

Summary Minutes

Rider Experience and Operations Committee Meeting September 3, 2026

Call to order

The meeting was called to order at 1:00 p.m. by Committee Chair Walker 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) Kristina Walker, Tacoma Councilmember	(P) Ed Prince, Renton Council President

Board Members	
(A) Claudia Balducci, King County Councilmember	(P) Teresa Mosqueda, King County Councilmember
(P) Steffanie Fain, King County Councilmember	(P) David Parshall, Lynnwood Councilmember
(A) Hunter George, Fircrest Councilmember	(A) Peter von Reichbauer, King County Councilmember

Hunter Rancipher, Board Relations Specialist, announced that a quorum of the committee was present at roll call.

Report of the Chair

Chair Walker provided the report, noting that the REO Metrics Report for June 2026 was included in Committee members' packets for their consideration.

CEO Report

Pinehurst Station Opening Date

CEO Constantine announced that Pinehurst Station will open on September 30th. He noted that this would be the first infill station opened in Sound Transit history and would connect communities near NE 130th street to the rest of the region. CEO Constantine reported that decisions by the Board in 2020 and 2022 allowed for the project to be opened five years ahead of schedule and that lessons learned from this process are being used to inform work on Graham Street and Boeing Access Road infill stations.

Safe, Clean, Welcoming Ride

CEO Constantine noted that the agency has expanded significantly over the last five years, and that the operations and maintenance of the system will continue to expand with the system. He noted that the agency's focus is to consistently deliver a high-quality passenger experience that is safe, clean, and welcoming at all the agency's stations facilities and vehicles. CEO Constantine noted that all the presentations at today's Committee meeting will tie into the idea of creating a safe, clean, welcoming ride, and that a new coordinated initiative is being introduced to manage that work.

Upcoming Busy Weekend

CEO Constantine noted that Sunday, September 6, 2026, will be very busy on the system due to concurrent Mariners, Seattle Reign FC, and Apple Cup games, combined with Bumbershoot and PAX West at the Seattle Convention Center. He reported that the agency is prepared with rider communications to support passengers throughout the region.

CEO Constantine then requested that the floor be given to Marie Olson, Rider Experience and Operations Executive Director in Transit Operations, to provide additional remarks regarding the Fall 2026 Service Change.

Ms. Olson reported that several ST Express changes approved by the Board in the 2026 Service Plan will be going into effect over the weekend. Changes include the elimination of routes 550 and 554, increased frequency on route 556, and truncation of route 574 to Federal Way Downtown Station. She also noted that two new Night Bus routes have been established: One between Lakewood and Seattle, and another between Redmond and Seattle.

Public comment

Chair Walker announced that public comment would be accepted via email to emailtheboard@soundtransit.org, in person, and would also be accepted virtually.

The following person provided written public comment:

Patricia Hodges

The following person provided in-person public comment:

Draven Doyle

No virtual public comments were received.

Business Items

For Committee final action

August 6, 2026, Rider Experience and Operations Committee meeting minutes

It was moved by Committee Vice Chair Prince, seconded by Board member Parshall, and carried by the unanimous vote of all committee members present that the minutes of the August 6, 2026, Rider Experience and Operations Committee meeting be approved as presented.

For Recommendation to the Board

Motion No. M2026-35: Approving Sound Transit's submittal of the 2026 Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan to the Washington State Department of Transportation's State Safety Oversight Office.

Andrea Trepadean, Chief Safety Officer, and Melissa Durel, Safety Management System Manager, provided a presentation on the action.

Board member Fain asked whether safety events listed in the safety plan are also inclusive of fatalities, injuries, and other categories that are also listed. Ms. Durel noted that fatalities and injuries are considered as a subset of overall safety events, so each injury would count as both a safety event and injury. Board member Fain asked whether the same applies to injuries compared to transit worker injuries. Ms. Durel responded that transit worker injuries are a separate category from general injuries.

Board member Fain noted that the 2025 WSDOT rail fixed guideway safety report included 58 safety events and asked whether the agency was projecting a higher number of events due to the targeted 114 safety events included in the 2026 safety plan. Ms. Durel responded that the discrepancy is due to both

a difference in definitions of what is reported as a safety event between different reporting authorities and the rolling average across multiple years that drives the overall target metric.

Board member Fain asked how the data within the safety plan reconciles different reporting requirements for various oversight bodies. Ms. Trepadean responded that agency staff continue to strengthen the agency's relationship with state reporting agencies and request better alignment with federal reporting requirements, while noting that the final decisions for state level requirements are finally determined by the state.

It was moved by Board member Fain, seconded by Committee Vice Chair Prince, and carried by the unanimous vote of all committee members present that Motion No. M2026-35 be forwarded to the Board with a do-pass recommendation.

Reports to the Committee

At Grade Crossing Program Update

Andrea Trepadean, Chief Safety Officer, and Heather Hewitt, Commercial Director, provided the report.

Ms. Trepadean noted that the At Grade Crossing Program has been working based on principles and guidance established by the Board in Resolution No. R2025-11, with the adoption of the At-Grade Crossings Master Plan. She further noted that the resolution expanded the scope of the existing program to address at grade crossings systemwide, with an emphasis on the Rainier Valley.

Ms. Trepadean reviewed safety data trends, highlighting that 16 percent of light rail collisions in the Rainier Valley are with pedestrians, which are being actively focused on through the automatic pedestrian gate pilot project, and 62 percent being with vehicles making prohibited left hand turns, which are being addressed through a series of deterrence-based projects. Ms. Trepadean also highlighted how the at grade crossing program is able to track crashes by location, showcasing a graphic displaying Dawson, Graham, and Kenyon Streets as being the intersections with the highest rate of collisions within the Rainier Valley.

Ms. Trepadean gave an overview of the overall collision trend within the Rainier Valley over the last six years, noting how various projects have helped reduce collisions and improve safety. She then noted various highlights from how the At Grade Crossing Program is engaging in outreach, through events such as the Youth Safety Poster Contest and in-vehicle safety advisements during the World Cup.

Ms. Hewitt gave an update on active At Grade Crossing projects. The Royal Brougham pedestrian gate project is at 100 percent design, with the project team moving forward with an advertisement for the construction contract by the end of 2026. Enhancements for Martin Luther King Jr. Way remain in planning, with the goal of moving into design work in Q4 2026 and final completion anticipated in 2029. The Automatic Pedestrian Pilot Project is progressing through design in coordination with the Seattle Department of Transportation, with the goal of installation being completed by 2030. The Alternating Wig-Wag Headlight retrofit project is working to have vehicles retrofitted, with all vehicles having them installed by 2028.

Ms. Hewitt also summarized other At Grade Crossing initiatives, including the recent completion of the Rainier Valley Safe Project Pilot using a federal SMART grant, continued planning of T Line standards development with a consultant being onboarded in Q3 2026, and continued planning on the Lakewood Subdivision also seeing a consultant onboarded in Q3 2026.

Ms. Hewitt noted that the At Grade Crossing program will continue with equitable community engagement planning to ensure community input into projects. She also reported that the agency will continue coordinating with SDOT to complete projects within Seattle, with kickoffs coming soon for planning work in Tacoma and Lakewood.

Chair Walker noted that the previous At Grade Crossing update included a complete table of all projects and their status, asking if there was a public facing location members of the community could look to keep track of progress of various projects. Ms. Hewitt responded that the Sound Transit website has an at grade crossing program page, which is updated quarterly with progress on the various projects. She also noted that all timelines shown in the previous At Grade Crossing update are still current.

Chair Walker asked for additional information on the relationship between Sound Transit staff and SDOT. Ms. Hewitt responded that agency staff having standing bi-weekly and monthly meetings with SDOT for implementation planning and coordination, and that conversations regarding cost sharing are ongoing, though no agreements have been reached at present.

Board member Fain noted that 62 percent of vehicle collisions are due to prohibited left hand turns, with a further 21.5 percent categorized as 'other,' asking if there was additional detail that could be provided on what that entails. Ms. Trepadean responded that those falling into the 'other' category include instances where vehicles ran a red light, illegally entered into the intersection during a red light other than a left turn, and vehicles that were too close to the light rail right of way, causing a collision.

Board member Fain asked what work was being done to address some of those 'other' types of collision causes. Ms. Trepadean responded that the pavement markings project was meant to directly help address vehicles accidentally entering the dynamic window, or projected path, of the train.

Board member Fain whether operators receive training in how to anticipate driver behavior and prevent potential collisions. Ms. Trepadean responded that operators do receive training in that area and actively monitor their environment when they are operating under the signal system, though they are sometimes unable to stop in time to prevent a collision.

Q2 2026 Fare Engagement Update

Brian de Place, Security and Fare Engagement Executive Director, and Tanya Starke, Fare Engagement Director, provided the report.

Mr. de Place highlighted the Fare Ambassador program's work throughout the World Cup, with the team conducting 35 thousand inspections across the six game days. 14 additional mobile validators were deployed at Pioneer Square, International District/Chinatown, and Stadium Stations to reduce queueing and improve compliance. Fare Ambassadors continued to assist thousands of riders with wayfinding, system use, and fare information, and that staff were strategically deployed after each game based on passenger behavior and line management. During the World Cup, the system average 58 percent fare media compliance.

Mr. de Place summarized year-to-date fare inspection and fare media compliance performance. Fare Ambassadors inspected 666,202 between January and June 2026, putting the program on track to pass their 2025 total of 986,304. Fare media compliance has steadily grown from 2023, increasing from 56 to 62.8 percent between 2023 and 2025, though this does not account for youth ridership, which accounted for approximately six percent of ridership in 2022 when youth free fare was introduced.

Ms. Starke reported on developments in the Entrance Inspection Pilot, noting that there is a positive correlation between entrance inspection frequency and observed compliance rate. She further noted that these early checks result in up to a 30 percent increase in fare media transactions at stations during the inspection periods, and a three percent turnaround rate where passengers would obtain fare media when asked.

Ms. Starke discussed typical Fare Ambassador labor allocation and other duties. She noted that Fare Ambassadors have provided more than 377 thousand passenger services interactions during the first half of 2026, compared to 460 thousand for the entirety of 2025. Ms. Starke that Fare Ambassadors spend approximately 42 percent of their time on fare inspections, 20 percent on passenger service, and

the remaining time on training, support activities, and otherwise maintaining a presence on the system for riders, with an emphasis on identifying and reporting safety and security concerns.

Ms. Starke noted that the program will continue to evaluate the effectiveness of different fare inspection techniques, balance resource allocation between on-vehicle and station-based fare inspections, and support planning for the frontline posture of the agency for the Fare Gates Pilot Program.

Board member Fain asked if there was fare compliance data available on a month-to-month basis as well as a further explanation of the administrative work breakdown. Mr. de Place responded that staff would follow up and provide that information.

Chair Walker noted that this report is given quarterly, though with the rate of change and scale of data it may serve the Committee better to change that cadence in the future.

Annual Passenger Experience Survey

Marcus Clark, Director – Passenger Services, and Rebeca de Buen Kalman, Project Manager – Data & Research, provided the report.

Ms. Kalman noted that the Passenger Experience Survey has existed in some form since 2012, with the goal of assessing the agency's overall performance against its service goals. The survey includes four sections: passenger characteristics, overall performance, foundational categories, and performance drivers. More than 22 thousand surveys were submitted by passengers, with outreach being conducted through a mix of email, text, signage, and social media posts.

Ms. Kalman summarized the agency's overall score and likelihood to recommend, which have remained relatively stable since COVID. In the 2025 survey, passengers gave Sound Transit an overall rating of 3.3/5, with a likelihood to recommend score of 8.1/10.

Ms. Kalman reported that the two areas the agency ranked above average in were dependability and availability of service. Ms. Kalman also discussed the areas performing below average in the survey, which included perception of personal safety, maintenance and cleanliness of stations, and passenger information during disruptions.

Mr. Clark gave an overview of what the agency was doing to respond to areas identified as performing below average in the survey. He noted that in response to concerns about personal safety, the agency will increase its visible presence of security staff and target resources where needed, while strengthening rider reporting and supporting vulnerable individuals. He reported that the agency is continuing its work on enhancing facility maintenance and cleanliness, through its redefine clean program, better repair programs, pilot automation for certain tasks, and enhancing the quality of ongoing work. For vehicle cleanliness, the agency addresses the problem through a multi-tiered approach involving end-of-line cleaning, end of day cleaning at the yard, and monthly details of each light rail vehicle.

Ms. Kalman provided additional details on the agency's response to concerns regarding rider information during disruptions. She noted that user-centered research is ongoing to find more effective means of communication, while continuing to meet the agency's current alert thresholds, and that on-time alerts performance is at 98.2 percent in 2026. She further noted that the survey team will work in close coordination with operations to ensure the survey generates useful information, with additional focus on ensuring future surveys align with goals developed as part of the Safe, Clean, Welcoming Ride Initiative.

Chair Walker asked how passengers should report spills and how does the agency respond to those types of reports. Mr. Clark responded that passengers should always call or text the Security Operations Center (SOC) if they see something that needs to be addressed on vehicles. Rail Operations Executive Director Benjamin Marx added that once a report is received by the SOC, it is directly relayed to the Link

Control Center to ensure that support vehicles are deployed, or that the train is removed from service if necessary.

Chair Walker asked if the passenger experience survey captures whether riders understand that process or how to report those types of concerns. Ms. Kalman responded that the survey does not currently capture that level of detail, though it is an area that could be added in future iterations of the survey.

Chair Walker asked if there was a way for the public to access the information gathered from the survey. Innovation and Research Deputy Executive Director Andrea Stuart-Lehalle responded that the agency does not currently plan to release the full survey report to the public.

Safe, Clean, Welcoming Ride Initiative

Chief Operating Officer Whitney Abrams provided opening remarks and introduced Marie Olson, Rider Experience and Operations Executive Director, Brian de Place, Security and Fare Engagement Executive Director, and Camilla Walter, Government and Community Relations Systems Program Manager, to provide the report.

Ms. Walter introduced the Safe, Clean, Welcoming Ride Initiative, noting its goal to strengthen coordination across the agency to be responsive to passengers while continually raising the agency's standards. She reported that the Initiative is framed by five key focus areas: Facilities and vehicles, data and standards, frontline operations, passenger experience, and regional collaboration.

Ms. Olson summarized the agency's work to enhance the passenger experience through ensuring cleaner, better-maintained stations, making the system easier to navigate, and providing more accessible and reliable information. She also reported on progress on providing an increase visible presence across the system, including the deployment of more staff regularly on-site beyond security and fare engagement, the opening of the Westlake Station customer information booth, and the activation of Lynnwood City Center Station with a coffee shop and planned farmers' market. She also highlighted that Magdalyn Horvath, who led the agency's efforts in planning for the World Cup, would be joining the Safe, Clean, Welcoming Ride team to carry forward lessons in passenger experience in this work.

Mr. de Place noted that, in response to prior questions during the meeting, that the number to call or text the SOC is (206) 398-5268. He then discussed improvements the agency is making to improve safety and security across the system through systemwide safety improvements, targeted interventions, and regional partnerships. He also shared 2026 data trends, with passenger injuries decreasing 32 percent, transit worker assaults decreasing by 21 percent, and at grade crossing collisions decreasing by 10 percent. Mr. de Place further discussed how the agency is taking in information from riders, and how the agency responds to concerns. He noted that in the first half of 2026, the agency received 22,464 written inquiries and 8,781 calls, and that the agency had a 93 percent response rate within three business days.

Ms. Walter noted that in the future, the Safe, Clean, Welcoming Ride team will continue to develop key performance indicators and apply them across various topics that the Committee has oversight of.

Board member Fain shared her appreciation that staff are taking public feedback seriously and finding ways of reporting on what the agency is doing in response.

Chair Walker asked for a projected timeline on the establishment of the KPIs for this work. Ms. Walter responded that staff intend to update the Committee in the next quarter.

Chair Walker thanked Mr. de Place for providing the phone number for the SOC and recalled an instance where she experienced trash on the train and was unsure of what to do as it seemed minor, pondering whether the installation of trash receptacles could help alleviate the issue.

Mr. de Place responded that riders should call or text the SOC with concerns regarding trash or litter, as it still falls into part of their duties, and committed to following up with Chair Walker regarding the installation of trash receptacles on light rail vehicles.

Chair Walker expressed her interest in station activation and asked what steps are necessary to include retail and other amenities at stations. Ms. Olson responded that Transit Operations staff work in tandem with other teams depending on the size and scale of an event to determine what needs must be met and that staff are happy to work on further developing how stations and spaces are utilized. Agency Chief of Staff Calli Knight added that the Office of Planning and Development is currently working on a retail strategy for stations and that they would be happy to bring forth their work to the Committee once it is close to conclusion.

Executive session – None

Other business – None

Next meeting

Thursday, October 1, 2026
1:00 to 3:00 p.m.
Ruth Fisher Boardroom and Virtually via Zoom.

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 2:28 p.m.

ATTEST:

Kristina Walker
Rider Experience and Operations Committee Chair

Kathryn Flores
Board Administrator

APPROVED on _____, HRR.