



## Motion No. M2023-94

### 2024 State Legislative Program

Meeting:	Date:	Type of action:	Staff contact:
Executive Committee	11/02/2023	Recommend to Board	Andrew Austin, Acting Executive Director, Government and Community Relations
Board	11/16/2023	Final action	<b>Alex Soldano, Director, State Relations</b>

### Proposed action

Adopts the Sound Transit 2024 State Legislative Program and directing staff to evaluate and engage in issues that impact the agency as it continues to implement a regional high-capacity transit system.

### Key features summary

- This action would authorize Sound Transit staff and consultants in Olympia to advocate and/or pursue the following positions during the upcoming state legislative session:
  - Seek state funding to support the target delivery dates for Sound Transit projects and services.
  - Streamline permitting for some Sound Transit projects in state right-of-way.
  - Develop and expand availability of affordable housing and support Sound Transit's transit-oriented development program.
  - Develop and retain a vibrant, diverse workforce in Washington State.
  - Collaborate with partner agencies and others on efforts that enhance access to Sound Transit services.
  - Support partner efforts to ensure the safe and cost-effective delivery of transit projects.
  - Oppose legislation that increases the costs of transit improvements and services or otherwise impairs the agency's ability to deliver the voter-approved regional high-capacity transit program.
  - Engage in efforts that support the public's desire to base vehicle taxes on a vehicle's true current value, in a revenue neutral manner that does not unconstitutionally impair bondholder contracts.

### Background

The Board annually considers a State Legislative Program. The program captures agency priorities for Board members engagement in Olympia on behalf of the agency as well as policy guidance to staff and contract lobbyists to assist them in representing the agency's interests during the legislative session.

This action would authorize Sound Transit Board members, staff, and consultants to advocate and/or pursue the following positions during the upcoming state legislative session:

- **Seek state funding to support the target delivery dates for Sound Transit projects and services.**

As directed by Motion No. M2020-37, the Sound Transit Board is seeking new, flexible revenue to achieve target schedules for delivery of Sound Transit's capital program. As Washington State invests in transportation infrastructure with a focus on equity and combating climate change, we acknowledge that the leading contributor to greenhouse gas emissions is the transportation sector. Building out Sound Transit's light rail system combats climate change while building back our economy and creating thousands of jobs.

- **Streamline permitting for some Sound Transit projects in state right-of-way.**

When constructing projects in state right-of-way, the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) is not subject to certain local permit requirements, a policy that saves taxpayers money through streamlined processes. The Sound Transit Board of Directors asks that the Legislature expand this policy to apply to Sound Transit while constructing transit infrastructure within WSDOT right-of-way. This change would expedite planning and development of light rail, bus rapid transit, and fish passage barrier corrections.

- **Develop and expand availability of affordable housing and support Sound Transit's transit-oriented development program.**

The Puget Sound is facing a shortage of available, affordable housing creating an obstacle for residents to access jobs, education, and essential services. To date, there are more than 3,100 housing units, including more than 2,300 units as affordable, in various stages of creation with Sound Transit development partners. Sound Transit supports legislative efforts to support transit-oriented development through zoning and parking reforms, expanding affordable housing resources like Washington State's Housing Trust Fund and the federal Low-Income Housing Tax Credit program, resourcing building local infrastructure to support redevelopment, and other solutions to support efforts to meet the Puget Sound region's housing and community development needs.

- **Develop and retain a vibrant, diverse workforce in Washington State.**

As Sound Transit continues to implement the most ambitious transit expansion in the United States, there is a need for a trained workforce to sustain the development, operations, and maintenance of the agency's infrastructure and service through both workforce development and retention. Sound Transit will work alongside our labor partners to support protection and expansion of funding for pre-apprentice and apprenticeship programs, as well as proposals that foster and retains a more inclusive and diverse work environment.

- **Collaborate with partner agencies and others on efforts that enhance access to Sound Transit services.**

Sound Transit supports legislative efforts to grow access to regional transit, including support for greater availability of reduced fare programs including ORCA Lift and programs for local jurisdictions to improve infrastructure and services around transit stations.

- **Support partner efforts to ensure the safe and cost-effective delivery of transit projects.**

Sound Transit has historically supported the efforts of our partners and others that facilitate the efficient, safe and cost-effective delivery of transit projects and services. Sound Transit will work in collaboration on efforts aimed at improving the transit system, including proposals impacting transit operations and proposals which would either increase funding or reduce costs for transit agencies.

- **Oppose legislation that increases the costs of transit improvements and services or otherwise impairs the agency’s ability to deliver the voter-approved regional high-capacity transit program.**

The Sound Transit Board opposes legislation that would negatively alter the oversight, planning, financing, construction, delivery and operation of Sound Transit projects and services.

- **Engage in efforts to support the public’s desire to base vehicle taxes on a vehicle’s true current value, in a revenue neutral manner that does not unconstitutionally impair bondholder contracts.**

Sound Transit will continue to work with the Legislature on solutions that seek to implement the public’s desire to base vehicle taxes on a vehicle’s true current value in a revenue neutral manner, provided that such solutions must not unconstitutionally impair bondholder contracts.

## **Fiscal information**

This proposed action does not have a budget or financial impact to the agency or any of its programs. Advocacy of the State Legislative Program is fully funded through the annual Executive Department budget.

## **Disadvantaged and small business participation**

Not applicable to this action.

## **Public involvement**

Not applicable to this action.

## **Time constraints**

Sound Transit’s interests are better served at the State Legislature if the Board of Directors adopts a State Legislative Program as early as possible in advance of the 2024 legislative session that begins January 08, 2024. Delaying adoption would harm effective advocacy by eliminating opportunities offered by pre-session meetings and work sessions.

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**Environmental review** – KH 10/18/23

**Legal review** – JCN 10/23/23



## Motion No. M2023-94

A motion of the Board of the Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority adopting the Sound Transit 2024 State Legislative Program and directing staff to evaluate and engage in issues that impact the agency as it continues to implement a regional high-capacity transit system.

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## Motion

It is hereby moved by the Board of the Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority that the Sound Transit 2024 State Legislative Program is adopted, and staff is directed to evaluate and engage in issues that impact the agency as it continues to implement a regional high-capacity transit system.

APPROVED by the Board of the Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority at a regular meeting thereof held on November 16, 2023.



Dow Constantine  
Board Chair

### Attest:



Kathryn Flores  
Board Administrator