



Summary Minutes

System Expansion Committee Meeting April 9, 2026

Call to order

The meeting was called to order at 1:32 p.m. by Committee Chair Birney 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) Angela Birney, Redmond Mayor	(P) Kim Roscoe, Fife Mayor

Board Members	
(P) Steffanie Fain, King County Councilmember	(P) Dave Somers, Snohomish County Executive
(A) Cassie Franklin, Everett Mayor	(P) Dan Strauss, Seattle Councilmember
(P) Ryan Mello, Pierce County Executive	(A) Katie Wilson, Seattle Mayor
	(P) Girmay Zahilay, King County Executive

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

Report of the Chair

None

CEO Report

Chief Executive Officer Dow Constantine provided the report.

Enterprise Initiative Survey – CEO Constantine reported that, in addition to a series of regional forums, the public can provide comments related to the Enterprise Initiative via an online survey that recently rolled-out. So far, the agency has received almost 10,000 responses.

Happy Earth Month – CEO Constantine noted that while much of the agency’s focus has been on the Crosslake Connection and Enterprise Initiative, sustainability is at the heart of the agency’s visions to improve quality of life for residents across the region. He wished all a Happy Earth Month.

Public comment

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

Written public comments:

Kathleen Hosfeld, with Homestead Community Land Trust

Alan Caswell

Nancy Kuta, Joel Creswell, Scott J, Destinee Evers, Teddy Warshaw, Beth Osborne

Jake Alewel, Brigette Ball, Anthony Bolton, Irene Wu, Sandy Matthews, Amy Owings
Melanie Vartanian, Paul Cabarga
Betty Lau
Unnamed Commenter
Jeff Ryan, with the City of Mill Creek
Victor Bishop

In-person Verbal Public Comments:

Betty Lau
Brien Chow
Marykate Ryan
Jack Whisner
Michael Miller
Ryan Donohue
Lusha

Virtual Verbal Public Comments:

Carl Aslund
Laura Svancarek
Mike Stewart
Eric Olson

Business items

For Committee Final Action

Minutes: March 12, 2026 System Expansion Committee meeting

It was moved by Vice Chair Roscoe, seconded by Board member Strauss, and carried by unanimous voice vote that the minutes of the March 12, 2026 System Expansion Committee meeting be approved as presented.

Motion No. M2026-14: Authorizing the chief executive officer to execute a contract modification with David Evans & Associates to exercise a contract option for consultant services for the Sounder Rail Track & Signal Project's Phase 3 Preliminary Engineering and Sounder Project Management Services in the amount of \$12,680,410 with a 10% contingency of \$1,268,041 totaling \$13,948,451 for a new total authorized contract amount not to exceed \$40,761,348.

Melissa Flores Saxe, High-Capacity Transit Project Development Director, gave the staff presentation. She was joined by John Martin, Capital Delivery Executive Director, and William Chow, Commercial Director.

It was moved by Vice Chair Roscoe, seconded by Board member Strauss, and carried by unanimous voice vote that Motion No. M2026-14 be approved as presented.

For Recommendation to the Board

Motion No. M2026-16: Authorizing the chief executive officer to execute a contract modification with HNTB Corporation to provide project development services for the Ballard Link Extension project in the amount of \$16,277,000, with a 20% contingency of \$3,255,400 totaling \$19,532,400, for a new total authorized contract amount not to exceed \$345,638,236.

Brad Owen, Capital Delivery Executive Director, gave the staff presentation.

Board member Fain asked if there is a more specific updated timeline for the publication of the Ballard Link Extension Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement. Mr. Owen noted that the document is in the Federal Register's docket, but there is no current expected date of release. Board member Fain asked if additional delays to the publication would impact this contract modification. Mr. Owen stated that staff have attempted to account for some potential delay with the terms of the modification but would need to return for additional dollars should those assumptions be insufficient.

Board member Strauss reminded the Board of his request from the March 18, 2026 Board Retreat of working to parse dollars being spent on the Downtown Tunnel portion and on the remaining segments of the Ballard Link Extension.

It was moved by Board member Strauss, seconded by Vice Chair Roscoe, and carried by unanimous voice vote that Motion No. M2026-16 be forwarded with a do-pass recommendation.

Resolution No. R2026-06: Selecting the non-motorized and transit improvements to be built to improve access to the Tacoma Dome Station as part of the Tacoma Dome Station Parking and Access Improvements Project, amending the ST2 Plan.

Manan Garg, Capital Delivery Executive Project Director, began the staff presentation. He was joined by Lauryn Douglas, Tacoma Dome Link Extension Planning Director, and Diane Wiatr, High-Capacity Transit Development Manager.

Board member Mello thanked Board member Walker for her efforts in ensuring this project continues to advance. He reminded the committee that this project was included and deferred from ST2 and highlighted the ability to leverage funding from a Puget Sound Regional Council grant.

Chair Birney noted that she had communicated with Board member Walker, and shared Board member Walker's statement of full support for the improvements as presented.

Board member Fain asked what community engagement occurred and how it informed the selection of the improvements. Ms. Wiatr responded that engagement kicked off in 2024 with open houses, online meetings, and meetings with committees and commissions in the area (including the Tacoma Commission on Disabilities). She noted that the Tacoma Dome station area is close to several equity priority communities. That engagement directly informed which improvements would be most beneficial.

Vice Chair Roscoe also echoed thanks to Board member Walker and the collaboration with the City of Tacoma. She invited other members to tour the station area to see how transformative these improvements will be. She added that these improvements are welcome in place of additional parking and that the project is one in a sequence that will, eventually, connect Mt. Rainier to Puget Sound.

Chair Birney noted the cumulative impact that many projects, including Sound Transit projects, can have on a particular area is wonderful to see develop.

Vice Chair Roscoe noted that at the full Board meeting, this action will require a two-thirds supermajority vote to adopt.

It was moved by Vice Chair Roscoe, seconded by Board member Strauss, and carried by unanimous voice vote that Resolution No. R2026-06 be forwarded with a do-pass recommendation.

Resolution No. R2026-07: Authorizing the chief executive officer to acquire certain real property interests, contingent upon receipt of any necessary federal approvals, including acquisition by condemnation to the extent authorized by law, and to reimburse eligible relocation and reestablishment expenses incurred by affected owners and tenants as necessary for the Tacoma Dome Link Extension project.

Manan Garg, Capital Delivery Executive Project Director, gave the staff presentation. He was joined by Wells Lawson, Real Property Deputy Executive Director, and Emily Walton-Percival, Financial Planning, Analysis, and Budget Manager.

Board member Strauss stated his support for the action.

It was moved by Vice Chair Roscoe, seconded by Board member Strauss, and carried by unanimous voice vote that Resolution No. R2026-07 be forwarded with a do-pass recommendation.

Resolution No. R2026-08: (1) Approving the Chief Executive Officer's declaration that three Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) sites known as Mount Baker Site A, Mount Baker Site B, and Roosevelt Site C are surplus; (2) declaring the three TOD Sites to be suitable for development as housing; (3) authorizing staff to negotiate an agreement to transfer Mount Baker A and Roosevelt C at a discount to the City of Seattle for affordable housing development; and (4) authorizing staff to offer Mount Baker B for sale at fair market value to all interested parties.

Marshall Foster, Chief Planning and Development Officer, began the staff presentation. He was joined by Mara D'Angelo, Community Development Acting Director, and Heather Burns, Senior Project Manager.

Vice Chair Roscoe stated her pleasure that Sound Transit is committed to, and currently exceeding, the 80-80-80 criteria related to offering property for Transit Oriented Development, despite the work of the Enterprise Initiative to close the project affordability gap.

Board member Strauss noted that, as he was growing up, housing in the Roosevelt area was considered less modern and clean so opportunities to develop new housing in the area are exciting.

Board member Strauss asked for clarification that the parcels near the Mount Baker Station are planned to be sold at market value to whoever puts in the best offer. Ms. D'Angelo clarified that the north portion of the offering would be for affordable housing while the south portion would be offered at market rate. Noting that there is a current Seattle Office of Housing affordable housing project, Board member Strauss asked if there was a barrier to offer the land in question to the project at the same time. Ms. D'Angelo responded that coordination and engagement with the Office of Housing resulted in the determination that the UW laundry site could produce more than 400 affordable units while the current Sound Transit property is steeply sloped and more difficult to develop. The agencies came to an understanding that the best pathway was for Sound Transit to pursue its own offering strategy. Ms. Burns noted that the Office of Housing may be able to take advantage of the adjacent site as staging for its project while the feasibility period is ongoing. Board member Strauss asked if affordable childcare would be offered at the Office of Housing's UW Laundry site. Ms. Burns responded that construction on the site is anticipated to begin in the fall and that an early learning center was included in the project's development. Board member Strauss stated that he feels there were missed opportunities to better complement the Office of Housing's development. He noted he would support forwarding the action to the Board but would follow up with staff on more specific information.

Chair Birney stated her support for the development of mixed-use and mixed-income properties from Sound Transit properties.

It was moved by Board member Strauss, seconded by Vice Chair Roscoe, and carried by unanimous voice vote that Resolution No. R2026-08 be forwarded with a do-pass recommendation.

Motion No. M2026-17: Approving the replacement key business terms of multifamily and office transactions for mixed use transit-oriented development by Touchstone, LLC (a URG Company) at the Operations and Maintenance Facility East TOD site in Bellevue, Washington.

Marshall Foster, Chief Planning and Development Officer, began the staff presentation. He was joined by Mara D'Angelo, Community Development Acting Director, and Rennie Elliot, Senior Project Manager.

It was moved by Vice Chair Roscoe, seconded by Board member Strauss, and carried by unanimous voice vote that Motion No. M2026-17 be forwarded with a do-pass recommendation.

Reports to the Committee

Presentation on Construction Costs and National Market Trends

Ken Simonson, Associated General Contractors of America (AGC) Chief Economist, was joined by Sonja Forster, AGC of Washington, to provide insight into current trends in the construction industry.

Reporting on the results from a November-December 2025 survey of contractors principally in Washington State, Mr. Simonson noted that only two construction fields (data centers and power infrastructure) had assumptions for higher value in work in 2026, while all other fields, including transportation, had negative expectations compared to 2025. He added that the industry's pessimism may offer an opportunity to Sound Transit to attract more firms who would otherwise be looking in other market segments.

Thirty-nine percent of Washington firms expect to increase headcount while 30% expect headcount to decrease. This differs from the usual majority of firms reporting optimism about increasing headcount. Sixty-three percent of firms, nationally, expected to increase their headcount. Mr. Simonson noted that construction employment in Washington has been declining since a peak in 2022. This also differs from the national trend which has continued to increase since 2022. While revised numbers from the Bureau of Labor Statistics and a slight uptick in January 2026 are welcome, Washington State is still down more than two percent when compared to the month right before the COVID-19 pandemic. He added that it may mean less pressure on wages and lead to more opportunities to bring workers onto Sound Transit projects.

Mr. Simonson turned to the construction employment information for Washington State metro areas, almost all of which measured a decline since January 2025 by 1-5%. Looking at comparisons with other states, Washington was one of 11 states that lost construction employment over the last year, but the decline was milder than initially tracked. Mr. Simonson added that Oregon saw a much more dramatic loss in construction employment which may be beneficial to Washington projects.

Turning to results from the annual Job Opening and Labor Turnover Survey, new hires and job openings both declined over the last year, while layoffs remained steady over the same period, which Mr. Simonson believed is due to optimism in the medium and long term. Firms are currently unwilling to track down formerly laid-off workers in the hope that work is upcoming.

In general throughout 2025, construction declined on a year-over-year basis, with a slight uptick in the last quarter of 2025. Public construction has remained positive at a modest level, while private construction (both residential and non-residential) has remained negative. Looking specifically at mass transit construction spending, Mr. Simonson reported that the category has been one of the biggest negatives, in terms of dollars spent, in any sector of construction, with some blame being in the trailing off of federal dollars.

When reviewing major concerns raised by Washington contracting firms, Mr. Simonson explained that 87% of respondents included concerns around economic slowdown/recession, followed by rising direct labor costs, increased competition, and material costs. When looking at the Producer Price Index, Mr. Simonson noted that the price for construction inputs has increased 3.7% over the last 12 months, while the Consumer Price Index increased by 2.4%. This is part of a 45% increase in the same inputs when compared to February 2020. Mr. Simonson explained that tariffs of 50% have been imposed on key materials, including steel, aluminum, copper/brass, diesel fuel, and construction machinery. While the

PPI only includes domestic producers and importers, the data show that they are aware of how tariffs are impacting prices. The War with Iran is also expected to have a long-term impact on fuel prices.

Speaking to tariffs, Mr. Simonson provided a recap of the current relevant tariffs in place, noting that the tariffs rules invalid by the Supreme Court in February were not incredibly impactful to the construction industry. He added that AGC maintains a Tariff Resource Center on its website for those wanting more information. When surveyed about responses to tariffs, 36% of Washington firms responded that they raised bid prices and passed most or all tariff costs on to the project owner. A quarter of respondents stated that they were not affected by tariffs. Some firms were also able to accelerate purchasing while tariffs were being rolled out.

Related to national construction wages, Mr. Simonson reported that the four common metrics all point to a 4-5% increase over 2025. He caveated the data for Washington by reminding the committee of the deflated sense of optimism in the state's construction industry. Mr. Simonson also noted that the construction trades have historically heavily relied on immigrant labor, with 29% of Washington state construction workers being foreign born.

Mr. Simonson noted the general uncertainty resulting from the war with Iran can impact prices of already inflated construction inputs including fuel, natural gas, alumina, and longer delivery times. Some impacts, such as cancelled private projects, may play to Sound Transit's benefit.

Highlighting policy changes that may impact construction markets, Mr. Simonson summarized the possible effects of tariffs, immigration/deportation activities, higher interest rates, lessened federal regulations, and corporate taxes. Mr. Simonson closed by detailing his medium-term outlook with assumptions that economic growth is close to stalling, transit construction timelines are likely to extend nationally, and a protracted war will contribute to higher materials prices.

Board member Strauss asked if the percentage changes on slide 6 (construction job growth across the states) are in comparison across states or against a national average. Mr. Simonson clarified that the changes are within the same state from January 2025 to January 2026. Board member Strauss asked if the decline could also be tied to the cool-off of the area's rapid growth in the 2010s. Mr. Simonson noted that there was some overbuild done in the past and the high cost of living may be pushing people to move either to the East Coast or even Idaho, where construction trends are currently stronger. Board member Strauss pushed back on the assumption of a complete overbuild in the area, citing the strong delivery of studio and one-bedroom units in multi-family developments. Mr. Simonson responded that the trend is also true nationally in that there is a mismatch in right-sizing multi-family units.

Vice Chair Roscoe asked if the respondent pool for the Washington-specific surveys was normal, in terms of quantity. Mr. Simonson responded that the Washington chapter had one of the larger respondent data sets. He clarified that many firms are multi-state and so they might skip over the questions selecting a primary state.

Board member Mosqueda thanked Mr. Simonson for the presentation and highlighted the crucial role of immigrants in the development of vibrant communities.

System Expansion Monthly Status Report update

Capital Delivery Deputy CEO Terri Mestas began the report by noting that the information covered is from February 2026. The presentation will cover Program-level updates, as well as updates on Projects in Planning & Design and Projects in Construction.

Ms. Mestas reported that the capital delivery department has continued its effort to issue prompt payment, with an average of 26 days to pay applicable invoices, exceeding the 30-day benchmark. There was one OSHA recordable injury incidents in February on the Sumner Parking and Access Improvement project. The injury was a pinch injury; lessons learned resulted in corrective actions being taken to reduce rework-related hazards.

Moving to Projects in Planning and Design, Ms. Mestas noted that work is expected to move forward on final design of the Operations and Maintenance Facility South project after the Board approved a Progressive Design-Build contract last month. She highlighted that the final Stride projects in planning should begin to move into the construction tracker. She added that the schedules for most of major projects in planning are subject to the Enterprise Initiative.

Shifting to Projects in Construction, Ms. Mestas noted that the next iteration of the presentation will be able to reflect the opening of the East Link Extension’s Crosslake Connection and she called out the anticipated Q3 opening of the Pinehurst station.

Board member McLeod asked if the Board could be informed on the specific cost-savings measures related to the Infill Stations. Ms. Mestas said that staff could provide that information, as it is a part of the opportunity register which is helping to inform the Enterprise Initiative.

Executive session

None.

Other business

None.

Next meeting

Friday, May 22, 2026
1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.
Ruth Fisher Board Room & Virtually via Zoom

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 3:30 p.m.

ATTEST:

Angela Birrney
System Expansion Committee Chair

Kathryn Flores
Board Administrator

APPROVED on _____, AJM.