



West Seattle and Ballard

Link Extensions



Property owners and light rail expansion

Sound Transit executes Link light rail projects in three main phases — planning, design and construction. Find out how we work with potentially affected property owners during each phase of the project and what to expect in terms of your property.

What to expect 



? How could the planning phase affect my property?

As Sound Transit begins planning a project, crews conduct fieldwork, land surveys and limited testing in the project corridor. Most of this work will be within existing public rights-of-way, but in some cases, it may be needed on private properties. Fieldwork during the planning phase could include visual property inspections, photographing property and/or building(s), measurements of building(s), reviewing property records and files, and developing building sketches. In limited cases, work might include initial property surveys, including groundwater sampling, wetland delineations and, in rare cases, geotechnical borings.

If we determine we need access to your property in the planning phase, Sound Transit will send the property owner a letter along with a Right of Entry request. An ROE is a voluntary agreement to be signed by both the property owner and Sound Transit, giving agency representatives access to the property for specific purposes. We'll work with each landowner ahead of time to minimize disruptions to property owners, tenants and occupants, and we'll restore any affected properties to prior conditions.

? When will I know if my property is needed for the project?

As preliminary design progresses, Sound Transit will identify properties potentially needed for the project, and we'll list them in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement. But we'll contact owners whose property may be acquired under any of the alternatives considered *before* we publish the Draft EIS, and again before the Final EIS.

During this phase, Sound Transit will perform early engineering, conduct feasibility studies and complete the environmental process, and we'll learn more about potential effects on properties. But we won't typically know exact property impacts in detail until the final design phase, after we publish the Final EIS and the Sound Transit Board selects the project to be built.

? What happens if Sound Transit identifies my property as a potential acquisition?

Notification of potential impact does not mean we've made a decision to purchase your property. But it does mean there's a possibility Sound Transit would need to acquire your property at a later project phase.

As we refine project design, we'll continue updating our list of potentially affected properties. We won't make final determinations on which properties to purchase until after the Final EIS and Board action.

Sound Transit has specific policies and procedures that describe how the agency will work with property and landowners throughout the acquisition process. We follow federal guidelines in our property-acquisition process, more specifically, the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act and state law.

The Sound Transit comprehensive acquisition program is designed to treat affected property owners and tenants fairly, minimize hardships and maintain communications with all parties involved.

***West Seattle:** Design is expected to begin in 2023 and conclude in 2026. Construction and testing is expected to begin in 2026 and conclude in 2032. **Ballard:** Sound Transit is managing the Ballard Link Extension toward a 2037 delivery target by working to close a project affordability gap forecasted at approximately \$1.8 billion. The agency is seeking to reduce or eliminate this gap by increasing funding and support at the local, state and national levels, and by reducing costs as the Sound Transit Board considers and adopts project alignment options with input from partners and the public. If it is not possible to close the gap, current financial assumptions reflect the ability to affordably open service to Smith Cove in 2037, and to Ballard in 2039.



? How could the design phase affect my property?

Sound Transit will complete additional soil condition and ground water level testing, conduct more in-depth field surveys and locate utilities. Once again, much of this work will take place in public rights-of-way, but if we require access to your property, Sound Transit will send you a letter along with a voluntary Right of Entry request. We'll work to minimize disruptions to property owners, tenants and occupants during this work and restore any affected properties to prior conditions.

? Sound Transit identified my parcel or property for acquisition. Now what?

Several steps take place even before Sound Transit can begin the acquisition process, including:

- Identifying the type of acquisition (i.e. full or partial acquisition, temporary or permanent easement or access).
- Officially notifying property owners that their property is being considered by the Sound Transit Board and providing the date of Board meeting.
- Preparing property information for Sound Transit board review and approval.

Once approved for acquisition, Sound Transit will begin the property acquisition process, which follows these steps:

- Appraisal conducted by an independent appraiser.
- Appraisal review by Sound Transit for completeness and accuracy and to determine compensation for property.
- Sound Transit submittal of written offer with copy of the reviewed appraisal to the property owner.
- Property owners given reasonable opportunity to consider and respond to the offer.
- Conclusion of property purchase.

Sound Transit will make reasonable efforts to acquire real property expeditiously through voluntary agreements based on appraised fair market value.

? I own an affected property. What services can I expect?

Residential owners: Sound Transit provides relocation advisory and monetary assistance by reimbursing for moving and replacement housing expenses. A qualified relocation advisor will determine need, explain benefits, provide current housing inventories and offer assistance and advice with filing claims.

Business owners: Sound Transit provides moving reimbursement, relocation services and referrals for replacement properties, move planning, claims assistance and additional resources. Eligible moving and related expenses include transportation, packing/unpacking, disconnecting/reinstalling equipment, storage if necessary, insurance during the move, and reimbursement for search costs and reestablishment expenses.

? I'm an affected property tenant. What services can I expect?

Residential tenants: Sound Transit provides relocation advisory and monetary assistance by reimbursing for moving and replacement housing expenses. Relocation advisory services are provided by a qualified agent who will determine need, explain benefits, provide current housing inventories and offer assistance and advice with filing claims.

Business tenants: Sound Transit provides relocation advisory and monetary assistance for moving-related, site search, and reestablishment expenses. The level of benefits and advisory services may be different for each displaced person depending on complexity of the business operation.



Construction: 2026 to 2037-2039*

? How could the construction phase affect my property?

Major construction can be disruptive, which is why Sound Transit is committed to being a good neighbor. Throughout the Construction Phase, there are dedicated Community Engagement staff available to answer questions and address needs, as well as a 24/7 construction hotline service.

Project contractors follow standard requirements when working in your neighborhood and community, including:

- ✓ Maintaining a safe, clean and secure worksite.
- ✓ Maintaining access to homes and businesses.
- ✓ Minimizing noise and lighting impacts.
- ✓ Minimizing parking impacts from construction equipment and vehicles.

Sound Transit will continue the acquisition process based on the properties and access required by the construction timeline. Property needed for the project may be acquired in stages to accommodate the project schedule. Sound Transit will work with property owners and tenants throughout construction to minimize potential impacts to property access.

Learn more and subscribe to project emails:

soundtransit.org/wsblink

Contact us

wsblink@soundtransit.org or 206-903-7229

Helpful resources

soundtransit.org/residential-property | soundtransit.org/business-property



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