

Motion No. M2023-19

Identifying additional alternatives for study in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement and modifying the preferred alternative for the Tacoma Dome Link Extension

Meeting:	Date:	Type of action:	Staff contact:
System Expansion Committee Board	03/09/2023 03/23/2023	Recommend to Board Final action	Don Billen, Executive Director, PEPD Curvie Hawkins, HCT Project Development Director, PEPD

Proposed action

(1) Identifies additional alternatives for study in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Tacoma Dome Link Extension project, including new alignment and station options, and (2) modifies the preferred alternative in the South Federal Way segment from the station area south.

Key features summary

- Through the progression of design, and environmental review, Sound Transit staff have identified the need to study an additional alternative from the South Federal Way Station through Milton, as well as additional station options in Fife.
- This action would expand the alternatives previously identified by the Board in Motion No. M2019-75 and M2019-77 by introducing additional alternatives for evaluation in the Draft EIS for the Tacoma Dome Link Extension. These include:
 - Two additional station options in Fife, and
 - One additional alignment alternative in south Federal Way, with corresponding station option(s).
- This action would also modify the preferred alternative designation in the South Federal Way segment. It would modify the preferred alternative to only include the northern portion of the alignment. The southern portion generally from South Federal Way Station south, would continue to be studied in the Draft EIS as an EIS alternative, but would no longer be identified as preferred.
- Identification of these additional station options and alignment alternative would require additional design and analysis, resulting in publication of the Draft EIS in mid-2024. This delay would have a corresponding impact on the revenue service date with opening anticipated in 2035.

Background

The Tacoma Dome Link Extension (TDLE), financing for which was approved by voters as part of Sound Transit (ST3), would expand Link light rail transit from the Federal Way Downtown station to the Tacoma Dome. The project corridor is approximately 10-miles long. During the alternatives development phase of the project, Sound Transit conducted technical analysis, public engagement, and coordination with affected Tribal Nations, the public, and local, state and federal agencies. That work helped to inform the alternatives to study in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

On July 25, 2019, the Sound Transit Board approved Motion Nos. M2019-75 and M2019-77 identifying a preferred alternative and other alternatives to study in the Draft EIS. Based on coordination with agencies, jurisdictions, and regional Tribal partners, this included one alignment alternative from the South Federal Way Station to the city of Milton and one station option in the city of Fife.

To maintain eligibility for potential federal funding and support federal approvals, the project will comply with the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). As the public agency proposing the project, Sound Transit is required to comply with the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA). The Federal Transit Administration, as the federal lead agency under NEPA, and Sound Transit, as the lead agency under SEPA, have determined that the proposed project may have probable significant adverse environmental impacts. To satisfy both NEPA and SEPA requirements, the agencies are preparing a combined NEPA/SEPA EIS for the project.

Through the progression of design, and environmental review, Sound Transit identified the need to study an additional alignment alternative from the South Federal Way Station through Milton, as well as additional station options in Fife. The additional alignment alternative would avoid potential impacts to cultural resources in the vicinity of the I-5 alternative and adding station options in Fife is intended to meet federal environmental regulations related to floodplains.

Additional Station Options in Fife

Two additional station options in Fife would be located outside the current FEMA-mapped floodplain (Fife Ditch Tributary Floodplain). The two proposed station options would be in the vicinity of 54th Avenue East. One station option would have a station platform spanning 54th Avenue East and the second station option would be located to the west of 54th Avenue East. These station options would be included in the project's Draft EIS as options to the Fife preferred alternative.

The additional Fife station options were identified to minimize fill in the FEMA-mapped Fife Ditch Tributary floodplain, avoid known environmentally and culturally sensitive areas, and be located along alignments previously identified for study in the Draft EIS. This included technical analysis that compared station options using measures from the 2018/2019 TDLE alternatives development process. The evaluation also included input from the Puyallup Tribe of Indians, the City of Fife, the Federal Transit Administration, and other agencies.

South Federal Way Alternative

An additional alternative alignment is proposed for evaluation in the south Federal Way and Milton areas. Early coordination with regional Tribal partners identified known cultural resources adjacent to I-5. When the Board identified alternatives to study in 2019, information at that time indicated that potential impacts could be minimized or avoided. Since then, coordination has been ongoing and project design and planning has advanced. In recent communications our regional Tribal partners stated that impacts to these known cultural resources are unavoidable with the preferred alternative. Additionally, Sound Transit identified potential constructability issues that would pose substantial challenges along the current preferred alternative, adjacent to I-5 in South Federal Way. Evaluating an additional alignment alternative in this area provides flexibility as the TDLE project advances.

The alternative identified would use portions of Pacific Highway/SR 99 generally south of the Enchanted Parkway station and would also require adjustments to the location and configuration of the Enchanted Parkway Preferred Station alternative. The alignment in south Federal Way and Milton is similar to an alternative along Pacific Highway/SR 99 developed during the Phase 1 alternatives analysis phase of TDLE project development.

The additional South Federal Way alternative seeks to avoid potential cultural resources in south Federal Way near I-5. Sound Transit conducted a screening evaluation for the South Federal Way alternatives using measures from the 2018/2019 TDLE alternatives development process. This work

was done in collaboration with the Puyallup Tribe of Indians, Federal Transit Administration, City of Federal Way, City of Milton, and other agencies.

Alternatives identified by the Board in 2019

Below are the preferred alternatives and other alternatives identified by the Board in Motion Nos. M2019-75 and M2019-77 for study in the Draft EIS. Additions, changes to naming conventions and changes to reflect advances in planning directed by the Board in the 2019 motions are noted in *italics*. The Preferred Alternative station, SF Enchanted Parkway, and I-5 alignment identified in 2019 in South Federal Way would advance as additional alternatives to study in the Draft EIS.

Tacoma Dome

Preferred Alternative

- TD2 (*Tacoma 25th Street-West*): Elevated station at Tacoma Dome station in vicinity of E. 25th St., west of G Street. Options for the alignment and station close to the Sounder corridor should be examined.

Other EIS alternatives

- TD3 (*Tacoma 25th Street-East*): Elevated station at Tacoma Dome station in vicinity of E. 25th St., east of G Street. Options for the alignment and station close to the Sounder corridor should be examined.
- TD4 East in-Street (*Tacoma 26th Street*): Elevated station at Tacoma Dome station over E. 26th St. Station location should be examined closer to D Street.

Recognizing that the Tacoma Dome Station is the stop for Downtown Tacoma and the South Sound's regional multi-modal hub, in 2019 the Board also directed staff to work with the City of Tacoma, Puyallup Tribe, local transit agencies, Amtrak, the City's TOD Advisory Group and other stakeholders to ensure the Tacoma Dome Station represents the highest possible level of urban design and integration and catalyzes transit-oriented development in the neighborhood.

The following alternative was developed in response to the Board's direction in 2019 for study in the Draft EIS:

- *Tacoma Close-to-Sounder: Elevated station at Tacoma Dome station above Freighthouse Square, west of G Street, close to the Sounder corridor.*

East Tacoma (Portland Avenue)

Preferred Alternative

- ET3A (*Portland Avenue Station*): Elevated station at East Tacoma in the vicinity of E. 26th St. or 27th St. near Portland Avenue and north of Interstate 5 with elevated guideway in the vicinity of E. 25th St. or E. 26th St. connecting to TD 2 or TD3. Option for an elevated station spanning Portland Avenue should be studied.

Other EIS alternative

- ET3B (*Portland Avenue Span Station Option*): Elevated station at East Tacoma in the vicinity of E. 26th St. or E. 27 St. near Portland Avenue and north of Interstate 5 with elevated guideway in the vicinity of E. 26th St. connecting to TD4. Option for an elevated station spanning Portland Avenue should be studied.

In 2019, the Board also directed staff to work with the City of Tacoma, Puyallup Tribe, Port of Tacoma, local transit agencies, the City's TOD Advisory Group and other stakeholders to examine opportunities to ensure appropriate multi-modal access, particularly non-motorized, drop-off and transit access, to this station, as well as how the station location and design can best support appropriate transit-oriented development. A particular focus will need to be on connections between the station and the neighborhoods and key destinations on the south side of I-5, including exploration of a pedestrian and bicycle bridge.

Fife

Preferred Alternative

- Fife 3 (*Fife Station*): Elevated station in Fife north of 15th St.

Other EIS alternatives

- Fife 3A (*Fife I-5*): Elevated guideway alignment to the north of the station in the vicinity of I-5 and to the west of the station in the vicinity of I-5.
- Fife 3B (*Fife Pacific Highway and Fife Median*): Elevated guideway alignment to the north of the station in the vicinity of I-5 and to the west of the station on the south side of SR 99.

The Fife station includes approximately 500 park-and-ride spaces. In 2019, the Board directed staff to examine opportunities to establish appropriate non-motorized, drop-off and transit access to this station and work with the City of Fife and stakeholders to support transit-oriented development around the station.

South Federal Way

Preferred Alternative (identified in 2019)

- SF2 West (*SF Enchanted Parkway*): Elevated station in South Federal Way along Enchanted Parkway near S. 352nd St. in the vicinity of I-5.

Other EIS alternatives

- SF 8/9 (*SF I-5*): Elevated station in South Federal Way along I-5 near S. 356th St. *and alignment* in the vicinity of I-5.

The South Federal Way station includes approximately 500 park-and-ride spaces. Additionally, the Board directs staff to work with the City of Federal Way and stakeholders to support transit oriented development around the station and examine opportunities to establish appropriate non-motorized, drop-off and transit access to this station.

Additional alternatives to consider including in the Draft EIS and modifications to the Preferred Alternative

This action would authorize the study of an additional alternative from the South Federal Way Station through Milton and additional station options in Fife. Identification of these additional station options and alignment alternative would require additional design and analysis, resulting in publication of the Draft EIS in mid-2024. This delay would have a corresponding impact on the revenue service date with opening anticipated in 2035.

Fife

Additional station options to be studied in the Draft EIS (To be added to Other EIS alternatives)

- *Two station options in Fife located west of 54th Avenue East and spanning 54th Avenue East near Pacific Highway.*

South Federal Way

The preferred alternative would be modified to only include the portion of the SF2 West (SF Enchanted Parkway) alignment north of the station. The southern portion of SF2 West (SF Enchanted Parkway) would continue to be studied in the Draft EIS as an EIS alternative and would no longer be identified as preferred. This would allow the Board to identify a preferred alternative after additional alternatives are studied and public, Tribal and agency feedback is obtained during the Draft EIS comment period.

Modified Preferred Alternative

- *Northern portion of SF2 West (SF Enchanted Parkway): Alignment between the Federal Way Downtown station and the South Federal Way station area in the vicinity of I-5.*

Other EIS Alternatives

- *Southern portion of SF2 West (SF Enchanted Parkway): Elevated station in South Federal Way along Enchanted Parkway near S 352nd St. and alignment generally south of the station in the vicinity I-5.*

Additional alternative to be studied in the Draft EIS (To be added to Other EIS alternatives)

- *Elevated station in South Federal Way in the vicinity of Enchanted Parkway/ S 352nd St. and alignment generally south of the station in the vicinity of Pacific Highway/SR 99.*

Project status

Project Identification	Alternatives Identification	Conceptual Engineering/ Draft EIS	Preliminary Engineering/ Final EIS	Final Design	Construction
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Projected completion date for Phase 2: Q4 2024

Procurement Information

Not applicable to this action.

Fiscal information

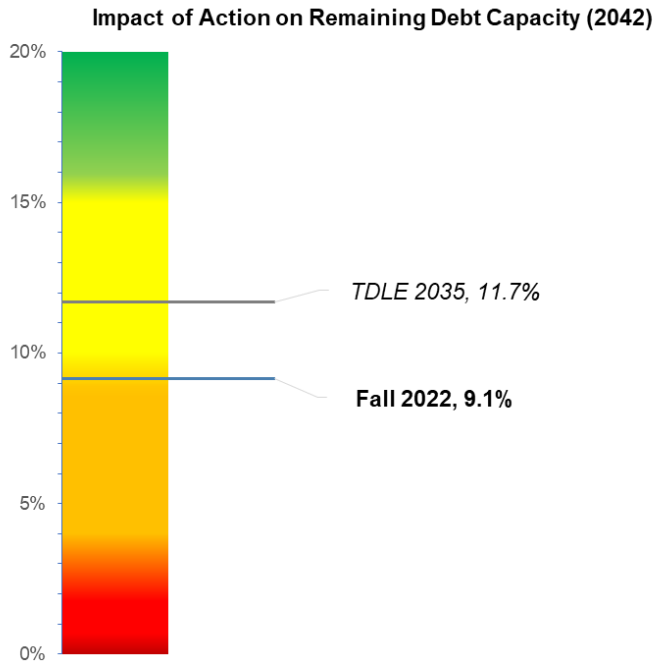
The target and affordable schedules, adopted by the Board in realignment, established a completion date for the project of 2032. An affordability gap was not identified in the realignment resolutions. If this motion is approved, the Draft EIS is estimated to be published in mid-2024. This delay in the Draft EIS publication will affect other project milestones, including a change to the forecast date of revenue service to 2035.

Approval of this motion requires a change to the in-service date of the project in the Financial Plan from 2032 to 2035. The fiscal impact of this change is as follows:

- Increase in capital cost of \$400 million (YOES) due to inflation.
- Decrease in operating cost of \$100 million (YOES) due to the schedule change.

As a result, the total impact is an increase in affordability as measured by an increase of 2.6% in remaining available debt capacity (currently 9.1% in the Fall 2022 Financial Plan) in the minimum year and an increase in minimum net coverage of .05x (currently 1.67x).

The current cost estimate for the Tacoma Dome Link Extension is \$3,955 million in 2022\$ and is affordable within the Agency’s Finance Plan. However, the cost of the additional alternative is anticipated to be greater than the current alignment alternative along I-5 which may more than offset the benefits in terms of financing metrics, so this remains a risk that is unaccounted for in the Financial Plan. Staff will return to the Board at a later date with updated information on the impact of the delay and cost change to the Financial Plan.



Disadvantaged and small business participation

Not applicable to this action.

Title VI compliance

Not applicable to this action.

Public involvement

Sound Transit provided a public update on the project with an opportunity for feedback on the alignment alternative and station options that were advanced from the screening process. Public outreach commenced on February 27, 2023 and included mailers to addresses and property owners within ½ mile of potential additional alternative and station options, a project email update to the project listserv, an online open house, and in-person drop-in sessions in Federal Way, Fife, and Milton. Sound Transit will also contact property owners and businesses by phone and e-mail within the vicinity of the potential additional alternative and station options during the outreach period from February 27, 2023 to March 17, 2023.

Project staff continue to be available for questions and feedback from the public and interested community-based organizations, property owners, businesses, and individuals are encouraged to sign up for briefings.

Time constraints

A delay of one-month to this Board action would have a corresponding one-month delay to the Draft EIS publication. Publication of the Draft EIS, anticipated in mid-2024, is the critical milestone of the current phase (Phase 2) of project development. A delay to the Draft EIS would likely affect downstream milestones, including completing the Project's environmental review (Phase 3) and entering construction (Phase 4/5).

Prior Board/Committee actions

Motion No. M2022-98: Authorized the chief executive officer to execute contract modifications with HDR Engineering, Inc. to provide additional project development services to complete Phase 2 of the Tacoma Dome Link Extension

Motion No. M2019-77: Identified the preferred alternative(s) and other alternatives for study in the Tacoma Dome Link Extension Environmental Impact Statement for the Tacoma Dome station area.

Motion No. M2019-75: Identified the preferred alternative and other alternatives for study in the TDLE project's Draft EIS.

Motion No. M2019-24: Authorized the chief executive office to execute a Statement of Partnering Intent with the Puyallup Tribe of Indians for the TDLE project.

Motion No. M2019-03: Authorized the chief executive officer to execute an agreement with the City of Federal Way for TDLE project administration.

Motion No. M2018-149: Authorized the chief executive officer to execute an agreement with the City of Milton for TDLE project administration.

Motion No. M2018-121: Authorized the chief executive officer to execute an agreement with the City of Fife for TDLE project administration.

Environmental review – KH 3/2/23

Legal review – AJP 3/6/23

Motion No. M2023-19

A motion of the Board of the Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority (1) identifying additional alternatives for study in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Tacoma Dome Link Extension project and (2) modifying the preferred alternative in the South Federal Way segment from the station area south.

Background

The Tacoma Dome Link Extension (TDLE), financing for which was approved by voters as part of Sound Transit (ST3), would expand Link light rail transit from the Federal Way Downtown station to the Tacoma Dome. The project corridor is approximately 10-miles long. During the alternatives development phase of the project, Sound Transit conducted technical analysis, public engagement, and coordination with affected Tribal Nations, the public, and local, state and federal agencies. That work helped to inform the alternatives to study in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

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The additional Fife station options were identified to minimize fill in the FEMA-mapped Fife Ditch Tributary floodplain, avoid known environmentally and culturally sensitive areas, and be located along alignments previously identified for study in the Draft EIS. This included technical analysis that compared station options using measures from the 2018/2019 TDLE alternatives development process. The evaluation also included input from the Puyallup Tribe of Indians, the City of Fife, the Federal Transit Administration, and other agencies.

South Federal Way Alternative

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The alternative identified would use portions of Pacific Highway/SR 99 generally south of the Enchanted Parkway station and would also require adjustments to the location and configuration of the Enchanted Parkway Preferred Station alternative. The alignment in south Federal Way and Milton is similar to an alternative along Pacific Highway/SR 99 developed during the Phase 1 alternatives analysis phase of TDLE project development.

The additional South Federal Way alternative seeks to avoid potential cultural resources in south Federal Way near I-5. Sound Transit conducted a screening evaluation for the South Federal Way alternatives using measures from the 2018/2019 TDLE alternatives development process. This work was done in collaboration with the Puyallup Tribe of Indians, Federal Transit Administration, City of Federal Way, City of Milton, and other agencies.

Motion

As such, it is hereby moved by the Board of the Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority that, based on Board's review of the findings from the alternatives development process; the identification of third-party funding consistent with the partnering agreements with local jurisdictions; public and agency scoping comments; tribal comments; input from the Stakeholder Group (May 29, 2019) and Elected Leadership Group (June 14, 2019); the Partnering Agreements with the Cities of Tacoma, Fife, Milton, and Federal Way; the Statement of Partnering Intent with the Puyallup Tribe of Indians, the System Expansion Transit Integration Agreement with King County Metro, input from FTA, and other information developed to date, the preferred alternative, and other alternatives for the TDLE Draft EIS for the Tacoma Dome station area is modified and confirmed as follows:

Additions, changes to naming conventions and additions or modifications to Motion Nos. M2019-75 and M2019-77 are noted in *italics*.

Tacoma Dome

Preferred Alternative

- TD2 (*Tacoma 25th Street-West*): Elevated station at Tacoma Dome station in vicinity of E. 25th St., west of G Street. Options for the alignment and station close to the Sounder corridor should be examined.

Other EIS alternatives

- TD3 (*Tacoma 25th Street-East*): Elevated station at Tacoma Dome station in vicinity of E. 25th St., east of G Street. Options for the alignment and station close to the Sounder corridor should be examined.
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- *Tacoma Close-to-Sounder: Elevated station at Tacoma Dome station above Freighthouse Square, west of G Street, close to the Sounder corridor.*

Recognizing that the Tacoma Dome Station is the stop for Downtown Tacoma and the South Sound's regional multi-modal hub, the Board also directs staff to work with the City of Tacoma, Puyallup Tribe, local transit agencies, Amtrak, the City's TOD Advisory Group and other stakeholders to ensure the Tacoma Dome Station represents the highest possible level of urban design and integration and catalyzes transit-oriented development in the neighborhood.

East Tacoma (Portland Avenue)

Preferred Alternative

- ET3A (*Portland Avenue Station*): Elevated station at East Tacoma in the vicinity of E. 26th St. or 27th St. near Portland Avenue and north of Interstate 5 with elevated guideway in the vicinity of E. 25th St. or E. 26th St. connecting to TD 2 or TD3. Option for an elevated station spanning Portland Avenue should be studied.

Other EIS alternative

- ET3B (*Portland Avenue Span Station Option*): Elevated station at East Tacoma in the vicinity of E. 26th St. or E. 27 St. near Portland Avenue and north of Interstate 5 with elevated guideway in the vicinity of E. 26th St. connecting to TD4. Option for an elevated station spanning Portland Avenue should be studied.

The Board also directs staff to work with the City of Tacoma, Puyallup Tribe, Port of Tacoma, local transit agencies, the City's TOD Advisory Group and other stakeholders to examine opportunities to ensure appropriate multi-modal access, particularly non-motorized, drop-off and transit access, to this station, as well as how the station location and design can best support appropriate transit-oriented development. A particular focus will need to be on connections between the station and the neighborhoods and key destinations on the south side of I-5, including exploration of a pedestrian and bicycle bridge.

Fife

Preferred Alternative

- Fife 3 (*Fife Station*): Elevated station in Fife north of 15th St.

Other EIS alternatives

- *Two station options in Fife located west of 54th Avenue East and spanning 54th Avenue East near Pacific Highway.*
- Fife 3A (*Fife I-5*): Elevated guideway alignment to the north of the station in the vicinity of I-5 and to the west of the station in the vicinity of I-5.
- Fife 3B (*Fife Pacific Highway and Fife Median*): Elevated guideway alignment to the north of the station in the vicinity of I-5 and to the west of the station on the south side of SR 99.

The Fife station includes approximately 500 park-and-ride spaces. Additionally, the Board directs staff to examine opportunities to establish appropriate non-motorized, drop-off and transit access to this station and work with the City of Fife and stakeholders to support transit-oriented development around the station.

South Federal Way

Preferred Alternative

- *Northern portion of SF2 West (SF Enchanted Parkway): Alignment between the Federal Way Downtown station and the South Federal Way station area in the vicinity of I-5.*
- *No Preferred Alternative Identified for the segment south of the station location.*

Other EIS Alternatives

- *Southern portion of SF2 West (SF Enchanted Parkway): Elevated station in South Federal Way along Enchanted Parkway near S 352nd St. and alignment generally south of the station in the vicinity I-5.*
- *Elevated station in South Federal Way in the vicinity of Enchanted Parkway/ S 352nd St. and alignment generally south of the station in the vicinity of Pacific Highway/SR 99.*
- *SF 8/9 (SF I-5): Elevated station in South Federal Way along I-5 near S. 356th St. and alignment in the vicinity of I-5.*

The South Federal Way station includes approximately 500 park-and-ride spaces. Additionally, the Board directs staff to work with the City of Federal Way and stakeholders to support transit oriented development around the station and examine opportunities to establish appropriate non-motorized, drop-off and transit access to this station.

This motion also authorizes staff to complete the Draft EIS, using the preferred alternative(s) and other alternatives identified above. The Draft EIS is anticipated to be published in mid-2024. The Board will not make a final decision on the project to be built until after completion of the Final EIS, which is anticipated to be published in 2026.

APPROVED by the Board of the Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority at a regular meeting thereof held on _____.

Dow Constantine
Board Chair

Attest:

Kathryn Flores
Board Administrator