

Motion No. M2026-06

2026-2030 Sustainability Plan

Meeting:	Date:	Type of action:
Executive Committee	02/05/2026	Recommend to Board
Board	02/26/2026	Final Action

Staff name:	Staff title:
Margaret Cederoth	Deputy Chief Planning Officer
Amy Shatzkin	Sustainability Director

Proposed action

Adopts the 2026-2030 Sustainability Plan, directs the CEO to implement the commitments contained in the plan, and pledges specific goals for the agency to strengthen its decarbonization efforts.

Key features summary

- The purpose of this action is to further Sound Transit's sustainability efforts by implementing the 2026-2030 Sustainability Plan. This Sustainability Plan sets both the agency's sustainability vision and workplan for the next five years as well as long-term decarbonization goals.
- The 2026-2030 Sustainability Plan:
 - Builds on the foundation of the agency's initial Sustainability Plan approved by the Board in 2011 and updated in 2015 and 2019.
 - Includes a comprehensive set of goals and action items to enable the agency to more clearly achieve decarbonization goals for fleets and facilities, including commitments to ensure that:
 - All fleets and facilities will be zero emissions by 2050;
 - All Link light rail service and electricity use will be greenhouse gas neutral by 2030; and
 - The purchase of revenue vehicles powered by fossil fuels will end in 2030; and the percentage of electric vehicles in the non-revenue fleet will increase to 30 by 2030.
 - Sets goals to align with regional, national, and international decarbonization initiatives.

Background

Sustainability is at the heart of Sound Transit's mission to improve the region's quality of life by connecting residents to opportunity through clean, frequent, and reliable transit. The agency strengthens Central Puget Sound's prosperity by connecting more people to more places, efficiently, affordably and in an environmentally friendly manner. Sustainability balances environmental, social, and economic issues in building a better future for generations to come by supporting healthy, vibrant communities and economies.

In 2004, the Board adopted an environmental policy (Resolution No. R2004-06), making Sound Transit one of the first transit agencies to implement an Environmental and Sustainability Management System (ESMS). The agency received and still maintains ISO 14001 certification for meeting international environmental management standards. The agency also employs the ESMS as its tool for implementing strategic sustainability goals throughout the organization.

In 2007, the Board adopted Resolution No. R2007-12, authorizing the chief executive officer to establish a Sound Transit Sustainability Initiative. Pursuant to Resolution No. R2007-12, the chief executive officer issued Executive Order No. 1 directing staff to implement the Sustainability Initiative.

In 2011, the Agency developed its first Sustainability Plan to launch the agency's program to implement the Sustainability Initiative and Executive Order. The 2015 Sustainability Plan more thoroughly integrated sustainable design and infrastructure into system planning and project delivery. The subsequent 2019 Sustainability Plan Update more clearly defined the agency's long-term decarbonization goals and renewed focus on the role of social equity and economic development in both internal and external activities.

The 2026-2030 Sustainability Plan re-defines the agency's sustainability priorities into clear themes, goals, and action items that are monitored and measured via quantifiable metrics. The document sets 2030 as the date by which all 2026-2030 Sustainability Plan goals and action items should be completed, apart from the goals that set 2050 as the date by which the agency will achieve zero emissions for all facilities and fleets. The plan provides additional detailed action items to advance the transition to zero emissions fleets and facilities.

The agency's newest plan was developed in consideration of the policies, programs, and plans of local partner agencies and jurisdictions, as well as transit agencies nationwide. The plan improves upon previous efforts by focusing sustainability goals on time-sensitive opportunities. The plan's goals also deepen the focus of the agency's actions to address community engagement, workforce and contractor sustainability, non-motorized access, climate resilience and operational reliability, among other topics.

Currently, Sound Transit services are powered by a mix of propulsion types. Link light rail and T Line services are 100% electrified and in 2024 they were sourced by 84% carbon free power. (Note that the 1 Line was carbon free from 2020 to 2024. The opening of the 2 Line and the 2025 extension of the 1 Line to Federal Way adjusted the overall energy mix for Link operations so that it is no longer carbon free.) In 2030, with the implementation of Washington's Clean Energy Transformation Act (CETA), all electricity – and thus Link light rail and T Line service- will be greenhouse gas neutral. ST Express bus service is powered by diesel and renewable diesel, as available, and compressed natural gas (CNG). Sounder commuter rail is powered by diesel (the transition to renewable diesel is currently underway).

The 2026-2030 Sustainability Plan sets the following decarbonization goals: All facilities will be zero emissions by 2050; and all facility electricity use will be greenhouse gas neutral by 2030. All fleets will be zero emissions by 2050; and all Link light rail and the T Line service will be greenhouse gas neutral by 2030. The agency will also sunset the purchase of revenue vehicles powered by fossil fuels in 2030; and increase the percentage of electric vehicles in the non-revenue fleet to 30 percent in 2030.

Sound Transit staff will work closely with the agency's operating partners to cooperatively plan for this transition to achieve all agencies' sustainability goals. This motion also addresses how the agency will handle unplanned vehicle replacement needs as the broader zero emission transition is planned and implemented for revenue fleets.

Fiscal information

Although there is no direct fiscal action associated with this board motion, the implementation of the 2026-2030 Sustainability Plan may have fiscal impacts on the agency. Those impacts will be addressed during future actions as they are presented. The goals and action items presented in the 2026-2030 Sustainability Plan will be funded and screened through existing agency budget and review processes.

Many of the Plan's sustainability goals are low- and no-cost items accomplished through staff-driven research and analysis. However, some initiatives require significant capital investment. In many cases, these initiatives save money over their lifecycle.

Where capital investment is required, the 2026-2030 Sustainability Plan can also draw on multiple funding sources from the ST3 program:

- Sustainability Cost Allocation: Capital projects use funding from this program to enable green design and infrastructure in planning, design and construction of ST3 projects, consistent with agency design requirements and industry best practices.
- Efficiency and Sustainability Program fund: The operations and maintenance budget for the ST3 Plan includes funding for resource conservation and pollution reduction, with a focus on efforts that reduce long-term operations, maintenance, utility, and fuel costs.

Public involvement

Sustainability staff engaged with the Community Oversight Panel and the Transit Access Coalition as well as sustainability staff at local jurisdictions and partner agencies to provide input to the plan.

Time constraints

A one-month delay would not create a significant schedule impact. However, issuance of the 2026-2030 Sustainability Plan will guide work planning and program implementation beginning in 2026. A lengthier delay may impact the ability to implement near-term action items.

Prior Board/Committee actions

Resolution No. R2022-21: Authorized a change to the pre-baselined Sound Transit 3 (ST3) cost estimates maintained in the Financial Plan to more efficiently and effectively implement sustainability across the ST3 plan by moving \$123.52 million (2022\$) in sustainability cost estimates from ST3 system expansion project cost estimates into a ST3 Sustainability Cost Allocation fund projection within the Financial Plan with no change to the subarea distribution.

Motion No. M2019-06: Directed the CEO to implement the Sustainability Plan 2019 Update.

Motion No. M2015-06: Directed the chief executive officer to implement the Sustainability Plan – 2015 Update to continue the integration of sustainable business practices and strategies throughout the Sound Transit organization.

Motion No. M2011-40: Directed the chief executive officer to implement a Sustainability Plan and continue to integrate sustainable business practices and strategies throughout the Sound Transit organization.

Resolution No. R2007-12: Authorized the chief executive officer to establish a Sound Transit Sustainability Initiative.

Resolution No. R2004-06: Adopted an environmental policy for Sound Transit.

Environmental review – KH 1/20/26

Legal review – MT 1/30/26

Motion No. M2026-06

A motion of the Board of the Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority directing the chief executive officer to implement the 2026-2030 Sustainability Plan and pledging the agency to meet the plan's decarbonization goals.

Background

Sustainability is at the heart of Sound Transit's mission to improve the region's quality of life by connecting residents to opportunity through clean, frequent, and reliable transit. The agency strengthens Central Puget Sound's prosperity by connecting more people to more places, efficiently, affordably and in an environmentally friendly manner. Sustainability balances environmental, social, and economic issues in building a better future for generations to come by supporting healthy, vibrant communities and economies.

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Sound Transit staff will work closely with the agency's operating partners to cooperatively plan for this transition to achieve all agencies' sustainability goals. This motion also addresses how the agency will handle unplanned vehicle replacement needs as the broader zero emission transition is planned and implemented for revenue fleets.

Motion

It is hereby moved by the Board of the Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority that:

Section 1: The chief executive officer is directed to implement the commitments contained in the 2026-2030 Sustainability Plan as outlined, consistent with Executive Order No. 1's directive to integrate sustainability into all agency activities from planning and design to construction and operations.

Section 2: The chief executive officer is directed to ensure that the following decarbonization goals and fleet management commitments are integrated into the agency's Long-Range Finance Plan as well as the Transit Operations Department's planning, procurement and operations.

Decarbonization goals

- All facilities will be zero emissions by 2050; and all facility electricity use will be greenhouse gas neutral by 2030.
- All fleets will be zero emissions by 2050; and all Link light rail service will be greenhouse gas neutral by 2030.

The agency will also:

- Sunset the purchase of revenue vehicles powered by fossil fuels in 2030;
- Increase the percentage of electric vehicles in the non-revenue fleet to 30 percent in 2030.

Fleet management commitments

To ensure clean, frequent, reliable service, in 2030 the Transit Operations Department will no longer purchase fossil fuel powered vehicles for ST Express bus and Sounder commuter rail fleets, with the following qualifications:

- Single vehicle replacement decisions, due to accident or mechanical failure, for existing ST Express bus and Sounder commuter rail revenue fleets powered by fossil fuels will be based on Total Cost of Ownership (TCO) analyses, following Finance and Business Administration's established practices. Replacement of fossil fuel powered vehicles by like-kind vehicles may be recommended if the projected costs (acquisition, operation, maintenance, depreciation, resale) of a new equivalent zero emissions vehicle is significantly more expensive than maintaining, repairing or replacing the fossil fuel vehicle with a similar model to meet service levels.

- The Sounder Sound Transit 2 Fleet Expansion project (Resolution No. R2017-28) received Board approval for a 2017 budget amendment to purchase an additional, used locomotive. This motion allows for this procurement, which has yet to be made, to proceed. Additionally, if needed, this motion allows the Sounder commuter rail program to request additional budget for a new locomotive if a used locomotive cannot be procured.

Section 3: The implementation of the 2026 Sustainability Plan's decarbonization goals will comply with the ST3 voter-approved ballot measure (Resolution No. R2016-17) and will aim to align zero-emissions transition dates with operating partner agency commitments in developing the following: an updated ST3 System Plan and Regional Transit Long-Range Plan that integrates zero emissions operating assumptions; updated Zero Emissions Transition Plans for ST Express bus and Sounder commuter rail, including modified procurement and operating plans; and a balanced and affordable Long-Range Finance Plan that addresses the zero emissions transition.

It is hereby moved by the Board of the Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority that the chief executive officer is directed to implement the 2026-2030 Sustainability Plan.

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

Dave Somers
Board Chair

Attest:

Kathryn Flores
Board Administrator