

Summary Minutes

System Expansion Committee Meeting May 8, 2025

Call to order

The meeting was called to order at 1:32 p.m. by Committee Chair Balducci and was available for viewing in person and online.

The meeting was recorded and can be found at <https://www.soundtransit.org/get-to-know-us/board-directors/meeting-videos>.

Roll call of members

Chair	Vice Chair
(P) Claudia Balducci, King County Councilmember	(P) Kim Roscoe, Fife Mayor

Board Members	
(A) Nancy Backus, Auburn Mayor	(P) Bruce Harrell, Seattle Mayor
(P) Angela Birney, Redmond Mayor	(P) Ryan Mello, Pierce County Executive
(A) Cassie Franklin, Everett Mayor	(P) Dave Somers, Snohomish County Executive
	(P) Dan Strauss, Seattle Councilmember

Alejandro Monzon, Board Relations Specialist, announced that a quorum of the System Expansion Committee was present at roll call.

Report of the Chair

System Expansion Monthly Status Report

Chair Balducci noted that the System Expansion Monthly Status report was included in the meeting materials and is posted on the Sound Transit website. She noted her request for recurring monthly verbal updates as well.

Downtown Redmond Link Extension

Chair Balducci stated her excitement for the opening of the Downtown Redmond Link Extension this weekend.

CEO Report

Chief Executive Officer Dow Constantine provided the report.

Downtown Redmond Link Extension Opening – CEO Constantine reminded the Committee and Public about the May 10 opening of the Downtown Redmond Link Extension.

Construction Safety Week – CEO Constantine recognized and thanked all the construction teams working on and building the agency's system. Over this week and month, many teams will be hosting additional toolbox talks, training sessions, and recognition events to keep safety at the forefront of daily discussions.

Activation Update – CEO Constantine shared that while the East Link Extension I-90 segment gets closer to commencing testing activities later this month, the newest schedule assessment sees an early 2026 date for project completion. The next stage of testing – which includes moving trains across the bridge – is crucial. Running through the spring and summer, the testing will provide more information and clarity on the remaining schedule for the project.

The Federal Way Link Extension continues to complete systems integration testing.

West Seattle Link Extension Record of Decision – CEO Constantine reported that the agency had received the Federal Record of Decision (ROD) for the West Seattle Link Extension last week on April 29. The ROD allows Sound Transit to move the project into the Design phase, and the agency will continue to engage with the community and advance cost-savings measures.

Public comment

Chair Balducci announced that public comment would be accepted via email to meetingcomments@soundtransit.org and would also be accepted verbally.

Written public comments:

Brien Chow
Betty Lau
Mitch Johnson
Matt Bailey
Riley Guerrero, on behalf of Pierce County Authority

In-person Verbal Public Comments:

Alvertis Brooks Jr.
Brien Chow
Paul Wu
Laurie Nix
Richard Reisinger
Riley Guerrero

Virtual Verbal Public Comments:

Joe Kunzler
A. Newsome

System Expansion Monthly Status Report update

Capital Delivery Deputy CEO Terri Mestas began the report by noting that the information covered is from March 2025, and that she is joined by Capital Delivery Executive Directors Brad Owen, Manan Garg, and Michael Morgan. The presentation would cover Program-level updates, as well as updates on Projects in Planning & Design and Projects in Construction.

Deputy CEO Mestas reported on progress in implementing the Project Management Information System. There are 30 different modules to be implemented, and staff are working on incorporating those into the department's practices and procedures.

She also shared that the agency is now displaying a Procurement Forecast Tool which publicly tracks all upcoming Capital Delivery managed procurements. She also reported on several industry engagement events that allow Sound Transit to further connect with industry partners in the pursuit of being an Owner of Choice.

For Program-level Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), Ms. Mestas noted that the agency has improved its payment promptness by 3 days since January 2025, with a current average of 31 days against the target of 30 days.

On the safety KPIs, there was only one recordable event in March 2025, experienced by the Downtown Redmond Link Extension. The worker in question lost balance and fell from a ladder. Sound Transit is looking into other methods to do that work in order to prevent similar occurrences.

Ms. Mestas explained that for this presentation, the Projects in Planning & Design have been rolled up by mode. All Link light rail projects are experiencing cost increases, while staff assess and implement cost-savings measures. Preliminary forecasts for project schedules are also under review. The Operations and Maintenance Facility Program (currently only consisting of the OMF South) has costs trending within the financial plan and a procurement is in progress for design-build services. The Sounder Program also sees costs trending within the financial plan and is tracking well. The Sound Transit-managed portions of the Stride BRT program are trending well against cost, but there is a noted schedule impact to float due to delays in real property acquisitions. The WSDOT-managed portions of Stride are performing well.

Brad Owen noted that the Federal Transit Administration had issued the West Seattle Link Extension (WSLE) Record of Decision, and staff are advancing work to prepare applications for expedited project delivery grants in 2026. Work will continue assessing, evaluating, and incorporating cost-savings measures, with focuses on project affordability and mitigating community impacts.

The Ballard Link Extension is continuing through the planning process and the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is expected to be published later this year. The Board will have the opportunity to confirm or modify the preferred alternative before staff advance the project into the Final EIS. The project schedule assumes publishing the Final EIS, selecting the project to build, and receiving the ROD in 2026. Similar work to WSLE is underway to assess and evaluate cost-savings measures to improve affordability and schedule.

Manan Garg reported that the Everett Link Extension Draft EIS is anticipated to be published in Q1 2026, and publishing the Final EIS, selecting the project to be built, and receiving the ROD is expected to be in late 2027. Cost-saving measures are also being evaluated on this project to improve affordability and schedule. There are currently geotechnical investigations being conducted along the corridor to better understand the alternatives. The project continues to closely coordinate with third parties and local jurisdictions.

The Tacoma Dome Link Extension published its Draft EIS in December 2024, and staff are preparing to return to the Board with an action to confirm or modify the Preferred Alternative. The current schedule anticipated receiving the ROD in 2027. Cost-saving measures are also being evaluated on this project to improve affordability and schedule. The project team will be presenting a more in-depth presentation later in the meeting to prepare for the upcoming Board action.

Ms. Mestas spoke to the rolled-up breakdown for Projects in Construction and asked Michael Morgan to provide additional information on the projects. Mr. Morgan expressed excitement for opening the Downtown Redmond Link Extension while acknowledging the unfortunate safety incident mentioned earlier. The Pinehurst Station project is on track against cost and schedule, and Mr. Morgan noted increase safety awareness after an incident last month and the complexity of building an infill Station. The Federal Way Link Extension is progressing well against cost and schedule, as internal scheduling and resource management has allowed the project to coordinate testing needs with the East Link Extension. Mr. Morgan noted that the East Link Extension is trending very closely to the top of its budget and is something that staff are continuously monitoring. He noted that the project has experienced some slip over the last few months and added that more information will be available in July after testing with trains on the I-90 segment can better inform remaining work schedules.

Ms. Mestas noted that staff intend to bring a Projects in Construction update in June and have a Projects in Planning & Design update in Q3. Staff will continue to incorporate project updates into presentations accompanying actions items.

Chair Balducci thanked staff for the report as they aimed to balance being informative and high-level.

Board member Birney agreed with Chair Balducci and thanked staff for taking the Committee's feedback into account.

Chair Balducci asked that information included in the CEO Report, such as the schedule impact to East Link, also be equally emphasized in these reports as applicable.

Chair Balducci requested that the Board and Committee be briefed on the cost-savings measures and progress of the workplan prior to staff requesting the Board confirm or modify the alternatives for the Ballard Link Extension Final EIS. She acknowledged the tight timeline that staff may face.

Business items

For Committee Final Action

Minutes: April 10, 2025 System Expansion Committee meeting

It was moved by Vice Chair Roscoe, seconded by Board member Birney, and carried by unanimous voice vote that the minutes of the April 10, 2025 System Expansion Committee meeting be approved as presented.

For Recommendation to the Board

Motion No. M2025-13: Authorizing the chief executive officer to execute four individual 12-month contracts with Crunican LLC, Kenneth L. Johnsen, Roger M. Natsuhara and WSP USA (Charla Skaggs) to provide capital program consultant services in individual contract amounts not to exceed \$100,000.

Calli Knight, Agency Chief of Staff, gave the staff presentation.

Chair Balducci asked how the contract billing will be managed. Ms. Knight confirmed that the costs will be tracked and billed on an hourly/pay-for-services basis.

Chair Balducci expressed her thanks to the work performed by the Technical Advisory Group to-date and feels that this move adequately positions them to advise the best level of the agency for a bit longer. She hopes that all the work by the TAG is fully incorporated into the standard operating procedures of the agency.

It was moved by Board member Birney, seconded by Board member Somers, and carried by unanimous voice vote that Motion No. M2025-13 be forwarded with a do-pass recommendation.

Motion No. M2025-24: Authorizing the chief executive officer to execute a contract with PCL Construction Services, Inc. for construction services for the Stride Bus Base North project in the amount of \$228,344,322 with a 20 percent contingency of \$45,668,864 for a total authorized contract amount not to exceed \$274,013,186.

Manan Garg, Executive Director, and Madeleine Greathouse, Executive Project Director, gave the staff presentation.

Board member Birney asked if there are any known concerns about the plans to run a Battery Electric Bus fleet for Stride. She noted that those may not be known until a later date. Mr. Garg responded that he will be happy to provide those updates as necessary and with future actions.

Chair Balducci noted the importance of this project for delivering Stride BRT service as soon as possible.

Board member Strauss added his support, noting the siting of the facility and the integral connection of Stride service to the Link light rail spine.

It was moved by Vice Chair Roscoe, seconded by Board member Birney, and carried by unanimous voice vote that Motion No. M2025-24 be forwarded with a do-pass recommendation.

Reports to the Committee

Tacoma Dome Link Extension DEIS Public Comment report

Lauryn Douglas, Tacoma Dome Link Extension Planning Director, provided the presentation. She was joined by High-Capacity Transit Development Managers Diane Wiatr and Kathy Leotta. Ms. Douglas explained that the presentation would review the key findings from the DEIS, report on the 60-day comment period, and preview the staff recommended preferred alternatives and other routes/stations for study in the Final Environmental Impact statement.

Ms. Douglas briefly recapped the project's history and noted that key upcoming milestones include the Board action to identify/modify the preferred alternative in June 2025 and publication of the FEIS in 2027. The project includes roughly 10 miles of alignment and four stations, 500 parking stalls at the Fife and South Federal Way stations (to be completed by 2038), and a light rail bridge over the Puyallup River.

She spoke to the overall comments from the DEIS comment period and noted that Ms. Wiatr and Ms. Leotta would cover segment-specific comments in their respective segments. Sound Transit held an extended 60-day comment period from December 13, 2024 to February 10, 2025. During that time, the agency hosted three in-person public meetings, an online public meeting, and an online, interactive open house. Individual conversations were also extended to property owners along the corridor. Ms. Douglas spoke the numbers and types of interactions and highlighted critical engagement with the Puyallup Tribe of Indians and noted that their input will be essential to the project.

Along the entire project corridor, Ms. Douglas reported that most comments/engagements showed support for the project, desire to build the project sooner, concerns around impacts to wetlands and property displacements, concern over construction impacts and business access, desire to ensure close Tribal coordination, desire for multimodal transportation integration for each station, and jurisdictional concerns about parking. Before handing off the presentation, Ms. Douglas explained that the team will walk through each of the project's segments, report on key comments, and offer the staff recommendation for preferred alternatives.

Ms. Leotta began with the South Federal segment, which has four alignment and five station alternatives. There is currently no preferred alignment or station in the segment. The alignment alternatives along I-5 impact highly sensitive cultural resources that the Puyallup Tribe has explained that no amount of mitigation would be sufficient to resolve impacts. The 99-East alternative would have more transportation impacts but fewer residential displacement than the 99-West alternative. The 99-Enchanted station and 99-352nd station alternatives can both be paired with either the 99-East or 99-West alignment alternatives. The 99-352nd station would have two more business displacements than the 99-Enchanted station but also performs better for transit integration, transit-oriented development (TOD), and multimodal access.

Comments primarily raised concerns about business displacements near station sites and shopping centers, Pacific Highway closures during construction, and displacements at mobile home parks. Overall comments also included community support for TOD surrounding the stations and concerns about potential impacts to the West Hylebos Wetlands. Ms. Leotta also covered a design refinement in Milton for the 99-West alternative, which would reduce the residential displacements from 17 to four. Staff's preliminary recommendation is for the Board to identify the 99-West alternative, with the design refinement, and the 99-352nd station as the preferred alternative in the South Federal Way segment.

Ms. Wiatr began in the Fife segment, noting there are three elevated alignment alternatives and three station alternatives in the segment. The Fife station is the preferred alternative, with Fife 54th Avenue and Fife 54th Span station options added in 2023 to address potential concerns with the Fife floodplain. The alignments along Pacific Highway received comments highlighting concerns about construction impacts to businesses, specifically to Pick-Quick Drive In. The I-5 alignment alternative received comments with concerns about visual and visibility changes along I-5. And the stretch of alignment to the East of the potential station received comments raising concerns about impacts to St. Paul Chong Hasang parish and WSDOT's Hylebos Riparian Restoration Program. The preliminary staff recommendation in the Fife segment is for the Board to identify the Fife I-5 alignment and confirm Fife Station as the Preferred Alternative.

Ms. Wiatr explained that there are three sections of the Tacoma segment: the Puyallup River bridge, Portland Avenue station, and Tacoma Dome station. She noted that Sound Transit recognizes the treaty rights afforded to the Puyallup Tribe and the project is actively engaging with the Tribe on this key area of the projects. There are two bridge options: clear-span and in-river pier. The clear-span bridge option would have greater impacts to the view of the Mountains from Tribal ceremonial grounds, while the in-river pier option would have a greater impact to ecosystems, water resources, and Tribal fishing rights. Staff are not offering a preliminary recommendation on the bridge and further coordination with the Tribe is crucial to this area.

The Portland Avenue section has two station alternatives with accompanying alignments. The Board identified the Portland Avenue Station alternative as preferred, but both station options have generally similar effects. Comments on the options highlighted concerns about transit access, general safety, and construction impacts. The eventual station design is highly contingent on the type of bridge constructed to cross the Puyallup River. The preliminary station recommendation is to confirm the Portland Avenue Station as the preferred alternative.

There are four station and alignment alternatives in the Tacoma Dome section of the segment, with the Tacoma 25th Street-West alternative identified as the preferred alternative. The Tacoma Close to Sounder alternative has the greatest number of displacements, primarily affecting tenants in Freighthouse Square, while the 25th East and West alternatives would require full closure of 25th Street and the entire T-line during construction. Comments in this section raised concerns about impacts to Freighthouse Square, the T Line and E 25th Street, and the Amtrak/Sounder station. Overall, the comments focused on seamless transit connections between bus services, Sounder, Amtrak, T Line, and Link as a regional transit hub. Other comments highlighted a desire to prioritize passenger experience and safety and accessibility in the station vicinity. The preliminary recommendation is to modify the preferred alternative to the Close to Sounder alignment and station alternative.

Ms. Douglas concluded the presentation by re-iterating the next steps including potential action next month on the alternatives to study in the FEIS.

Chair Balducci noted that the presentation also includes additional appendix slides for members and the public to compare the alternatives side-by-side.

Board member Mello thanked staff for the presentation. He emphasized the importance of the inclusion of the Puyallup Tribe of Indians in this project. He asked that when the agency receives the letter from the Tribe, that it be specially communicated to the Board and not just rolled into any other comments or letters.

Board member Birney thanked staff for the opportunity to take a tour of the future alignment, and she concurred with Board member Mello's statements of appreciation for coordination with the Puyallup Tribe. She also highlighted the concerns raised by public commenters and noted that this is one of the challenges of building key infrastructure in developed areas. She also thanked Vice Chair Roscoe for her insights into Fife and the alignment impacts.

Vice Chair Roscoe highlighted ongoing discussions with potentially impacted property owners in the Fife segment and noted that she would be pushing the Fife City Council to submit a letter regarding a stance on the preferred station and alignment in the Fife segment. She also highlighted a disparity in awareness of the project's potential impacts between potentially affected owners. She expressed her excitement for the progress on the project and is committed to support the agency and her city through the process. Chair Balducci thanked Vice Chair Roscoe for her efforts and engagement.

Board member Strauss stated his support for building the light rail spine from Tacoma to Everett and thanked the public commenters for their input today. He also emphasized that the significant cultural resources are deserving of protection without exception. He asked for a current projection on the schedule and budget for the project, all else held equal. Ms. Mestas noted that the cost-savings measures are still being applied to this project, but it continues to carry the previous financial estimate from the DEIS publication from last year. Ms. Douglas highlighted that the estimates are mostly for comparison between the alternatives but will provide the information. She also laid out the currently projected milestones that will lead to a forecasted project opening in 2035.

Chair Balducci reiterated her thanks to the public commenters and expressed appreciation to staff for work on design refinements to mitigate the number of displacements in key areas. She also highlighted the fact that I-5 options in the South Federal Way segment do not appear feasible at this time.

Board member Mello corrected an earlier statement of his by noting the coordination and engagement to date with the Puyallup Tribe is not yet considered formal consultation.

Multiple Award Task Order Contract (MATOC) briefing

Terri Mestas, Capital Delivery Deputy CEO, provided the presentation.

Ms. Mestas explained that MATOCs are similar to bench or on-call contracts that Sound Transit has used over the years, with the key difference being the size and scale of the work that could be performed. She noted that this contracting approach is utilized in the transit construction industry, as well as others both public and private. The approach was initially developed by the Army Corp of Engineers for Environmental work.

Utilizing the MATOC approach, Sound Transit would have access to experts that could be deployed to support multiple projects and realize time & cost savings in simplifying the procurement process for individual scopes of work. The complexity and scale of the System Expansion Program results in an ebb and flow of services and necessitates nimbleness on the part of staff. Utilizing MATOCs is part of Capital Delivery's intent to reduce indirect costs associated with projects. While traditional procurement methods lead to a long contract period with minimal ability to change direction, MATOC allows for smaller scopes to be awarded via task order which can be evaluated on a shorter basis. Ms. Mestas noted that there has been excitement from industry partners on Sound Transit looking into the MATOC approach.

When staff are able to bring forward an action to approve MATOCs, the request will not be for individual allocations as funding will be committed on a task order basis from previously Board-approved budgets. The use of MATOC does not import the affordability of the Long-Range Financial Plan as the services that could be contracted under the MATOCs is already assumed and included in projections.

Previewing the structure of the upcoming MATOC, Ms. Mestas noted that the base term would be for five years with two one-year options to extend, and that the firms selected for the MATOCs went through a qualifications-based selection process without cost considerations. She added that they agency intentionally sought out firms of different sizes to better support smaller, local firms. The use of the MATOC method also allows for smaller capital projects, such as State of Good Repair projects and Emergency efforts, to utilize the services. She re-iterated that funding would be committed from approved budgets on a task order basis.

To date, Ms. Mestas has led over 14 industry engagement events, attended by over 700 individuals. The Environmental Service MATOC Pre-proposal meeting was attended by over 115 companies.

Looking forward to the three MATOCs planned to be brought before the Board, Ms. Mestas explained that staff intend to request an Environmental MATOC for an up to \$500 million cumulative value, as well as MATOCs for Design Services and Project/Construction Management Services for up to \$1 billion each. She explained that the dollar amounts were determined by looking at the remaining work to complete ST3 and comparing those to the figures of similar services for ST2 projects. Consideration was given to the services need to support multiple phases of the project lifecycle (planning, design, and construction) and how to best build capacity for agency-wide use. She added that individual task orders above \$10 million would require Committee approval, and those above \$50 million would require approval by the Board. She concluded by summarizing current next steps, including bringing the Environmental Services MATOC to the June SEC and Board meetings.

Chair Balducci asked what the assumed scale of indirect cost-savings is to be realized through this contracting method and whether there are any unique risks to be aware of. Ms. Mestas responded that part of the work is for Sound Transit and firms to develop a mutually recognized position term sheet to standardize nomenclature and rates across the firm for the use of experts, and annual increases in the rates are included, as is usual. This will also help the agency to be more precise with their task orders to dial in costs for expected services. She added that she does not yet have a complete analysis of the project savings, but that would be available by the next quarterly update on the cost-savings work plan. Chair Balducci asked that the information on expected savings be included when requesting the MATOC authorization. Speaking to the question on risks, Ms. Mestas noted that further scrutinizing the task orders for potential conflicts of interest, even as part of current processes, will be important and supported by standardization within the agency and the use of the in-development Project Management Information System. She noted that having MATOCs established does not preclude the agency from doing a more traditional procurement for larger needs.

Chair Balducci inquired into the process for awarding task orders. Ms. Mestas explained that staff will look at the list of contractors, perform an initial evaluation on their capacity and expertise, and most likely request a short statement of qualifications from interested firms. The team would review those and selected the most qualified firm to submit a cost to compare against internal estimates and enter negotiations. Should negotiations with the first firm be unsuccessful, the responsible team will move to the next interested, qualified firm. Chair Balducci noted that she has questions that largely fall into process, ensuring competitive bidding, and maintain appropriate checks and balance among staff and with the Board. She noted that process change can be daunting and wants to ensure the Board is fully aware of the action that will be before it.

Board member Strauss echoed similar sentiments to Chair Balducci on wanting more information to balance the needs for efficiency and oversight. He asked for a reminder into the amount of authority the Board would be asked to delegate to staff. Ms. Mestas re-iterated the Committee-approval threshold of \$10 million and the Board-approval threshold of \$50 million for each task order. Board member Strauss noted unease with those numbers. Ms. Mestas also reminded Committee members that her team is hosting informational sessions on the MATOC approach that either Board members or their staff are welcome to attend as well.

Board member Birney thanked Ms. Mestas for the additional information session as her staff found it helpful.

Executive session

None.

Other business

None.

Next meeting

Thursday, June 12, 2025
1:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.
Ruth Fisher Board Room & Virtually via Zoom

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 3:47 p.m.

ATTEST:

Claudia Balducci
System Expansion Committee Chair
APPROVED on _____, AJM.

Kathryn Flores
Board Administrator