



Summary Minutes

Executive Committee Meeting December 11, 2025

Call to order

The meeting was called to order at 10:30 a.m. by Committee Chair Somers 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) Dave Somers, Snohomish County Executive	(P) Claudia Balducci, King County Councilmember (P) Ryan Mello, Pierce County Executive
Board Members	
(A) Nancy Backus, Auburn Mayor (P) Cassie Franklin, Everett Mayor (P) Bruce Harrell, Seattle Mayor	(P) Julie Meredith, Washington State Secretary of Transportation (P) Kristina Walker, Tacoma City Councilmember

Katie Flores, Board Administrator, announced that a quorum of the Committee was present at roll call.

Report of the Chair - None

CEO Report

Chief executive officer Dow Constantine provided updates on the progress of pre-revenue service testing for the Coss Lake Connection. He also provided updates on the 2026 World Cup.

Public comment

Chair Somers announced that public comment would be accepted via email to meetingcomments@soundtransit.org and would also be accepted in-person and virtually.

The following people provided written public comment:

Joe Kunzler
Marilyn Kennell
Donna Popich
Jan Roberts
Jesse Simpson

The following people provided in-person public comment:

Mary-Kate Ryan
Day-Z Gould Wong

No virtual public comments were received.

Business items

Final Committee Action

November 6, 2025, Executive Committee meeting minutes

It was moved by Committee Vice Chair Mello, seconded by Committee Vice Chair Balducci, and carried by the unanimous vote of all Board members present that the minutes of the November 6, 2025, Executive Committee meetings be approved as presented.

For Recommendation to the Board

Motion No. M2025-64: Directing the chief executive officer to (1) conduct a fare gate retrofit implementation study; (2) if study findings support further action, develop a fare gate retrofit pilot proposal; and (3) report the fare gate retrofit implementation study findings to the Board and provide a staff recommendation that may include a fare gate retrofit pilot proposal based on the study findings.

Brian de Place, acting Security and Fare Engagement Executive Director, and Gavin Schaefer, Design Director, provided a presentation on the action.

Committee Vice Chair Balducci asked for the current fare compliance rate and the agency's current goal for that metric. Mr. de Place responded that fare compliance is currently at 61 percent, up approximately five percent from 2023 figures, with 85 percent being the target from 2019.

It was moved by Committee Vice Chair Mello, seconded by Board member Franklin, and carried by the unanimous vote of all Board members present that Motion No. M2025-64 be forwarded to the Board with a do-pass recommendation.

Reports to the Committee

Downtown Tunnel Analysis

Alex Krieg, Enterprise Planning Deputy Executive Director, and Brad Owen, Capital Delivery Executive Director, gave the presentation and noted that the report will provide an update on work responding to questions from the Board about the feasibility and cost-savings potential of operating all three future light rail lines through the current Downtown Seattle Transit Tunnell (DSTT). Mr. Krieg detailed the teams who collaborated on the study, as well as the overall scope of the assessment. He also noted several caveats, including the planning-level analysis done, which means the implications are only preliminary and that many components would require considerable additional study and design to validate this analysis.

Mr. Krieg explained the planned operating system assumed to be in place following the opening of the 2 Line Crosslake connection and the recent extension of the 1 Line to Federal Way. He also recapped the history of the DSTT.

Not directly related to today's main study, the existing DSTT contributes significantly to overall system resiliency work. The lack of crossover tracks and the current signaling system are constraints, and the ongoing program resiliency work will identify potential investments that can modernize and extend the DSTT's useful life. Other system constraints – at-grade sections, insufficient ventilation zones, etc. – also affect service reliability.

Looking to future expansion work under ST3, Mr. Krieg laid out the current expansion assumptions, including the spine segmentation that is planned to occur in 2039 when the Ballard Link Extension and the second tunnel become operational. The 1 Line (Tacoma-Ballard) would operate in the newly constructed tunnel, while the 2 Line (Redmond-Mariner) and 3 Line (West Seattle-Everett) would run in the DSTT. Benefits of this approach include manageable line lengths, fewer maintenance facilities, balanced rider volumes, and additional operational flexibility. Trade-offs include more transfers, less operational choice, and consistent fleet requirements across all light rail vehicles.

The second Downtown Tunnel is currently in planning as part of the Ballard Link Extension project (BLE) and is envisioned as rail-only. The current BLE cost range, without applying cost-savings opportunities, is \$20.1 – \$22.6 in 2025\$. The project intends to publish the Draft Environmental Impact Statement in Q1 2026.

Mr. Owen provided additional insight and explanation on the background of the study and the scope of the assessment. The study looked into two additional concepts beyond the current ST3 plan: Interline and Stub-end. The interline concept would see all three Link lines operate through the current DSTT, while the stub-end concept would have service from Ballard ending at Westlake station with a transfer to the current DSTT for connecting to the other lines, with the 1 Line not diverting to Ballard.

The interline concept would route the 1 Line to Ballard between Symphony and Westlake stations under 3rd Avenue. Transfers to the rest of the system can occur at Symphony station and further south. This concept would eliminate the need for BLE stations to be constructed at Westlake, Midtown, and Chinatown-International District, while potentially requiring capacity improvements at the existing DSTT stations. The interline concept would require suspending service on both the 1 and 2 Lines and the 3rd Avenue Busway while construction occurs. Additionally, the closure of the 1 and 2 Lines would sever the current Operations and Maintenance Facilities from the north half of the system. There is also risk of damaging the DSTT.

The stub-end concept would see a Ballard line terminate at Westlake Station, with a transfer to the rest of the system. Most construction and property considerations are similar to the current BLE assumptions, while additional considerations regarding forward-compatibility would need to be accounted for if there are plans to eventually complete the second tunnel. As the stub-end would be disconnected from the rest of the system, a dedicated Operations and Maintenance Facility would be required.

Before reviewing the findings, Mr. Owen noted that the information has been organized into 7 categories: cost savings, passenger transfers, future tunnel completion, construction disruption, maintenance facility needs, system reliability and resilience, and project schedule delay. Both projects may realize cost savings when compared to the full-build BLE, while there are partial offsets by costs of new construction, new right of way, service disruptions system upgrades, and project delays.

The interline concept projects approximately \$0 - \$4.5B in savings, allows same-platform transfers between the 1, 2, and 3 Lines at International District, Pioneer Square, and Symphony stations, could allow for future extension of the Ballard tunnel from Westlake to SODO, requires existing Link service to be suspended and the 3rd Avenue Busway to be closed for an extended period of time during construction, does not require an additional maintenance facility, requires upgrades to the current DSTT, and likely delays the schedule by at least two years.

The stub-end concept projects approximately \$0 – \$4B in savings (including consideration of an additional maintenance facility), requires transfer from the standalone Ballard Line to the remaining system, facilitates future extension of the tunnel from Westlake to SODO, avoids impacts to currently Link service, requires the construction of an additional maintenance facility along the Ballard line (including additional environmental review), requires upgrades to the current DSTT, and likely delays the schedule by at least two years.

Chair Somers thanked staff for the work on this matter, noting that it was important to explore questions surrounding the assumptions made when the initial ST3 ballot initiative was passed in 2016. Chair Somers also stated that, following the reading of the report and other documentation, the removal of the second downtown tunnel is not an option that should be further explored. He elaborated that the potential savings from the elimination of the second tunnel is more than likely to be absorbed by delays in the environmental process for various other projects, as well as inflated design and construction costs incurred due to those delays.

Board member Walker noted her agreement with the potential downsides of continuing this effort, stating that the downsides under what has been presented greatly outweigh the potential savings that might be achieved. She asked for clarification on whether the closure of the DSTT would result in years of bus-bridges and the operation of a different type of transit network. Mr. Owen responded in the affirmative. Board member Walker further asked whether there are lessons learned about the current DSTT that can be taken away from this feasibility study if it was not further pursued. Mr. Krieg responded that there are significant opportunities to tie together work from this study with other recommendations in the resiliency effort that has been progressing throughout the year.

Committee Vice Chair Balducci noted that this study exists in the context of the \$34 billion budget shortfall the agency is experiencing, and that presenting the findings of this study publicly shows the agency is holding itself to the Enterprise Initiative principles that the Board adopted in Motion No. M2025-36. She noted that while there is a range of potential savings, there is currently no other proposal before the Board that has the potential to generate \$4 billion in savings in one action. She further noted that while there have been many identified challenges with eliminating a second tunnel, doing so could bring significant passenger experience benefits by allowing seamless transfers between lines on shared station platforms. Committee Vice Chair Balducci asked staff to present these findings to an external party for consideration and verification of findings.

Committee Vice Chair Mello thanked Vice Chair Balducci for bringing this question to the forefront of conversations about potential cost savings, while also noting that this report has done great work in identifying constraints and vulnerabilities the agency's transit network has so that additional work can be done to remedy them. Committee Vice Chair Mello noted that one of the agency's largest drivers of cost escalations are delays, which leads to his feelings of concern and uncertainty about further pursuing the elimination of the second DSTT. He further noted that he does not feel that he can be convinced that this idea is worth of further consideration.

Equitable Transit-Oriented Development and Labor Standards Policy Briefing

Margaret Cederoth, Strategic Planning, Policy, and Programs Executive Director, Chris Elwell, Labor and Workforce Relations Executive Director, and Mara D'Angelo, acting Community Development Office Director, provided the report.

Ms. Cederoth noted that this presentation was created in response to a request for analysis of potential Board action to amend Section 2.5.4 of the agency's Equitable Transit-Oriented Development (ETOD) policy. The potential Board action would require General Contractors to submit a project labor agreement that would cover the entire scope of construction work executed, with the Board reserving the ability to grant waivers of this requirement under certain circumstances.

Ms. Cederoth reviewed the current ETOD policy, which was adopted in 2018 to reflect ST3 priorities and statutory labor standards. She also noted that the agency has a Project Labor Agreement for infrastructure projects and that positive labor outcomes have been achieved in the current TOD program framework.

Ms. Cederoth summarized the current labor standards and outcomes of the TOD program. She noted that the agency has supported the development of more than 20 TOD projects throughout the region, resulting in the construction of over 1600 new homes, with a further excess of 1800 housing units in development. She explained that current TOD projects require contractors to pay at least the equivalent of the residential prevailing wage, minimum workforce participation goals, a 20 percent labor hour utilization rate for state-registered apprentices, and the submission of a construction safety plan.

Chair Somers thanked staff for their work in developing this analysis and report. He requested that staff consult with local jurisdictions, labor organizations, and housing developers to hear additional feedback and inform next steps.

Committee Vice Chair Mello echoed the sentiments of the Chair and asked whether staff could look into developing different options for future Board action. He noted that while a mandate is one potential approach, he is also interested in incentive structures or other means to encourage contractors in the direction desired.

Labor Liaison Lisa Bogardus asked that staff bring back additional information on how the TOD program is meeting its labor goals and how those goals can be improved. She also asked for additional detail on how the agency measures positive outcomes for the community through its TOD program.

Executive Session

Chair Somers advised that the Committee was going into executive session to review the performance of a public employee. He introduced Diana McDougle, Deputy General Counsel, who explained that the committee was allowed to enter into executive session to review the performance of a public employee under RCW 42.30.110 (1)(g).

Chair Somers noted that the Committee would be in executive session for 20 minutes.

The executive session began at 11:53 a.m., with the Committee scheduled to return at 12:13 p.m.

The executive session was extended by 10 minutes, with the Committee scheduled to return at 12:23 p.m.

The meeting was called back to order at 12:23 p.m.

Business items, Continued

For Recommendation to the Board

Motion No. M2025-66: Approving a performance rating and related merit increase and a performance award for Dow Constantine, Sound Transit Chief Executive Officer.

It was moved by Committee Vice Chair Balducci, seconded by Board member Walker.

Chair Somers noted that the motion includes a performance rating recommendation of outstanding. He further noted that at the request of CEO Constantine, a merit increase and discretionary bonus will be deferred.

Board member Walker shared her thanks and appreciation for the work that CEO Constantine has done in his role thus far.

It was carried by the unanimous vote of all Board members present that Motion No. M2025-66 be forwarded to the Board with a do-pass recommendation.

Other business – None

Next meeting

Thursday, January 15, 2026 **NOTE DATE**
10:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.
Ruth Fisher Boardroom and virtually via Zoom

Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 12:27 p.m.

ATTEST:

Dave Somers
Executive Committee Chair

Kathryn Flores
Board Administrator

APPROVED on _____, HRR