SOUNDTRANSIT

Summary Minutes

Board Meeting
August 27, 2026

Call to order

The meeting was called to order at 1:32 p.m. by Vice Chair Ryan Mello and was available for viewing in person in the Sound Transit Board Room of Union Station, 401 South Jackson, Seattle, Washington 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 Chairs
(A) Dave Somers, Snohomish County Executive	(A) Claudia Balducci, King County Councilmember (P) Ryan Mello, Pierce County Executive

Board members	
(P) Angela Birney, City of Redmond Mayor	(A) Ed Prince, City of Renton Councilmember
(P) Steffanie Fain, King County Councilmember	(P) Kim Roscoe, City of Fife Mayor
(A) Cassie Franklin, City of Everett Mayor	(A) Dan Strauss, City of Seattle Councilmember
(P) Hunter George, City of Fircrest Councilmember	(P) Peter von Reichbauer, King County Councilmember
(P) Thomas McLeod, City of Tukwila Mayor	(P) Kristina Walker, City of Tacoma Councilmember
(P) Julie Meredith, WSDOT Secretary	(P) Katie Wilson, City of Seattle Mayor
(P) Teresa Mosqueda, King County Councilmember	(P) Girmay Zahilay, King County Executive
(P) David Parshall, City of Lynnwood Councilmember	

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

Report of the Chair

Monthly Contract Report - The meeting packet included the monthly CEO contract report for July 2026, as well as the monthly Multiple Award Task Order Contract (MATOC) report.

World Cup Congratulations – Vice Chair Mello acknowledged that Motion No. M2026-36 is on the Agenda without prior Committee consideration. He noted that staff have been negotiating against a deadline and were able to land the substantial terms of a contract needed for Board consideration. He thanked Rider Experience and Operations Committee Chair Walker for her flexibility.

Everett Link Extension (EVLE) Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) – Last week, the agency received news that the Federal Transit Administration signed the EVLE DEIS and cleared the way for publication on September 18. The milestone will launch a public engagement period for the region to learn more about the current state of the project and share priorities moving forward.

Agency staff will then incorporate the feedback as appropriate and inform the Board's deliberations as the project advances toward the Final Environmental Impact Statement.

CEO Report

CEO Constantine provided the report.

Community Oversight Panel (COP) Annual Report Response – CEO Constantine, noting that a formal response letter was included in the meeting materials, thanked the COP for their oversight of the agency. He reflected on the COP's annual report that identified both recent agency successes and areas where there are opportunities for improvement.

He added that he, Deputy CEO Brooke Belman, and Chief Operating Officer Whitney Abrams, have had the opportunity to meet with the panel and greatly appreciated the opportunity, and noted that he plans to return every two to three meetings, alternating with other agency leaders. He expressed optimism in the ongoing engagement with the panel.

Fare Gate Retrofit Pilot Implementation – Noting that today's action is building upon a long-time discussion at the agency, CEO Constantine expressed that staff have been urgently working to develop a fare gate retrofit implementation strategy after the Board took formal action last fall. He mentioned several key questions that Board members have raised during discussions and emphasized that staff are developing a thorough and equitable engagement strategy that ensures appropriate fare media and rider awareness materials are available.

West Seattle Progress – CEO Constantine remarked that the agency continues momentum on the West Seattle Link Extension, with the project bringing actions to the Board over the last three months. Today's actions include a significant investment in property acquisition, and the agency is committed to meaningful engagement with affected property owners and tenants.

He also flagged that staff will share exciting progress on reducing impacts in the SODO neighborhood, thanks to collaboration with the City of Seattle and Seattle City Light.

Public Comment

Vice Chair Mello announced that the Board was accepting public comment via email and verbally through the virtual meeting platform.

The following people provided written public comment to the Board:

Brandon Johnson
Riz Monghit
Rose
Jae Foxglove
Betty Lau
Brien Chow
Devon Breithart

Before hearing verbal public comments, Vice Chair Mello announced that earlier this month an individual had violated the Board's public comment rules and was issued an exclusion from verbal Public Comment. He noted that the Board rules allow an individual to be excluded from providing verbal public comment for up to 365 days if a third violation occurs within an 18-month timeframe. At the August 13, 2026 System Expansion Committee Meeting, Committee Chair Birney ruled Alex Tsimerman's public comment out of order and excluded him from providing verbal public comment for a period of 365 days, from August 13, 2026 to August 13, 2027. Vice Chair Mello explained that Mr. Tsimerman is still able to submit written public comment during his exclusion from verbal comment. Vice Chair Mello stated that the Board rules allow the decision to be overruled by a majority vote of the Board members in attendance at the next regularly scheduled Board meeting.

Vice Chair Mello asked if any Board member had an objection to the exclusion. There were no objections.

The following people provided in-person verbal public comment to the Board:

Betty Lau
Brien Chow
Jason Weill
Marykate Ryan
Carl Aslund
Joel Student
Mark Weed

The following people provided virtual verbal public comment to the Board:

Steve Banfield
Evan Church
Joe Kunzler
Timothy Hardis

Consent Agenda

<u>Voucher Certification: July 2026</u>

<u>Minutes of the July 23, 2026, Board of Directors Meeting</u>

<u>Motion No. M2026-29: Authorizing the chief executive officer to modify an agreement with King County to (1) extend Sound Transit's participation in a reduced fare program managed and administered by King County to support no to low-income riders in King, Snohomish and Pierce counties until the end of 2028, or until a permanent program is approved, and (2) add an additional $800,000 to the amount authorized for support of Metro's work under this agreement for a total authorized expenditure not to exceed $2,800,000, and (3) execute further modifications to the agreement with King County that do not change the authorized amount of the agreement.</u>

<u>Motion No. M2026-31: Authorizing the chief executive officer to execute an extension to the existing Law Enforcement Services Agreement with the City of Lynnwood for two additional years, in an amount not to exceed $710,818, to maintain continuity of services while Sound Transit continues development of a comprehensive regional safety, security and law enforcement framework.</u>

<u>Motion No. M2026-32: Approving the submittal of the Transit Development Plan 2026-2031 to the Washington State Department of Transportation.</u>

<u>Resolution No. R2026-18: Authorizing the chief executive officer to acquire certain real property interests, 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 West Seattle Link Extension, contingent upon adoption of Resolution No. R2026-19.</u>

The consent agenda was moved by Board member Walker and seconded by Board member Wilson.

It was carried by a unanimous vote of all Board members present that the Consent Agenda be approved as presented.

Business items

<u>Motion No. M2026-30: Authorizing the chief executive officer to advance design, procurement, and implementation planning activities for the Fare Gate Retrofit Pilot program to install fare gates at up to fourteen light rail stations.</u>

Brian de Place, Security and Fare Engagement Executive Director, and Meg Cederoth, Deputy Chief Planning Officer, provided the staff presentation.

Board member McLeod asked if the fare gates would be installed all at once or sequentially and, if the latter, would they be activated as installed or all together. Mr. de Place responded that additional work is needed to plan out the installation specifics, and discussions with the relevant vendors will be critical in determining the strategy. He added that there are arguments for both approaches, and that discussions with peer agencies stressed the need for effective post-installation passenger engagement to dial-in adjustments.

Board member Zahilay thanked staff for addressing many of his questions and issues from the Board's discussion in June in today's action and presentation. He asked what the potential fare ambassador response to a youth or reduced-fare eligible rider who approaches a fare gate and asks for assistance would be. For youth riders, fare ambassadors would be able to continue current practices of engaging with the rider and asking about age. This supports the potential strategy of utilizing fare ambassadors to override the gates as necessary since riders under the age of 19 do not have to show fare media. For low-income adult riders, there is a requirement to provide valid fare media, which is why the agency will be developing additional strategies to connect low-income individuals with the appropriate fare media and expand the number of individuals with supported access to fare media. Mr. de Place suggested a possible option to partner with local agencies to set up outreach tables at select stations. Board member Zahilay asked if there were any negative outcomes reported from peer systems that have installed fare gates recently. Mr. de Place noted that many of the peer agencies don't stack as an apples-to-apples comparison due to either already having fare gates in parts of the system or having been installed more than a decade ago. Staff are keen to measure those potential externalities and be ready to mitigate as necessary.

Board member Fain expressed support for coordination between the regional ORCA agencies and noted she would work with King County Metro to pursue easier access for youth fare media. She asked if today's action locks-in the 14 stations identified in the WSP report prepared for June. Ms. Cederoth response that the action does not select the specific stations. Today's action directs staff to prepare and advance the Request for Proposals needed to inform future board actions to authorize the full funding for the pilot. Board member Fain asked if the agency will be encouraging riders to also tap-off at stations without fare gates. Mr. de Place noted that the agency used to have a tap-on/tap-off system, so the capability is still available to return to those settings. He added that it would also assist in the natural collection of origin-destination data.

Board member Mosqueda asked about considerations around riders with bicycles and mobility devices. Ms. Cederoth noted that feedback from the ADA and bike communities will be essential in developing the RFP to contract the design of the gates, as other systems have developed strategies and designs that could be adapted. She explained that gates could be calibrated to allow sufficient time to pass through comfortably.

Board member Walker reported that the Rider Experience and Operations Committee considered this action at its meeting earlier this month and unanimously forwarded the Motion to the Board with a do-pass recommendation. She noted that the committee's discussion covered the development of an evaluation framework and engagement of fare media strategies, similar to today's questions.

Motion No. M2026-30 was moved by Board member Walker and seconded by Board member Parshall.

Board member Walker noted that these amendments reflect much of the committee's discussion, and she discussed these with Board member Balducci between the Committee meeting and today.

Amendment 1 to Motion No. M2026-30 was moved by Board member Walker and seconded by Board member Wilson.

Amendment 1 – offered by Board Vice Chair Balducci

> On page 1 of Motion No. M2026-30, amend the action language as follows:
>
> *to advance design, procurement, and implementation planning activities for the Fare Gate Retrofit Pilot program to install fare gates at up to fourteen light rail stations, and directing development of a comprehensive goals-based evaluation framework for Board approval.*
>
> And insert the following as a new 11th paragraph of the Background section:
>
> *To ensure informed decision-making regarding pilot continuation, modification, and/or expansion, Sound Transit shall establish prior to implementation of pilot revenue service a comprehensive Fare Gate Pilot Evaluation Framework to be brought to the Rider Experience and Operations Committee for review and the Board for approval by the end of 2027. This framework shall establish: (1) specific goals and metrics for fare compliance and any other pilot outcomes the agency is attempting to achieve; (2) baseline pre-pilot compliance and operational data collected station-by-station; (3) a plan for tracking and reporting enforcement activities and fare compliance efforts at pilot- and non-pilot stations; and (4) methods for comparing pre- and post-pilot outcomes in order to assess the cost-benefit of fare gates relative to other fare compliance strategies. Staff may also propose alternative methods for collecting data to assess the cost and effectiveness of the pilot fare gate program prior to the Board making decisions about the program.*
>
> And on page 2 of Motion No. M2026-30, amend the action language as follows:
>
> *to advance design, procurement, and implementation planning activities for the Fare Gate Retrofit Pilot program to install fare gates at up to fourteen light rail stations, and to develop and present for Board approval by the end of 2027 a comprehensive Fare Gate Pilot Evaluation Framework prior to implementation of pilot revenue service.*

Mr. de Place acknowledged the direction to develop the framework and noted that staff will likely also offer additional and alternative metrics to support the Board's oversight. He noted no concerns with implementing the amendment.

Board member Fain asked if staff are seeking flexibility on the overall program goals (return on investment, fare compliance, etc.) or just the granular data metrics. Mr. de Place clarified that the amendment provides some flexibility in the metrics, not the goals.

Vice Chair Mello called for a voice vote on Amendment 1.

Amendment 1 to Motion No. M2026-30 was carried by a unanimous vote of the Board members present.

Amendment 2 to Motion No. M2026-30 was moved by Board member Walker and seconded by Board member Wilson.

Amendment 2 – offered by Board Vice Chair Balducci

> On page 1 of Motion No. M2026-30, amend the seventh paragraph of the Background section as

follows:

Access to reduced-fare and fare-free programs will be a critical aspect during pilot implementation planning. ORCA LIFT provides reduced-fare transit access for eligible low-income riders, while youth ORCA cards support fare-free access for riders age 18 and younger. As part of pilot implementation planning, Sound Transit will develop detailed plans for youth fare media expansion and ORCA LIFT outreach and utilization tracking, including information or strategies related to any issues or concerns caused by the fare gate pilot and results of those efforts. In addition, Sound Transit will identify opportunities to increase access to these programs and consider approaches that may help eligible riders obtain and use available fare media, such as identifying and reducing barriers to enrollment, card acquisition, and continued use of these programs through targeted outreach, partnerships, and customer support efforts.

Board member Walker noted that the amendment reflects the conversation heard during the questions.

Board member Wilson thanked staff for their work on this to date and expressed appreciation for the amendment to codify the direction.

Vice Chair Mello called for a voice vote on Amendment 2.

Amendment 2 to Motion No. M2026-30 was carried by a unanimous vote of the Board members present.

Vice Chair noted that the next few years will be a lot of work to prepare for implementation, and looks forward to hearing more on the progress at meetings.

Vice Chair Mello called for a voice vote on Motion No. M2026-30, as amended.

It was carried by the unanimous vote of all the Board members present that Motion No. M2026-30 be approved as amended.

Resolution No. R2026-19: Amending the Adopted 2026 Budget to fund property acquisitions and construction support services for the West Seattle Link Extension project by increasing the authorized project allocation by $765,000,000 from $738,612,926 to $1,503,612,926.

Jason Hampton, West Seattle Link Extension Commercial Director, provided the staff presentation. He was joined by Michael Morgan, Capital Delivery Executive Director, and Hughey Newsome, Chief Financial Officer.

Board member McLeod asked if this request is new cost or just the next step of assumed project spending. Mr. Hampton confirmed this is the next step of spending.

Resolution No. R2026-19 was moved by Board member Roscoe and seconded by Board member Mosqueda.

Board member Roscoe reported that the System Expansion Committee considered this action at its meeting earlier this month and unanimously forwarded the Resolution to the Board with a do-pass recommendation. She noted that the funding provided from the action will result in several contracts that will come before the System Expansion Committee and funds the first major property acquisition package for the project.

Board member Wilson expressed her appreciation to Sound Transit and City of Seattle staff for the collaboration on the improved SODO transmission line positioning.

Board member Mosqueda echoed Board member Wilson's thanks. She noted that staff truly pursued every cost-savings measure feasible to overcome the cost pressures and get to outcomes like the current one. She thanked Board member McLeod for his clarifying question and noted the public will see many iterations of these budget increases as the project prepares for construction.

Vice Chair Mello called for a roll call vote on Resolution No. R2026-19.

Ayes		**Nays**
Angela Birney	David Parshall	
Steffanie Fain	Kim Roscoe	
Hunter George	Kristina Walker	
Thomas McLeod	Katie Wilson	
Julie Meredith	Girmay Zahilay	
Teresa Mosqueda	Ryan Mello	

It was carried by the unanimous vote of 12 Board members present that Resolution No. R2026-19 be approved as presented.

Motion No. M2026-36: Authorizing the chief executive officer to execute (1) an Implementation Services agreement with International Business Machines Corporation to provide Enterprise Asset Management System platform and consulting services in the amount of $21,223,018 and (2) a ten-year Software-as-a-service contract with Arcadis U.S. Inc., in the amount of $8,994,540; with a shared 15 percent contingency of $4,552,500, for a total amount across both items not to exceed $34,770,058, plus applicable taxes.

CEO Constantine briefly noted that the agency has been anticipating this action and has kept the Board appraised of the program over the last year, as recently as May. He explained that the contracts to be authorized by the action would design and build-out a modernized asset management platform to replace aging systems. The agency expected reduced long-term costs, stronger asset management practices, and improved business efficiencies.

Tracy Reed, Special Programs and Business Transformation Deputy Executive Director, provided the staff presentation. She was joined by Shankar Rajaram, Infrastructure and Asset Management Executive Director, and Randi Levin, Chief Information Officer.

Board member McLeod asked what differentiated the IBM proposal from the others. Ms. Reed gave a brief overview of the narrowing procurement process. Board member McLeod clarified his question to ask if the agency is required to take the lowest-bid contract, and Ms. Reed responded that this was not a lowest-bid proposal process. The proposals were based on the services available to be provided and best value. Ms. Levin explained that IBM's Maximo product is a market leader and supports a number of train-specific agencies, in addition to other general transportation firms. Aracdis provides a transportation-specific layer on the Maximo product that enables better user-end experience and better changement management as the agency's different modes are onboarded on to the platform. She also flagged that Sound Transit is at an inflection point and needs to partner with firms that can support the planned growth.

Board member Mosqueda, noting Board member McLeod's questions, asked if the agency is still bound by the 2022 overall Responsible Bidder policy. Ms. Reed confirmed the policy is still in effect.

It was moved by Board member Wilson, seconded by Board member Walker, and carried by the unanimous vote of all the Board members present that Motion No. M2026-36 be approved as presented.

Reports to the Board – None

2026 World Cup debrief

Magdalyn Horvath, Acting Special Projects Director, began the presentation and introduced Marie Olson, Rider Experience Executive Director.

Ms. Horvath noted that the last FIFA World Cup presentation occurred just seven days before the tournament began and provided a last push to inform the Board and riders of the preparations made.

She noted that she was impressed with the ridership records, positive media coverage, and the successful support for passengers across the region. Throughout the tournament, Sound Transit total Link ridership reached 7.1 million, with the two highest ridership days being on June 19th and July 6th, the dates when the US Men's team played in Seattle. Five out of the six match days surpassed the previous daily ridership record of 225,000 riders.

While Link was utilized much more on match days vs non-match days, the stations closest to the stadium – Pioneer Square, International District/Chinatown, and Stadium – saw the greatest increase, largely due to the emphasis on these as the recommended preferred stations for match attendance. Noticeably, Marymoor Village Station also saw a 173% ridership increase on match days.

Sound Transit staff mobilized as ambassadors across the system, supporting additional security and operators.

Ms. Olson explained that the agency is drawing lessons learned from improvements made for the tournament related to signage, priority boarding for those needing access assistance, language accessibility, use of staff ambassadors, and emergency management capabilities. She also highlighted key regional press that rated the Seattle region as high-ranked World Cup host.

Vice Chair Mello thanked staff for ensuring a follow-up briefing was planned and that he hopes all the practices and improvements continue to serve riders.

Board member Meredith thanked staff for their collaboration with the Washington State Department of Transportation over the last 2 years. She also highlighted her personal experience of seeing agency staff engaging with the public and informing them of the system.

Board member Zahilay extended his congratulations to all the teams involved.

Board member von Reichbauer shared his colleague's excitement on the ridership and inquired into the fare revenue over the World Cup. Ms. Horvath noted that staff would follow up once fare numbers are final.

Board member Wilson also thanked staff and opined that the region was able to be an exceptional host city due to decades of investments across the region into transit and public spaces.

Executive Session to discuss a proposed course of action when public discussion is likely to result in an adverse legal or financial consequence to the agency as authorized under RCW 42.30.110 (1)(i)(iii).

Vice Chair Mello advised that the Board was going into executive session to discuss a proposed course of action or current practice when public discussion is likely to result in adverse legal or financial consequence to the agency. He introduced Amy Pearsall, Sound Transit Deputy General Counsel, who explained that the Board was allowed to enter into executive session under RCW 42.30.110(1)(i)(iii) to discuss the risks of a proposed action in which a public discussion would have adverse legal or financial consequence to the agency.

Vice Chair Mello explained that the Board would be in executive session for 15 minutes. The executive session began at 3:33 p.m. and was scheduled to end at 3:48 p.m.

At 3:48 p.m., the executive session was extended by 5 minutes to end at 3:53 p.m.

At 3:53 p.m., the executive session was extended by 2 minutes to end at 3:55 p.m.

The executive session ended at 3:55 p.m. At 3:56 p.m. the meeting was called back to order.

Other business – None

Next meeting

The next Board meeting would be held on September 24, 2026, from 1:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. in the Ruth Fisher Board Room and as a virtual meeting via Zoom.

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 3:56 p.m.

ATTEST:

________________________________ ________________________________

Dave Somers
Board Chair

Kathryn Flores
Board Administrator

APPROVED on ________, AJM.