



Summary Minutes

Executive Committee Meeting March 5, 2026

Call to order

The meeting was called to order at 10:31 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) Ryan Mello, Pierce County Executive (P) Girmay Zahilay, King County Executive

Board Members	
(P) Angela Birney, Redmond Mayor (A) Cassie Franklin, Everett Mayor (P) Thomas McLeod, Tukwila Mayor	(P) Julie Meredith, Washington State Secretary of Transportation (P) Kristina Walker, Tacoma City Councilmember (P) Katie Wilson, Seattle Mayor

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

Report of the Chair

Chair Somers provided the report, noting that the Transit Oriented Development Report for the 4th quarter of 2025 was available in Board members' packets for their reference.

CEO Report

Chief executive officer Dow Constantine provided the report.

Federal Grant Funds

CEO Constantine thanked Senators Patty Murray and Maria Cantwell, as well as other federal partners for securing \$8.4 million in federal funds to support Seattle-area transit agencies in the lead up to the 2026 World Cup. He noted that these investments will allow the agency to ensure that visitors to the region have a positive experience during the event.

Stride S3 Groundbreaking

CEO Constantine highlighted the recent groundbreaking for the Stride Bus Rapid Transit S3 Line.

State Legislative Update

CEO Constantine reviewed the status of current state legislative work, noting that one bill would allow the agency to take advantage of currently unutilized federal loan programs and issue 75-year bonds, while the other would reform permitting processes to allow the agency to secure permits concurrently with property acquisitions, enabling quicker construction timelines for capital projects.

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:

Betty Lau

The following person provided in-person public comment:

Joe Kunzler

Paul Pitkin

No virtual public comments were received.

Business items

Final Committee Action

February 5, 2026, Executive Committee meeting minutes

It was moved by Board member Wilson, seconded by Board member McLeod, and carried by the unanimous vote of all Board members present that the minutes of the February 5, 2026, Executive Committee meetings be approved as presented.

For Recommendation to the Board

Motion No. M2026-09: Adopting the 2026 performance goals and objectives for Sound Transit Chief Executive Officer Dow Constantine.

Chair Somers noted that the proposed 2026 performance goals for CEO Constantine were developed between the Board Chair and Vice Chairs. Six goals were established covering the following: (1) Open the Crosslake Connection and Pinehurst Station, (2) Engagement with Board members and external partners on Enterprise Initiative work and other matters, (3) Ensure a culture of operational excellence, (4) Drive measurable improvements in Rider Experience, (5) Champion values-based leadership, and (6) Produce an updated TOD strategy to include the pursuit of joint development opportunities.

It was moved by Board member Birney, seconded by Committee Vice Chair Mello, and carried by the unanimous vote of all Board members present that Motion No. M2026-09 be forwarded to the Board with a do-pass recommendation.

Recommendations for East King County and Snohomish County Community Oversight Panel Appointments

Chair Somers reported that Board members from Snohomish and East King County reviewed applications from people within their respective communities for appointments to the Community Oversight Panel (COP) and thanked those who applied for their interest.

Chair Somers nominated Thomas Hingson to serve on the COP representing Snohomish County, highlighting Mr. Hingson's extensive experience in transit and how his previous work will interface with duties on the COP.

Board member Birney nominated Fred Jarrett to serve on the COP representing East King County, highlighting Mr. Jarrett's experience on the Metro Transit Committee, Joint Regional Planning Committee for High Capacity Transit, and as a member of the Mercer Island city council and state legislature.

Chair Somers requested that staff prepare an action to appoint Mr. Hingson and Mr. Jarrett to the COP for consideration at the March 26 Board of Directors meeting. There were no objections from other committee members.

Reports to the Committee

Disparity Study Results

Edson Zavala, Economic Development Deputy Executive Director, introduced Sammer Bawa and Theresa Nelson from BBC Research and Consulting, to provide a report on the results of the 2025 Disparity Study.

Dr. Bawa discussed the objectives of the study. He noted that the primary goal was to assess the participation of disadvantaged businesses in Sound Transit work, relative to such businesses' estimated availability. For the purposes of the study, disadvantaged businesses were defined as those owned by people of color, women, veterans, and self-identified members of the LGBTQ community. Dr. Bawa also reported that the study also explored potential marketplace barriers which may hinder identified businesses from competing and performing work for Sound Transit.

Ms. Nelson described the participation portion of the study's analysis. She noted that data covering \$1.78 billion in contracts and procurements between 2020-2024 were studied. During that period, 6.9 percent of agency contracts were awarded to women-owned businesses, with a further 6.8 percent awarded to businesses owned by people of color. Of the latter group, 4.5 of the 6.8 percent of the contracts awarded were to Hispanic-owned businesses, 1.2 percent to black-owned, 0.5 percent to Native American-owned, 0.4 percent to Asian Pacific-owned, 0.1 percent to Subcontinent Asian-owned, and 0.0 percent to Middle Eastern North African-owned businesses. The remaining 86.3 percent of the contracts studied were awarded to firms that are either owned by white men, are publicly traded, are employee-owned, or cannot otherwise be classified within the first two categories by their ownership characteristics.

Ms. Nelson reported that small business participation was also studied. Of the \$1.78 billion in awarded contracts, 19.8 percent were awarded to small businesses as defined by the federal Small Business Administration as those who generate up to \$31.84 million a year. Within the small business group, the study further differentiated firms into 'Emerging,' 'Rising,' and 'Other' small businesses. These terms are defined by the Washington state Office of Minority and Women's Business Enterprises as firms who can generate up to \$3 million, \$10 million, and up to the \$31.84 million cap, respectively. Of the 19.8 percent awarded to small businesses, 2.0 percent went to emerging firms, 6.4 percent to rising firms, with the remaining 11.5 percent going to other small businesses. 80.2 percent of the 1.78 billion in contracts were awarded to non-small businesses.

Ms. Nelson summarized the market availability of disadvantaged businesses. Of all firms in the region, 11.0 percent are women-owned, and 17.5 percent are minority owned. Within the latter group, 6.0 percent are Asian Pacific-owned, 5.9 percent are Hispanic-owned, 1.7 percent are black-owned, 1.6 percent Subcontinent Asian-owned, 1.5 percent are Middle Eastern North African-owned, and 0.8 percent are Native American-owned businesses. The remaining 71.5 percent of firms within the region are either owned by white men, are publicly traded, are employee-owned, or cannot otherwise be classified within the first two categories by their ownership characteristics.

Ms. Nelson described the small business landscape in the region, with 69.9 percent of applicable businesses being defined as small under SBA definition, including 50.5 percent 12.9 percent, and 6.5 percent being Emerging, Rising, and Other small businesses, respectively under OMWBE definitions.

Ms. Nelson discussed the disparity analysis portion of the study, noting that study defined disparity as being the monetary value of contracts awarded to small and disadvantaged businesses divided by the monetary value of contracts if they were distributed amongst the groups according to their regional variability.

Ms. Nelson noted that for disadvantaged businesses, white women-owned businesses received 63 cents on the dollar compared to their regional availability for work, and minority-owned businesses received 39 cents on the dollar compared to their regional availability. She noted that any calculations falling below 80 cents on the dollar were considered a substantial disparity under the study's framework.

Ms. Nelson reported that for minority-owned businesses, Asian Pacific-owned received seven cents on the dollar, Black-owned received 74 cents on the dollar, Hispanic-owned received 75 cents on the dollar, Middle Eastern North African-owned received one cent on the dollar, Native American-owned received 66 cents on the dollar, and Subcontinent Asian-owned received nine cents on the dollar compared to their respective regional availability for work.

Ms. Nelson discussed that for small businesses, emerging firms received four cents on the dollar, rising firms received 50 cents on the dollar, and other small businesses received 1.77 on the dollar compared to their respective regional availability.

Ms. Nelson reviewed the 12 recommendations as part of the disparity study, with two highlighted as most impactful for the agency. She noted that further tailoring and refinement of the Small Business Enterprise Program and creating overall agency Small Business goals would make the greatest impact to the disparities identified in the presentation.

Chair Somers asked how experience and existing capacity for work was factored into the study, noting that many small firms may not have the requisite ability to take on the bodies of work Sound Transit regularly handles. Ms. Nelson responded that capacity was factored into the analysis through a custom census availability model, which filters contracts to align only with small businesses which match the type and monetary value of work identified. She further noted that in qualitative interviews with local small businesses, various barriers to participation were identified, and recommendations were developed based on the ability to respond to those barriers, such as limited financing capacity or limited technical assistance.

Board member Walker thanked staff and the consultants for their work and noted that she was looking forward to working with CEO Constantine on how the agency will move forward to meet its goals.

Board member Wilson asked whether LGBTQ-owned businesses were included in the analysis since they were not discussed during the presentation. Ms. Nelson responded that, while not included in the presentation, both LGBTQ-owned and Veteran-owned businesses were also included in the study. LGBTQ-owned businesses were available for 2.3 percent of contracting dollars, with 0.1 percent awarded, while Veteran-owned businesses were available for 4.4 percent of dollars and awarded 1.5 percent.

Board member Wilson asked whether there was additional information available on the breakdown of non-minority owned businesses by category, noting that knowing the relative volume of White Male-owned businesses compared to employee or publicly traded companies would help better contextualize the overall diversity of the marketplace. Dr. Bawa responded that White Male-owned businesses were overutilized by the agency but were not specifically reported in the study due to the focus being on minority-owned and small businesses.

Board member Wilson asked whether business size of minority-owned firms were considered for the analysis, noting that some of the disparity may be explained if that was not normalized. Ms. Nelson noted that there was significant overlap between minority and women-owned businesses and having an emerging small business designation. She further noted that by creating more tailored race and gender-neutral small business goals, the agency may also see significant equity improvements as well.

Board member Wilson asked if the level of administrative burden and cost incurred if the agency would award additional contracts to emerging and rising small businesses were considered in the analysis. Dr. Bawa responded that there are increased costs and administrative burden by awarding additional

contract dollars to small firms, and that it is a tradeoff question for the agency to determine where funds are best utilized.

Board member Zahilay asked for additional clarity on the key takeaways from the data provided and what the agency's current equitable contracting goals are to better benchmark the results presented. Ms. Nelson responded that the biggest takeaway is that small and minority-owned businesses experience barriers to agency contracting opportunities. She noted that the agency's participation rates for both categories have improved since the previous 2020 Disparity Study, but that gaps still exist.

Board member Zahilay asked how closely the agency's current small business goals align with overall equity goals. Ms. Nelson responded that it's difficult to measure how the agency can best align its equity and disadvantage business goals considering new developments in the federal regulatory landscape.

Board member Zahilay asked what timeline the Board should anticipate for any potential actions stemming from the study. Mr. Zavala responded that there is no current anticipated Board action based on the study, but that staff will be working to digest and determine next steps, with the goal of returning to the Board at that time if any recommendations require Board action.

Board member Birney asked how MATOC contracting will impact the results found in the Disparity Study. Ms. Nelson responded that the Disparity Study does include analysis of contracts awarded under task order executed in years before 2024. She noted that for future impacts, data on MATOC awards are still too recent for any trends to be reported. Mr. Zavala added that there is significant inclusion of minority-owned and small business in MATOC work, and that additional efforts are underway to improve inclusion of small businesses in future work.

Board member McLeod asked whether minority-owned businesses who were not awarded contracts during the studied period were included in the development of recommendations. Ms. Nelson responded in the affirmative.

CEO Constantine noted that staff is working to expand the opportunities available for MATOC awards and expand qualifying credentials to include more small and emerging businesses.

Enterprise Initiative: Board Retreat Preview

Alex Krieg, Enterprise Planning Deputy Executive Director, and Margaret Cederth, Deputy Chief Planning Officer, provided the report.

Mr. Krieg outlined the rules and expectations that drove the development of the scenarios to be considered at the March Board Retreat. He noted that the goal of the scenarios is not to present definitive choices, but to drive discussion about key trade-offs and policy choices. Each scenario is meant to also prioritize scenarios that present significant cost savings, while maintaining simplicity in their approach.

Mr. Krieg highlighted the timeline for the development of the scenarios and reiterated the four workstream driving the Enterprise Initiative: Policy and Planning, Transit Operations, Capital Delivery, and Finance.

Mr. Krieg outlined the draft agenda for the March Board Retreat. The Retreat will start with a review of different capital program scenarios, followed by small group discussions on different trade-offs within each of the Enterprise Initiative workstreams, and concluding with a large group discussion on developing a Board direction on scenario refinement.

Mr. Krieg discussed the emerging policy questions, which can be divided into Systemwide and Subarea categories. Systemwide policy questions include: determining modal priorities between Link, Sounder, and ST Express; trade-offs on project readiness; cost sharing for and relative contribution of systemwide assets; and potential changes in financial policies and practices to enable dynamic management of ST3 delivery. Subarea policy questions include: differing tax bases across different subareas; capturing

investment priorities within different subareas; reflecting and incorporating subarea priorities; and assessing subarea trade-offs from specific scenarios.

Discussion on the 2026 Executive Committee Work Plan

Chair Somers reviewed the Work Plan, noting that the draft version of the workplan was discussed at the previous Executive Committee meeting in February, and has been updated with new topics of special interest regarding a review of passenger restroom policy.

Chair Somers asked whether the Fare Gate Retrofit Implementation Study would be presented to the Executive Committee or another body of the Board. CEO Constantine responded that he believed it would go to the Rider Experience and Operations Committee but would confirm and follow-up with Chair Somers.

Executive Session – None

Other business – None

Next meeting

Thursday, April 2, 2026
10:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.
Ruth Fisher Boardroom and virtually via Zoom

Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 11:46 p.m.

ATTEST:

Dave Somers
Executive Committee Chair

Kathryn Flores
Board Administrator

APPROVED on _____, HRR