



## Frequently asked questions (FAQs)

Planning Phase: Alternatives Development

### Q: What happens during the alternatives development phase?

**A:** During alternatives development, staff analyze alternatives for the specific route of the alignment, the location of stations, and other project elements starting with the representative projects approved by voters in the Sound Transit 3 Plan. The representative project itself is the result of extensive, yearslong planning and public involvement work, including high-capacity transit studies, the process to update the agency's long-range plan, and the work that developed the ST3 Plan approved by voters last year. During the 18-month alternatives development process, staff will engage stakeholders and the community in an intensive public involvement process that will lead to the Sound Transit Board identifying a preferred alternative, as well as other alternatives to evaluate, in an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) by mid-2019.

### Q: Why is it important to identify preferred alternatives early?

**A:** Public input during the development of [ST3 emphasized](#) a strong interest in putting new light rail extensions in service as fast as possible. Identifying the preferred alternative earlier in the project development process is a key component of Sound Transit's program to streamline project planning. This will allow public consensus about the preferred alternative to emerge earlier in the process—at the beginning of the EIS. It may also result in fewer alternatives studied in the EIS, both of which are critical elements to maintaining the project schedule and budget.

### Q: What are representative projects?

**A:** The ST3 Plan approved by voters included a representative project to extend light rail from Federal Way to the Tacoma Dome. The representative project establishes the transit mode, approximate route, number of stations, general station locations and a maintenance facility—all critical in the development of project budgets and schedules. The representative project for the Tacoma Dome Link Extension (TDLE) is the starting point for alternatives development. Building on the representative project captures work already publicly vetted and approved rather than starting anew, helping to meet overall project schedules and budgets.

### Q: Will the alternatives development process drive significant changes to the representative project?

**A:** Sound Transit will study alignments, precise station locations and other project elements suggested during the public engagement process, and assess advantages and disadvantages relative to the representative project included in the ST3 Plan. Alternatives requiring major changes to the representative project could add months or years to the schedule and significantly increase design and building costs in what will likely remain an intensely competitive construction market. The risk of costly delays will be a primary factor in considering whether substantial revisions to voter-approved projects are feasible and reasonable.



### Q: How will public input shape the alternatives development process?

**A:** The representative project reflects years of public engagement, starting with a high-capacity transit studies for Pierce and South King counties in spring 2014; the Long Range Plan update in December 2014; and the ST3 Plan development during 2015 and 2016. Public involvement in these efforts shaped representative projects that will serve as starting points for developing more refined alternatives. For the Tacoma Dome Link Extension, numerous opportunities will occur in the next 18 months for community members, stakeholders and elected officials to weigh in with their priorities for a preferred alternative. Public engagement will continue through all subsequent project phases.

The best way to stay connected to project progress and public involvement opportunities is to sign up for the project email list at [www.soundtransit.org/tdlink](http://www.soundtransit.org/tdlink)

### Q: Is there a chance this project can open earlier?

**A:** During development of the ST3 Plan, after the public advocated for an earlier opening date, staff conducted additional work to [reduce by three years](#) the initial delivery date of 2033. Whether it is possible to further expedite light rail to Tacoma depends on work to speed up the project development phase, starting with identifying a preferred alternative in the scheduled 18 months. This will require Sound Transit, cities in the corridor and other project stakeholders to work together intensively to streamline the number of alternatives studied, manage project scope, reach consensus on the preferred alternative, and build durable consensus to avoid the time-consuming process of studying alternatives introduced late in the process. It will also require the timely granting of permits by cities so construction can begin as soon as possible.

The nearly six-year construction schedule for the Tacoma Dome Link Extension is already aggressive. Few opportunities exist to further speed up the construction schedule.

### Q: What happens after alternatives development?

**A:** The following timelines anticipate meeting all milestones (Show in timeline graphics)

Tacoma Dome Link Extension, Planning: 2018 to 2022. Design 2022 to 2025. Construction and testing 2025 to 2030.

### Q: Where will the stations be located?

**A:** The Sound Transit Board will select the project to build, including specific location of stations, following an 18-month alternatives development process and a 2 1/2 year environmental review that will include feedback throughout from the public, stakeholders, jurisdictions and property owners in the corridor. This decision should occur in 2021 or 2022.



# Tacoma Dome

## Link Extension

February 2018

### **Q: Is an Operations and Maintenance Facility part of this project? If so, where will it be located?**

**A:** The voter-approved ST3 Plan included an Operations and Maintenance Facility (OMF) in the south corridor, which is required to store and maintain the expanded light rail fleet necessary to serve the southern corridor. Planning for the OMF will advance concurrently with the TDLE project. The Sound Transit Board will select the project to build, including specific location of the maintenance facility, per the process and timeline above.

### **Q: What affordable housing components will this project include?**

**A:** Under state statute (RCW 81.112.350), Sound Transit is committed to developing and implementing a regional equitable transit-oriented development (TOD) strategy for diverse, vibrant, mixed-use and mixed-income communities. The agency will pursue opportunities to make surplus Sound Transit property available for affordable housing. For the Tacoma Dome Link Extension, the agency will consider TOD opportunities during the early project development, conceptual design and preliminary engineering phases. There will be further assessment of TOD potential during the property acquisition phase, which will include a robust public involvement process. After this assessment, likely sometime in 2023, the agency will pull from ideas shared to define the specific ways in which to use surplus property.

**You can read more about the Sound Transit TOD strategy here:** [https://www.soundtransit.org/sites/default/files/Final%20ST%20Board\\_TOD%20Wkshp%20Briefing%20Booklet\\_042017.pdf](https://www.soundtransit.org/sites/default/files/Final%20ST%20Board_TOD%20Wkshp%20Briefing%20Booklet_042017.pdf).