

## Motion No. M2025-42

### Federal Way Link Extension Service and Fare Equity Analysis

| Meeting:                                        | Date:                    | Type of action:                    | Staff contact:                                                                                                     |
|-------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Rider Experience and Operations Committee Board | 09/04/2025<br>09/25/2025 | Recommend to Board<br>Final action | Daphne Cross, Chief Economic Development and Civil Rights Officer<br><b>Adrian Mejia, Title VI Program Manager</b> |

### Proposed action

Approves the Federal Way Link Extension Service and Fare Equity Report.

### Key features summary

- According to FTA guidelines, Sound Transit must conduct service and fare equity (SAFE) analyses prior to implementing new starts and major service or fare changes to ensure planned changes will not disproportionately affect members of a group identified by race, color, or national origin.
- The Federal Way Link Extension SAFE included analysis of the following:
  - Service Changes;
  - Assessment of potential adverse effects to minority and low-income populations; and
  - Public outreach to inform the decision-making process.
- A fare equity analysis is also required by federal regulation, but there were no fares changes associated with the opening of Federal Way Link Extension.
- The Service analysis concluded the proposed changes to transit service comply with Title VI regulations. There are no disparate impacts or disproportionate burdens from service or fare changes resulting from the Federal Way Link Extension, and mitigations are not necessary.

### Background

The Federal Way Link Extension (FWLE) is an 8-mile Link light rail project that will extend 1 Line service south from Angle Lake to three new stations at Kent Des Moines, Star Lake, and Federal Way Downtown. Trains will run between Federal Way Downtown Station and Lynnwood City Center Station from approximately 5 a.m. to 1 a.m., arriving approximately every 8 minutes at peak and every 10-15 minutes at off peak and on weekends. Changes to ST Express service will be considered separately by the Board as part of the 2026 Service Plan. No changes for ST Express related to Federal Way Link Extension will occur before Fall 2026.

### Fiscal information

The Federal Way Link Extension scope and project budget includes budget for startup and opening expenditures.

## **Title VI Compliance**

Section 601 of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 states: No person in the United States shall, on the grounds of race, color or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.

Sound Transit receives federal financial assistance to design and build the regional transit system through grants primarily awarded and administered by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) of the U.S. Department of Transportation. As an FTA grant recipient, Sound Transit cannot, on the basis of race, color or national origin, either directly or through contractual means:

- Deny an individual any service, financial aid or benefit provided under the program to which he or she might otherwise be entitled;
- Make distinctions in the quality, quantity, or manner in which the service or benefit is provided; or
- Segregate or separately treat individuals in any matter related to the receipt of any service or benefit.

As a part of its ongoing Title VI obligations, Sound Transit must continue to ensure that it complies with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which protects individuals from discrimination on the basis of race, color and national origin in any program receiving federal funds.

Included among the Title VI obligations, Sound Transit must submit a Title VI Program for FTA approval, every three years, which requires inclusion of equity analyses done by Sound Transit.

The service equity analysis concluded that the Federal Way Link Extension benefits the entire population in the service area, of which the minority population is above the system average. The FWLE service change adds platform hours without taking away service from existing Sound Transit routes and improves both midday and weekend service. Accordingly, there are no disparate impacts or disproportionate burdens from changes in service and mitigations are not required. Since Sound Transit fares are aligned across modes, this change also results in no disparate impacts or disproportionate burdens from changes in fares.

## **Public involvement**

FWLE began construction in 2020. Since the onset of the project, Sound Transit has maintained a strong commitment to public engagement and transparency, ensuring that communities along the route remained informed, involved, and supported throughout the construction process. From early planning to the end of construction, Sound Transit has actively engaged with residents, businesses, and local leaders through a wide range of outreach methods. This included neighborhood briefings, large public events, attendance at farmers markets, and other community celebrations and festivals. These efforts helped ensure that residents had direct access to project information, opportunities to ask questions, and channels to provide feedback.

The FWLE Community Engagement team were instrumental in ensuring communities had a chance to provide feedback early in the planning phase. With the kickoff of the environmental process in 2012, Sound Transit facilitated two public meetings as part of Early Scoping in 2012, and two additional meetings as part of Scoping in 2013, gathering 119 scoping comments. With the publication of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement in 2015, the project hosted two public meetings and hearings where 617 comments were received over the engagement period. In addition, the FWLE project provided 43 stakeholder briefings and 37 informational tabling sessions throughout the environmental review phase.

Sound Transit maintained a significant and visible presence in the cities of Des Moines, Federal Way, Kent, and SeaTac, which were directly affected by construction. In Des Moines, outreach included consistent coordination with city staff and local businesses, particularly near Highline College. In Federal Way, Sound Transit supported major events and worked closely with stakeholders to mitigate construction impacts while preparing for future transit-oriented development.

In Kent, extensive engagement was essential, especially around Structure C, where a soil stability issue led to a construction delay announced in 2022. In SeaTac, outreach focused on corridor aesthetics, access improvements, and coordination with adjacent infrastructure projects such as WSDOT's SR 509 Completion project.

In 2024, Sound Transit reached a milestone by opening College Way at Highline College and reopened the street to traffic, enhancing connectivity and access for students and residents near Kent Des Moines Station. This marked a major step toward full system completion. On March 30, 2025, Sound Transit opened the Federal Way Downtown Station Bus loop to prepare for the upcoming light rail openings and the opening of 319th Street.

In the current phase, the Engagement team has been connecting with project neighbors through drop-ins and other informational opportunities to get them prepared for the start of testing and pre-operations. Primary concerns from residents include visual and noise impacts from light rail operations. Through these years of construction and engagement, Sound Transit's community outreach efforts ensured that those most affected by the FWLE were not only informed but actively included in the progress of the project.

## **Time constraints**

The Federal Way Link Extension Service and Fare Equity report requires Board approval prior to beginning revenue service.

## **Prior Board/Committee actions**

Resolution No. R2025-17: Amended the 2025 Service Plan to include the major service change of extending the 1 Line to Federal Way Downtown Station and changed the order of Link light rail openings to allow the 1 Line Federal Way Link Extension to open for revenue service prior to the 2 Line Crosslake connection.

Resolution No. R2022-19: Established when the agency conducts equity analyses as required by the FTA and applies to major service changes, fare changes, and siting of maintenance facilities.

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**Environmental review** – KH 8/21/25

**Legal review** – MT 8/29/25

## Motion No. M2025-42

A motion of the Board of the Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority approving the Federal Way Link Extension Service and Fare Equity Report.

### Background

According to FTA guidelines, Sound Transit must conduct service and fare equity (SAFE) analyses prior to implementing new starts and major service or fare changes to ensure planned changes will not disproportionately affect members of a group identified by race, color, or national origin.

The Federal Way Link Extension SAFE included analysis of the following: service changes, assessment of potential adverse effects to minority and low-income populations, and public outreach to inform the decision-making process. A fare equity analysis is also required by federal regulation, but there were no fares changes associated with the opening of Federal Way Link Extension.

The Service analysis concluded the proposed changes to transit service comply with Title VI regulations. There are no disparate impacts or disproportionate burdens from service or fare changes resulting from the Federal Way Link Extension, and mitigations are not necessary.

The Federal Way Link Extension (FWLE) is an 8-mile Link light rail project that will extend 1 Line service south from Angle Lake to three new stations at Kent Des Moines, Star Lake, and Federal Way Downtown. Trains will run between Federal Way Downtown Station and Lynnwood City Center Station from approximately 5 a.m. to 1 a.m., arriving approximately every 8 minutes at peak and every 10-15 minutes at off peak and on weekends. Changes to ST Express service will be considered separately by the Board as part of the 2026 Service Plan. No changes for ST Express related to Federal Way Link Extension will occur before Fall 2026.

### Motion

It is hereby moved by the Board of the Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority Sound Transit's annual 2025 Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan submittal to the Washington State Department of Transportation's State Safety Oversight Office is approved.

APPROVED by the Board of the Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority at a regular meeting thereof held on \_\_\_\_\_, 2025.

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Dave Somers  
Board Chair

**Attest:**

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Kathryn Flores  
Board Administrator