicate to Sound Transit how you want to be engaged.
- Share information and discuss the project with your community.



Stakeholder Group

The Stakeholder Group was convened during the alternatives development phase to provide a forum for community members to inform the development of alternatives for light rail routes and stations. The group included residents, transit riders, business owners and representatives of business and community organizations throughout the corridor. While the group was focused on the Tacoma Dome Link Extension, they learned extensively about light rail operations, and were informed on the need and process for an operations facility in the South Sound:

- Highlighted issues and considered trade-offs along the route.
- Provided feedback on alternatives to assist Elected Leadership Group's recommendation decisions.



Elected Leadership Group

The Elected Leadership Group is comprised of a Puyallup Tribal Councilmember, the mayors of the cities along the project corridor, Sound Transit Board Members and a Washington State Department of Transportation representative. The group stays apprised of project updates as key decisions are made. Visit the webpage for more details. The Elected Leadership Group:

- Appointed Stakeholder Group members.
- Worked with project staff to understand and evaluate trade-offs, such as cost, constructability, development potential, environmental impacts, ridership, and others.
- Recommended a preferred alternative for routes and stations on the Tacoma Dome Link Extension to the Sound Transit Board based on the recommendations from the Stakeholder Group, public input and the voter-approved project scope, schedule and budget.



Sound Transit Board

The Sound Transit Board will oversee the implementation and delivery of the project, and have final voting authority on identification of the preferred alternative and other major decisions. The Board will consider public feedback when making decisions.

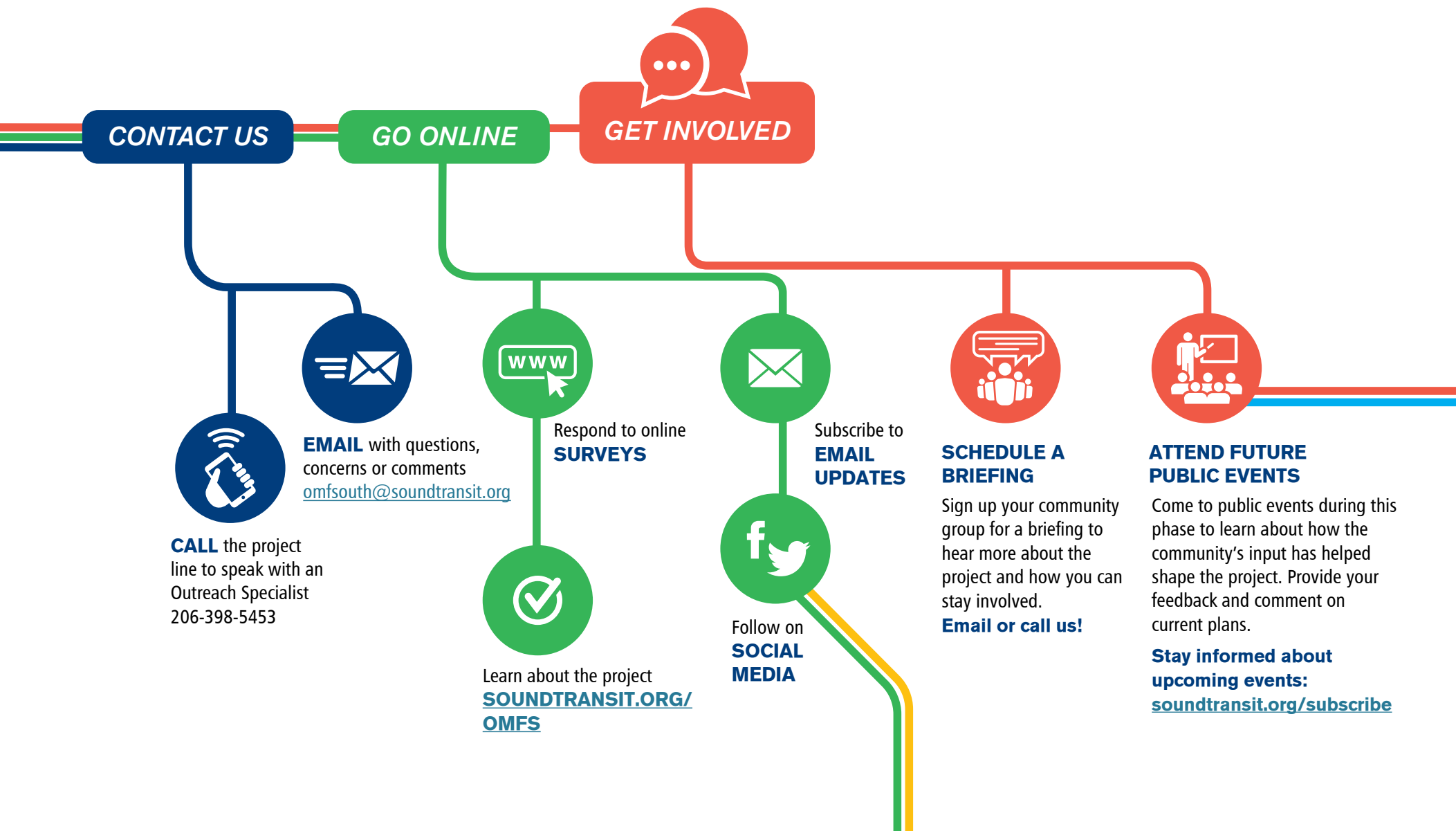


Interagency Group

Sound Transit will work closely and coordinate with a number of agencies and governments as this project moves forward, including, but not limited to:

- Puyallup Tribe of Indians.
- City of Kent.
- City of Federal Way.
- King County.
- Washington State Department of Transportation.
- Federal Highway Administration.
- King County Metro.
- Muckleshoot Indian Tribe.
- Seattle Public Utilities.
- City of Seattle.
- Washington State Department of Ecology.
- Environmental Protection Agency.

Get involved



Glossary of terms

Alternatives development

Project phase during which staff will assess the representative project included in the ST3 Plan and, based on additional public engagement and technical analysis, further refine the specific route, station locations and other project elements.

Early scoping

Public process that engages the community to provide feedback and comments to help develop, evaluate and compare corridor alternatives as part of the alternatives analysis process.

Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)

A document used for decision-making that analyzes impacts of project alternatives.

Environmental justice analysis

An evaluation of whether a project would result in disproportionately high and adverse effects on minority and low-income populations after consideration of impacts, benefits and mitigation.

Environmental review

An evaluation of impacts and benefits to inform the public, agencies and decision-makers about the environmental consequences of building and operating the project.

Preferred alternative

At the end of the alternatives development phase, the Sound Transit Board identifies alternatives for further study. The EIS further evaluates the selected alternatives. The final decision on the alternative to be built will not be made until after the Final EIS is issued.

Public engagement

A process that engages community members in a public dialogue about an issue that affects them.

Representative project

The representative projects were developed after years of public engagement and were included in the ST3 Plan to serve as starting points for developing more refined alternatives.

Sound Transit 3 (ST3)

The Sound Transit 3 Plan adds 62 new miles of light rail with 37 new stations. When complete, the Link light rail network will consist of 116 miles of light rail and 83 stations. The funding for ST3 was approved by voters in November 2016.

System Expansion Implementation Plan

A plan that describes Sound Transit's approach to delivering the expanded system of projects as well as needed reforms based on lessons learned from delivering major capital infrastructure to date.

CONTACT US

Visit our webpage and sign up for project news
www.soundtransit.org/omfs

Email omfsouth@soundtransit.org

Call 206-398-5453

