

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN

INCLUSIVE PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AT SOUND TRANSIT

Sound Transit is committed to continuous improvement of our public engagement strategies. It recognizes that its services are far-reaching and unique in that it provides rail, light rail, and bus service in the three-county region of King County, Pierce County and Snohomish County. Sound Transit strives to make sure all views are represented, not just those of the outspoken. It is devoted in every effort to hear the widest possible spectrum of viewpoints. By incorporating the engagement of historically underserved populations, the agency ensures that it is a good steward for all communities.

Sound Transit has numerous policies, resolutions, principles and tactics to guide and deliver how the agency engages with low income, minority and limited English proficient (LEP) populations

POLICIES AND RESOLUTIONS

Resolution 2011-15 Inclusive Public Participation Policy

Sound Transit's public involvement and community outreach programs will be designed to engage diverse populations by:

- Adopting an inclusive public participation policy to assure meaningful access to public involvement and community outreach programs for minority, low-income, and limited English proficient populations Bike Cage/Lockers Distribution.
- Making materials available in multiple formats, holding meetings in accessible facilities and providing meeting and project information to underserved populations.
- Providing the public with innovative opportunities and methods for accessing agency and project information.
- Engaging diverse populations early in the planning and development process
- Making information available to minority, low-income, and limited English proficient populations

Resolution No. 2022-19 Establishing when the agency conducts equity analyses as required by the FTA and applies to major service changes, fare changes and siting of maintenance facilities

- The agency measures adverse effects that could cause a disparate impact and/or disproportionate burden before any proposed major service change, fare change or siting of a maintenance facility.
- Aids the agency in determining whether adverse effects result in a Disparate Impact to Minority Populations, or Disproportionate Burdens to Low-Income Populations.
- If proposed changes result in disparate impacts to minority populations or disproportionate burdens to low-income populations Sound Transit is to examine and develop ways to mitigate or lessen the adverse effects.
- The Title VI evaluation of the proposed major service changes or fare changes, the impacts, mitigation efforts, outreach to impacted communities, and public comments will be a part of the record before the Sound Transit

Board when it makes its decision to approve the major service change, fare change, or siting of facilities in question.

Resolution No. 2023-34 Public Comment on Fare Changes and Major Service Changes Policy

Policy on public comment on fare changes and major service changes and supersedes the public engagement portion of the current fare policy, Resolution No. R2010-10 as amended by Resolution No. R2014-27.

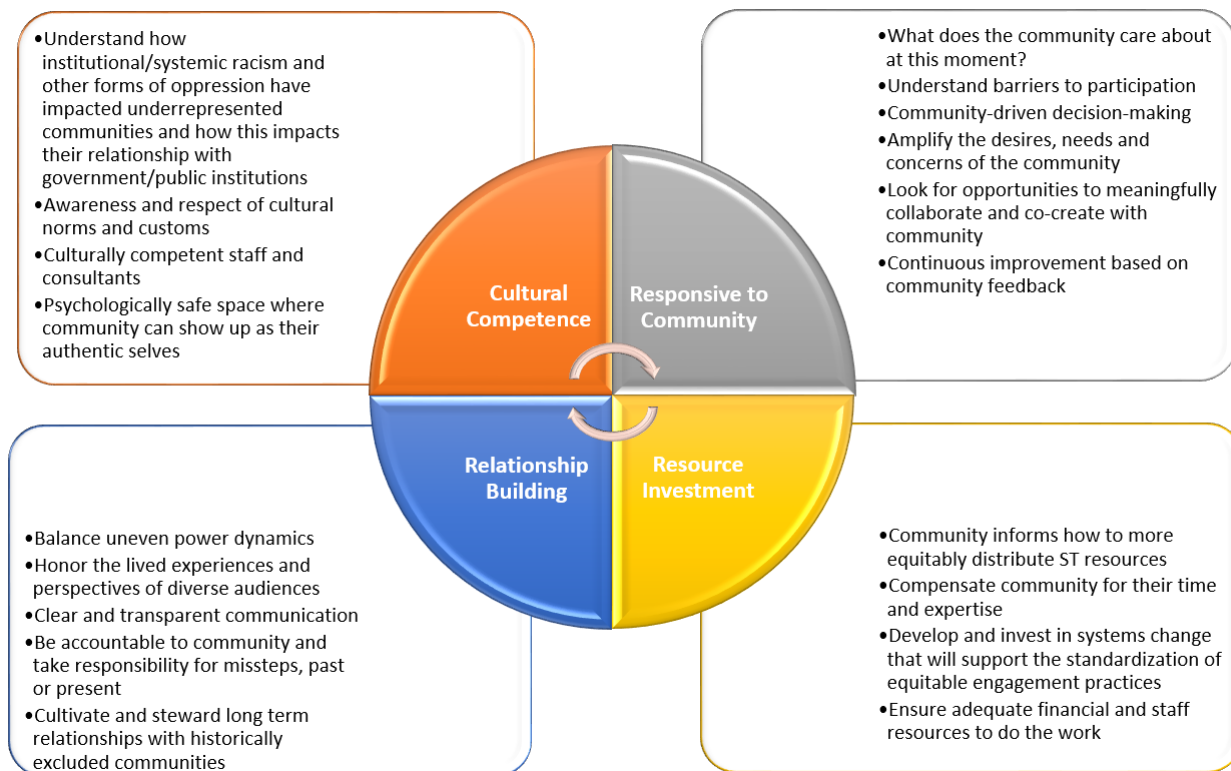
- This policy resolves a deficiency identified in the most recent Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Triennial review report dated May 5, 2023, with a finding that Sound Transit needs to establish a Board-approved policy about how Sound Transit receives and uses public feedback on major service reductions.
- Sound Transit agreed there was no written policy as stated in the deficiency, but that robust and equitable engagement takes place for all fare changes, service changes (reductions or additions), parking program and service fare equity analyses.
- This new policy complies with FTA requirements to inform the public of their right to provide public comment about fare changes and major service changes, particularly major service reductions, under consideration.
- The policy requires Sound Transit staff to do the following regarding fare changes and major service changes:
 - Publicize plans for proposed service changes/disruptions to reach potentially impacted riders and communities.
 - Prioritize strategies in areas where proposed changes are most impacted.
 - Use equitable engagement practices consistent with Sound Transit's equity tools.
 - Host noticed and publicized, public hearings and in-person and virtual public meetings for all fare and major service changes to collect public comment.
 - Share comments received with the Board prior to any final decisions.
- The policy supersedes public engagement provisions in fare policies R2014-27 and R2010-10.

AGENCY LEVEL STRATEGIES

Equitable Engagement Subcommittee and Equitable Engagement

Below are the four core pillars of Sound Transit's equitable engagement practices. Each pillar has an associated set of guiding principles that reflect Sound Transit's values in this area.

1. Cultural Competence
2. Responsive to Community
3. Resource Investment
4. Relationship Building



SOUND TRANSIT EQUITY TOOLS

The Equity and Inclusion Shared Language Guide (EISLG)

The Office of Civil Rights, Equity & Inclusion (CREI) developed the EISLG to provide the agency with a shared understanding of equitable and inclusive language. This guide provides historical context for terms or phrases and recommendations about preferred language. To build this guide, CREI sought input from employees across the agency and researched existing language guidelines. The purpose of the EISLG is to make it easier for staff to use accurate language that respects a community's identity. As the guide is not meant to be exhaustive or static, it offers recommendations based on present conditions. CREI acknowledges the cultural landscape is constantly evolving and language along with it. As such this guide may be revisited and edited to better reflect the sociopolitical environment.

Term Bank

Developed in 2020, this document provides translation vendors with 100 commonly used terms at Sound Transit with consistent translations in the top six Title VI languages.

Equity Dashboard

The Sound Transit equity dashboard allows Sound Transit staff easy access to data about the communities and riders that the Agency serves. The dashboards feature charts, tables and maps that help users visualize the demographics, travel behavior, and travel needs of people throughout the Sound Transit district. It allows for data to be filtered by demographic identifiers such as race/ethnicity, gender, income, English language proficiency, etc. and is used to inform equity analyses and engagement strategies.

INTEGRATED WEBSITE TRANSLATION

[Soundtransit.org](https://soundtransit.org) was redesigned in 2018 to include Google Translate, an integrated translation function that can automatically translate soundtransit.org content into 103 languages. Sound Transit contracts with vendors that provide translation and interpretation services upon request.

SOUND TRANSIT ENGAGEMENT TEAM

Thirty-five engagement staff are dedicated to community, customer, and equitable engagement. The team's mission is to: Provide high quality communications that build trust and connect ST to customers, interested parties, and the public. A core value of this team is to be inclusive, with stated objectives of broad participation, two-way communications, and diverse audience engagement. Engagement staff articulate a vision for equitable engagement, as well as collaborate and coordinate across the agency to ensure that procedures, practices, and protocols described above are consistently carried out across all engagement efforts. This team is also responsible for close coordination with other departments to ensure that ST continues to update and change methods and tactics in a fitting fashion as the agency expands. Currently, ST engagement staff utilize a variety of tactics, determining the appropriate mix of each on a project-by-project basis.

CURRENT ENGAGEMENT TACTICS

Strategies and Tactics for Language Access

- Proactively translate/transcreate printed materials when appropriate.
- Provide interpreter services based on demographic information for public hearings.
- Provide, on request, interpreter services and/or translated written materials, such as fact sheets.
- Include contact information for in-language interpretation (language block) on all printed materials, such as construction impact notices.
- Provide simultaneous interpretation via headset at community meetings, upon request.
- Run display ads for public engagement opportunities in non-English, community-based publications and/or run-on social media in multiple languages.
- Provide opportunities for feedback in multiple languages.
- Proactively translate surveys.
- Translate in-person briefings, upon request.
- Hold workshops with diverse audiences.
- Provide multiple and varied opportunities to encourage individuals with diverse needs to engage on a topic, such as community meetings, drop-in stations, door-to-door outreach, printed updates, and electronic media.
- Partner with service providers, community organizations and other governmental agencies to inform on projects.
- Mitigate impacts of construction to local businesses including minority, low income and limited English proficient business owners through our own business relations marketing campaign, wayfinding signage, support and resources.
- Provide Language Link training to all outreach staff and outreach volunteers to enable exchanges with limited English proficient communities.
- Provide buttons/nametags that identify multi-lingual staff and volunteers at outreach events.
- Provide "I speak" language assistance cards to offer support for limited English proficient persons.

*Additional information specific to language access for LEP populations can be found in the Language Assistance Plan.

Strategies and Tactics for Meaningful Public Participation

Be proactive and targeted in engagement strategies	▫ Research the community; know the demographic composition and their history in the area. ▫ Work through existing networks of community-based organizations that serve and organize in diverse cultural communities. ▫ Attend community meetings and cultural events as a participant. ▫ Develop awareness of the racial and economic disparities in the city or region. ▫ Seek out relationships with leaders from non-English speaking communities. ▫ Translate materials and provide interpretation at community meetings. ▫ Engage faith-based organizations to help bring residents on board. ▫ Host a “meet and greet” with community organizations and advocacy groups to build connections across sectors and develop partnerships. ▫ Build incentives for engagement that reduce barriers to participation (child-care, food, etc.).
Strategies for conducting engagement in historically excluded communities	▫ Provide opportunities to include substantive representation of people of color or organizations that represent low-income communities in various decision-making capacities. ▫ Create many entry-points for engagement and recognize the relative levels of power, voice, impact and opportunity for knowledge-sharing and relationship-building that they afford. ▫ Stay the course. Listening to community's concerns is central to developing and maintaining trust.
Strategies to prioritize community knowledge and concerns	▫ Hold listening sessions to surface community concerns by conducting engagement where people already gather. ▫ Incorporate storytelling activities into the process. ▫ Work with community leaders or elected officials to highlight assets, opportunities and challenges in low-income communities and communities of color to develop rapport and sense of shared concerns between decision-makers and local communities. ▫ Use diverse and multimedia communication.
Strategies for iterative and reflective processes	▫ Work with community members and community organizations to identify benchmarks for success. ▫ Establish regular check-ins to gauge progress and obtain feedback.
Strategies to target resources for ongoing engagement	▫ Contract with local, community-based organizations in low-income communities and communities of color to conduct engagement processes. ▫ Identify a community liaison or community organization to play an important “bridging” role to close the cultural, relational, racial, language and socio-economic divides. ▫ Leverage additional funds to support engagement through partnerships/sponsorship opportunities.

2023-2025 OUTREACH PUBLIC PARTICIPATION EXAMPLES

Sound Transit has a wide array of projects that benefit from meaningful public participation. Recent examples of these in which the agency has recently focused outreach and engagement are outlined below. Numerical figures for website visitors, survey respondents, and related values are approximate as of the time of writing.

Everett Link Extension

The Everett Link Extension (EVLE) project will add 16 miles of light rail and six new stations connecting Snohomish County residents in the communities of Lynwood, unincorporated Snohomish County, and Everett to the regional light rail network. An additional provisional station and parking facilities at two station locations are currently in the planning process. The project will also include the construction of the Operations and Maintenance Facility (OMF) North to support Link light rail operations. The project is currently in the environmental review phase of planning, where a conceptual design will be developed and an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) will be prepared.

Summary of Engagement Efforts

Equitable engagement is a core part of the EVLE project's engagement and has been built into every stage of the project (Figure 1). For the project, Sound Transit developed engagement materials for the project, including a fact sheet, a community engagement fact sheet, an FAQ, a property owner guide, and a community guide to National Environmental Protection Agency (NEPA) scoping. All documents were translated into Korean, Russian, and Spanish and made available on the [project engagement website](#), which includes the embedded Google Translate option. An event calendar was made available to notify the public of in-person and virtual public meetings, as well as other events.

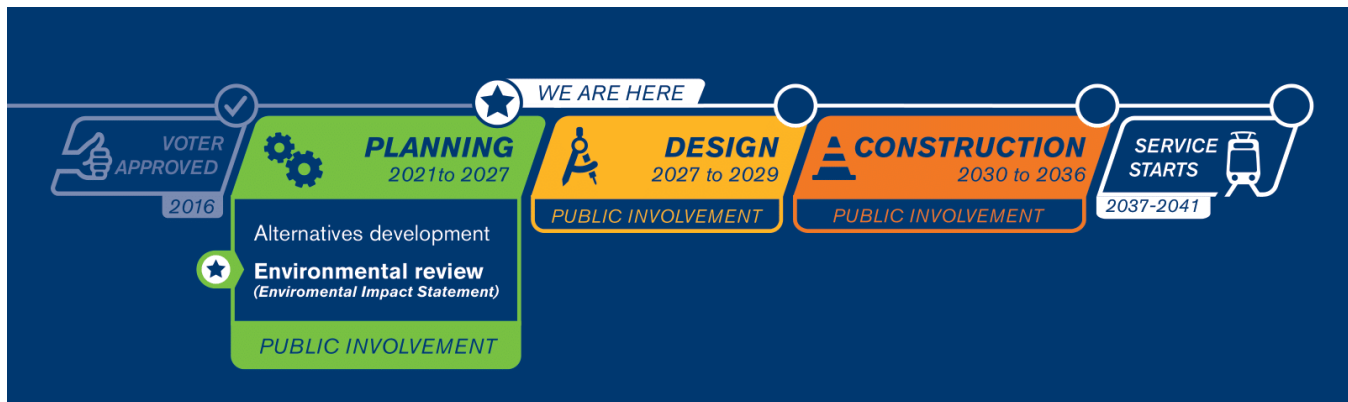


Figure 1. Everett Link Extension Project Process

Feedback collected supported Sound Transit's advisory groups' efforts to narrow down the number of alternatives and ultimately helped Sound Transit identify which alternatives would be studied in the [Environmental Impact Statement \(EIS\)](#). Sound Transit will continue to advance conceptual engineering, station designs, and environmental review through 2025, expecting to publish the Draft EIS in early 2026. When a Draft EIS is published, there will be an opportunity to make formal public comments on the project that will be considered by the Sound Transit board, including through the project engagement website and public meetings where the public can learn more about the project. Sound Transit will share the news through digital channels, and will also mail postcards to residents, businesses and property owners before the public comment period. Sound Transit will continue to engage with the public, Tribes and agencies, and commit to conducting equitable community engagement throughout the project.

Souder South Capacity Expansion

With a change in travel patterns brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic and work-from-home schedules, Sound Transit is re-examining the priorities from the 2020 Souder South Strategic Plan, which forecasted heavy ridership growth during peak periods and prioritized longer trains to serve this growth. Through research, peer comparisons and public outreach, Sound

Transit will consider whether potential additional trips should be prioritized over longer trains, and consider whether any new trips should run mid-day, evenings or on weekends, bearing in mind that any new trips require negotiation with BNSF Railway.

Summary of Engagement Efforts

In the fall of 2023, Sound Transit conducted engagement efforts to understand people's priority between keeping the current plan for longer trains during the commute peak versus adding more trip times to the current schedule. Sound Transit also explored how people currently use Sounder and how they envision it could better serve them in the future. Engagement noted that any new trips would require negotiation with BNSF Railway, which owns most of the tracks Sounder runs on.

To gather this feedback, Sound Transit held an online open house between Sept. 27 and Oct. 29, which received over 5,600 survey responses and was translated into eight languages (Spanish, Vietnamese, Korean, Tagalog, Simplified Chinese, Somali, Ukrainian and Russian). Sound Transit also conducted four focus groups with historically underserved communities and engaged with over 4,000 people at community events and Sounder stations, three of which were bilingual (Spanish and Vietnamese). The online open house was publicized to communities throughout the Sounder South corridor, to reach both riders and non-riders. Materials including posters, digital ads, and local media advertisements were placed in cities with Sounder stations and neighboring communities in South King and Pierce counties. Six local media outlets also ran stories about the survey, including a Spanish radio station that interviewed Sound Transit staff. Numerous community partners and jurisdictions also helped spread the word by sharing content on their social media channels and with their email networks. Through this effort, Sound Transit was able to reach:

- 1,157 survey respondents (26.4%) self-identified as people of color
- 472 unique visitors to the translated versions of the online open house
- 108 completed translated surveys
- 462 survey respondents stated that a language other than English is regularly spoken in their home

A summary of the community engagement efforts was made available on the Sound Transit website, with the executive summary translated into Korean, Russian, Chinese, Somali, Spanish, Filipino, Ukrainian, and Vietnamese. Sound Transit planned to use this feedback from the community, along with research on travel patterns, peer agency research, and ridership estimating to inform Board discussions about whether to prioritize new trips over longer trains in the Sounder South Strategic Plan.

Bus Rapid Transit (BRT)

Sound Transit's Stride bus rapid transit (BRT) will be a fast, frequent, and reliable bus service connecting to Link light rail and to communities north, east, and south of Lake Washington. Like light rail service, Stride is designed for convenient, fast travel, with off-board fare payment and multiple-door entry and exit. This high-capacity transit system includes new bus lanes and transit priority improvements, which will help riders avoid traffic. High-capacity transit means the size of the Stride fleet, speed of travel, frequency of service, and associated road improvements can serve more riders than traditional buses. Stride will be able to accommodate the region's growing population and meet the need for reliable public transportation.

The Stride program will feature three bus lines: S1, S2, and S3. These lines will replace three existing ST Express bus lines, which were originally planned to fill a transit gap until regional services like Stride could be built. Construction for the Stride program is set to start in 2025, with service beginning as soon as 2028.

Summary of Engagement Events

In the Spring of 2023, Sound Transit hosted an online open house from Feb. 22 to April 28 to share project design updates and solicit community input. Sound Transit also held in-person drop-in sessions to complement the online open house on March 15 in Lake Forest Park, March 22 in Shoreline, March 28 in Kenmore, and April 25 in Bothell. The online open house described 60% design updates to the refined program since March 2021 (30% design milestone) and provided information

about upcoming program milestones, including construction. The online open house was available in English, Spanish, Vietnamese, Simplified Chinese, and Traditional Chinese. Sound Transit also provided an online pre-construction survey for community members to share feedback with the program team which focused on community construction concerns, local community activities, and any additional comments for the program team.

A total of 5,461 users visited the English, Spanish, Vietnamese, Simplified Chinese, and Traditional Chinese online open houses. 5,461 users spent an average of three and a half minutes on the English site, 875 users spent an average of two and a half minutes on the Simplified Chinese site, 766 users spent an average of two and a half minutes on the Vietnamese site, 677 users spent an average of three and a half minutes on the Spanish site, and 77 users spent a total of three and a half minutes on the Traditional Chinese site. A total of 321 respondents completed the online survey across the English sites with one survey response in Simplified Chinese, and one survey response in Spanish. (No users submitted surveys via Vietnamese or Traditional Chinese sites).

Currently, Sound Transit is hosting the Stride BRT Online Open House, where the public can check out initial design plans to learn about transit improvements Stride projects are bringing to cities and communities surrounding Lake Washington. The online open house is available in English, Spanish, Traditional and Simplified Chinese, and Vietnamese.

MEASUREMENT AND EVALUATION

ST recognizes the need to continue to evaluate, assess, and refine the agency's approach to, and methods for, equitable engagement including with minority and low-income communities. The agency is continually developing ways to ensure accountability and further transparency. The tools described above are regularly used and serve to support the evaluation of ST's public participation efforts. Below are additional measures that ST teams are exploring as potential forward paths.

- Partnering with Community Based Organizations to ensure materials are culturally relevant and reach underserved communities.
- Exploring new ways to gather rider feedback to ensure ongoing improvements in accessibility.
- Creating informative and engaging presentation materials that explain available resources.
- Exploring the expansion of advertising through ethnic media outlets.
- Establishing a resource library for engagement best practices.

Appendix E
Public Participation Resolution



RESOLUTION NO. R2011-15
Inclusive Public Participation Policy

MEETING:	DATE:	TYPE OF ACTION:	STAFF CONTACT:	PHONE:
Executive Committee	12/1/11	Recommendation to Board	Leslie Jones, Director of Diversity Alec Stephens, Diversity Technical Advisor	206-398-5047 206-398-5019
Board	12/15/11	Final Action		

PROPOSED ACTION

Adopts an inclusive public participation policy to assure meaningful access to public involvement and community outreach programs for minority, low-income and limited English proficient populations.

KEY FEATURES

- This policy ensures that Sound Transit's public involvement and community outreach programs are designed to meet the following goals, pursuant to Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964:
 - Providing services without regard to race, color, or national origin;
 - Promoting the full and fair participation of affected populations in transit decision making;
 - Preventing denial, reduction, or delay in benefits related to programs and activities that benefit minority or low-income populations; and
 - Facilitating meaningful access to programs and activities by persons with limited English proficiency.
- This policy applies to planning and service aspects of Sound Transit projects that receive federal funding. Sound Transit is in compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and this policy affirms Sound Transit's commitment.
- Sound Transit will continue to include low-income, minority and limited English groups in its public involvement and community outreach programs, including service changes, fare changes and future service planning.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Title VI was enacted as part of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. It prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, and national origin in programs and activities receiving federal financial assistance.

FISCAL INFORMATION

Not applicable to this action.

SMALL BUSINESS PARTICIPATION

Not applicable to this action.

BACKGROUND

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 states that "no person in the United States shall, on the ground of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits

of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.” Sound Transit is committed to upholding these principles.

Sound Transit’s public involvement and community outreach programs will be designed to engage diverse populations by:

- Meeting environmental justice requirements and limited English proficiency needs
- Making materials available in multiple formats, holding meetings in accessible facilities and providing meeting and project information to underserved populations
- Providing the public with innovative opportunities and methods for accessing agency and project information
- Engaging diverse populations early in the planning and development process
- Making information available to minority, low-income, and limited English proficient populations

ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE

JI 11/23/2011

PRIOR BOARD/COMMITTEE ACTIONS

None.

TIME CONSTRAINTS

None.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

Not applicable to this action.

LEGAL REVIEW

RM 11/23/11



RESOLUTION NO. R2011-15

A RESOLUTION of the Board of the Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority adopting a policy for inclusive public participation and to assure meaningful access to minority, low-income and limited English proficient populations in public involvement and community outreach programs.

WHEREAS, the Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority, hereinafter referred to as Sound Transit, has been created for the Pierce, King, and Snohomish Counties region by action of their respective county councils pursuant to RCW 81.112.030; and

WHEREAS, Sound Transit is authorized to plan, construct, and permanently operate a high-capacity system of transportation infrastructure and services to meet regional public transportation needs in the central Puget Sound region; and

WHEREAS, in general elections held within the Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority district on November 5, 1996 and November 4, 2008, voters approved local funding to implement a regional high-capacity transportation system for the central Puget Sound region; and

WHEREAS, Sound Transit has made a commitment to the people within its three-county region to seek community involvement as it plans, designs, builds, and operate a regional transit system; and

WHEREAS, Sound Transit has developed and utilized strategies to reach and include the diverse people of its region to promote, encourage, and utilize public involvement processes to carry out its mission; and

WHEREAS, Sound Transit is a recipient of federal funding; and

WHEREAS, consistent with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Sound Transit is committed to:

- Providing services without regard to race, color, or national origin;
- Promoting the full and fair participation of affected populations in transit decision making;

- Preventing denial, reduction, or delay in benefits related to programs and activities that benefit minority or low-income populations; and
- Facilitating meaningful access to programs and activities by persons with limited English proficiency.

WHEREAS, inclusive public participation is fundamental to all of Sound Transit's public involvement and community outreach programs, the Board of Directors has decided to develop a policy reflecting Sound Transit's commitment for inclusive public participation and to assure meaningful access to minority, low-income and limited English proficient populations in its public involvement and community outreach programs.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Directors of the Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority that Sound Transit's public involvement and community outreach programs will be designed to meet the following goals, pursuant to Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964:

- Accommodate the diverse communities within the project area and meet environmental justice requirements and limited English proficiency needs
- Provide the public with multiple opportunities and methods for accessing agency and project information.
- Engage diverse populations early in the planning and development process by making materials available in multiple formats, holding meetings in accessible facilities and providing meeting and project information to underserved populations.
- Make information available to minority, low-income, and limited English proficient populations.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that in achieving these goals, and pursuant to Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Sound Transit will utilize strategies, tools, and techniques targeted to reach minority, low-income, and limited English proficient populations.

Resolution No. R2011-15

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Sound Transit will strive to conduct public involvement and outreach activities with processes that are full, robust, and inclusive of all community members.

ADOPTED by the Board of the Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority at a regular meeting thereof held on December 15, 2011.


Aaron Reardon
Board Chair

ATTEST:


Marcia Walker
Board Administrator

Resolution No. R2011-15

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