



Motion No. M2026-16

Contract Modification with HNTB Corporation for the Ballard Link Extensions

Meeting:	Date:	Type of action:
System Expansion Committee	04/09/2026	Recommend to Board
Board	04/23/2026	Final Action

Staff name:	Staff title:
Brad Owen	Executive Director – Capital Program Delivery
Daniel Turner	Acting Project Director

Proposed action

Authorizes the chief executive officer to execute a contract modification with HNTB Corporation to provide project development services for the Ballard Link Extension project in the amount of \$16,277,000, with a 20% contingency of \$3,255,400 totaling \$19,532,400, for a new total authorized contract amount not to exceed \$345,638,236.

Key features summary

- This action modifies the consultant services contract with HNTB Corporation (HNTB) to increase the total authorized contract amount, and to extend the period of performance for an additional period of 20 months, to complete Preliminary Engineering, including preparation of a Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Ballard Link Extension.
- The increase in contract funding is required to account for additional effort for cost savings work directed by Sound Transit in accordance with Board Motion No. M2024-59, and for work performed by HNTB related to additional alternatives, that was directed by Sound Transit but not initially scoped at the beginning of Phase 3. The amendment will fund completion of the environmental and preliminary design phase of work and external engagement to support future Board action(s) during this phase.
- This action falls within the current board authorized budget but requires additional dollars be added to this contract.

Background

The West Seattle and Ballard Link Extensions project is a voter-approved project under the ST3 Plan. The Project will provide fast, reliable light rail connections to dense residential and job centers throughout the region and add a new downtown Seattle light rail tunnel to provide efficient operating capacity for the entire regional system. It consists of two separate Link light rail extensions: one to West Seattle and the other to Ballard. The extension to West Seattle will operate from downtown Seattle to West Seattle's Alaska Junction neighborhood with four stations, and will eventually connect to Everett Link. The Ballard extension will operate from downtown Seattle to Ballard's Market Street area with nine

stations and will include a new rail-only tunnel from the Chinatown/International District to South Lake Union and Seattle Center/Uptown. It will eventually connect with the Tacoma Dome Link Extension.

The project development process has three phases. Phase 1 included alternatives development, environmental scoping and identification of a preferred alternative(s) and other alternatives. Phase 2 included the preparation of a Draft EIS and conceptual engineering of a preferred alternative(s) and other alternatives as identified through alternatives development. Phase 3 includes the preparation of a Final EIS, including responses to public and agency comments on the Draft EIS, and Preliminary Engineering of the Preferred Alternative.

To maintain eligibility for potential federal funding, 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). A decision to confirm, modify, or identify a preferred alternative(s) for the Final EIS is part of a separate motion for Board consideration. Following Board action on a preferred alternative(s) for the Final EIS, HNTB will begin preparation of the Final EIS and Preliminary Engineering of the preferred alternative(s) alignments and stations.

HNTB has satisfactorily completed Phase 1 and 2 work as well as the Final EIS and Preliminary Engineering for the West Seattle Link Extension. HNTB is actively working on completion of Phase 3 for the Ballard Link Extension, including publication of the Draft EIS, Final EIS and Preliminary Engineering. During Phase 3, additional alternatives were added to the BLE environmental process through Board action and the HNTB team also supported a one-year cost savings effort, both not anticipated during negotiations on the initial Phase 3 amendment. This contract modification approves additional funding to complete Phase 3 consultant services given those changes.

Project status

Project Development Phase: Draft EIS / Preliminary Engineering

Percent complete (measured to revenue service date): 10%

Current project status, performance metrics, and additional information are located on pages 14 of the February 2026 System Expansion Monthly Status Report.

Procurement information

A Request for Qualifications (RFQ), contract number RTA/AE 0036-17, West Seattle-Ballard Link Extension Project for three phases of the project development process (1. Alternatives Development, 2. Draft EIS and Conceptual Engineering, 3. Final EIS/ROD and Preliminary Engineering) was advertised on April 20, 2017. The HNTB Corporation team was determined to be the highest ranked firm based on qualifications and was invited to enter into negotiations. Sound Transit executed the contract with HNTB Corporation on October 15, 2017, in an amount not to exceed \$24,412,019 for Phase 1 work. A modification exercising a contract option for Phase 2 in the amount not to exceed \$60,293,750 was issued on May 23, 2019. HNTB has satisfactorily completed Phase 1 and 2 work and was invited to negotiate the level of effort for the scope of work and cost for Phase 3.

A modification approved in July 2022 partially exercised a contract option for Phase 3 work in the amount not to exceed \$11,162,414. Including this initial modification, four contract modifications have been issued to advance Phase 3, Final EIS and Preliminary Engineering of the Preferred Alternative on both the West Seattle Link Extension and Ballard Link Extension projects. The fourth Phase 3 modification in the amount not to exceed \$851,048 was issued on December 21, 2023 to support design

of integrated transit-oriented development along the West Seattle Link Extension and Ballard Link Extension projects. The current contract value with HNTB Corporation is not to exceed \$326,105,836.

This current Action further amends the existing contract with HNTB for Phase 3 and is needed to advance Ballard Link Extension. Additional funds are required because existing contract funds were used for unanticipated scope related to additional alternatives for Ballard Link Extension added by Board action during the environmental process and support for Board-requested project costs savings efforts. These additional tasks were negotiated and cost determined to be fair and reasonable level of effort and fee for the additional scope

Sound Transit prepared and submitted a draft scope of work to HNTB for the current modification and the time extension of 20 months to advance Phase 3 scope. After participating in negotiations, Sound Transit submitted a revised scope of work to HNTB. HNTB prepared and submitted a cost proposal that was accepted by Sound Transit. Based on the review of the scope of work level of effort and cost analysis, the Procurement and Contracts team has determined that the scope of work for this action is within the general scope of work originally procured and the not to exceed price is fair and reasonable.

Fiscal information

The most recent Ballard Link Extension preliminary cost estimate from 2025 – representing the agency’s estimate at this stage of project development and design – has been projected to be between \$20.1 billion and \$22.6 billion (2025\$). To address rising project costs, the agency is developing a workplan to assess project affordability and explore programmatic, financial, and project level strategies to improve the agency’s financial position. The impact of the recent preliminary cost estimate is not yet known and will be evaluated as part of this process.

This action is funded by the current approved project authorized allocation, and there is sufficient budget projected to fund the remaining work. The current project authorized allocation is included in the existing Long Range Financial Plan.

The authorized project allocation for the Ballard Link Extension project is \$814,019,999. Within the \$343,100,000 Preliminary Engineering phase, \$244,788,866 has been allocated to the budget line item for FEIS / PE (Phase 3). The action would commit \$19,532,400 to this line item and leave a balance of \$30,881,987.

Ballard Link Extension

(in thousands)

Project Phase	Authorized Allocation	Board Approvals*	This Action	Total Commitment Plus Action	Uncommitted / (Shortfall)
Agency Administration	\$131,909	\$87,084	\$31,445	\$118,529	\$13,380
Preliminary Engineering	343,100	266,980		266,980	76,120
Final Design	-	-	-	-	-
Third Party	16,350	8,068	-	8,068	8,282
Right of Way	322,661	8,088	-	8,088	314,572
Construction	-	-	-	-	-
Construction Services	-	-	-	-	-
Total	\$814,020	\$370,221	\$31,445	\$401,666	\$412,354

Phase Detail - Agency Administration

Lease & Construction Upgrades	\$32,000	\$	\$31,445	\$31,445	\$555
Other Agency Administration	99,909	87,084	-	87,084	12,825
Total Phase	\$131,909	\$87,084	\$31,445	\$118,529	\$13,380

Notes:

Amounts are expressed in Year of Expenditure \$000s.
 For detailed project information, see page 132 of the 2026 Adopted Budget & Financial Plan.
 * Board Approvals = Commitment and PO Contingency Remaining as of 2/28/2026.

Disadvantaged and small business participation

Sound Transit promotes and encourages DBE/small business participation. DBE/Small business goals are based upon an examination of subcontracting opportunities contained in the work of this contract and the number of DBE/small businesses available to perform such subcontracting work. Consistent with Sound Transit Policies and federal regulations that were effective in 2017, Sound Transit has established small business/DBE goals at the time this contract was solicited.

On October 3, 2025, U.S. Department of Transportation issued an Interim Final Rule (IFR) that removed race- and sex- based presumptions of social and economic disadvantage for purposes of Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) certification and implements new regulations in 49 CFR Part 26. The IFR temporarily prohibits the use of DBE goals in contracts receiving federal funding executed after October 3, 2025. Accordingly, DBE participation will not be counted toward a DBE goal at this time. Sound Transit promotes and encourages proposers to continue to solicit participation from, and honor commitments to, Small Businesses and firms that reflect all communities in the Sound Transit marketplace.

For this specific contract, in 2017 the following goals were set and the successful Bidder/Proposer has committed to the following small business participation:

Sound Transit small business goal: 18%	DBE goal: 11%
HNTB Small business commitment: 19%	DBE commitment: 12%
Current Small business attainment: 16.05%	
DBE attainment to September 30, 2025: 10.04%	

Public involvement

Sound Transit is committed to actively seeking public feedback at all project stages for the West Seattle and Ballard Link Extensions Project with the overarching goal of fostering public trust through transparent communication, meaningful involvement and being responsive to concerns and issues. The project will continue reaching out to communities, businesses, stakeholders and agencies to shape the project by asking questions, holding conversations with project staff and seeking out ideas and comments.

This contract amendment will continue extensive community engagement and outreach conducted in Phase 1, Alternatives Development, Phase 2, Draft EIS and Conceptual Engineering, and Phase 3, Final EIS and Preliminary Engineering, including public meetings, briefings, design workshops, public hearings and drop-in sessions. The proposed budget for this action supports online and in-person communications to support community engagement.

Time constraints

A delay in approval of this action would result in an equivalent delay in the subsequent production and review of the Final EIS.

Prior Board/Committee actions

Motion No. M2024-05: Authorized the chief executive officer to execute a contract modification with HNTB Corporation to advance the design of integrated transit-oriented development for stations along the alignments of the West Seattle and Ballard Link Extensions Project in the amount of \$6,798,391, including contingency, for a new total authorized contract amount not to exceed \$326,492,144.

Motion No. M2023-110: Authorized the chief executive officer to execute a contract modification with HNTB Corporation to prepare a feasibility assessment under the contract for project development services for the West Seattle and Ballard Link Extensions Project in the amount of \$776,247, including contingency, for a new total authorized contract amount not to exceed \$319,693,752.

Motion No. M2023-69: Authorized the chief executive officer to execute a contract modification with HNTB Corporation to provide project development services for the West Seattle and Ballard Link Extensions Project in the amount of \$146,589,734, including contingency, for a new total authorized contract amount not to exceed \$318,842,705.

Motion No. M2022-73: Authorized the chief executive officer to execute a contract modification with HNTB Corporation to provide project development services for the West Seattle and Ballard Link Extensions Project in the amount of \$71,858,568, including contingency, for a new total authorized contract amount not to exceed \$172,252,971.

Motion No. M2022-56: Authorized the chief executive officer to execute a contract modification with HNTB Corporation to provide project development services for the West Seattle and Ballard Link Extensions Project in the amount of \$11,162,414, including contingency, for a new total authorized contract amount not to exceed \$100,394,403.

Motion No. M2019-52: Authorized the chief executive officer to execute a contract modification with HNTB Corporation to provide project development services for the West Seattle and Ballard Link Extensions Project in the amount of \$54,812,500, with a ten percent contingency of \$5,481,250, for a new total authorized contract amount not to exceed \$87,745,971.

Motion No. M2018-101: Authorized the chief executive officer to execute a contract amendment with HNTB to provide a speed and reliability study for RapidRide C and D Improvements in the amount of \$599,000, for a new total authorized contract amount not to exceed \$27,452,221.

Motion No. M2017-119: Executed a contract with HNTB Corporation to provide project development services for the West Seattle and Ballard Link Extensions project in the amount of \$24,412,019, with a 10% contingency of \$2,441,202, for a total authorized contract amount not to exceed \$26,853,221.

Environmental review – LS for KH 3/26/26

Legal review – JSA 4/3/26



Motion No. M2026-16

A motion of the Board of the Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority authorizing the chief executive officer to execute a contract modification with HNTB Corporation to provide project development services for the Ballard Link Extension project in the amount of \$16,277,000, with a 20% contingency of \$3,255,400 totaling \$19,532,400, for a new total authorized contract amount not to exceed \$345,638,236.

Background

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beginning of Phase 3. The amendment will fund completion of the environmental and preliminary design phase of work and external engagement to support future Board action(s) during this phase.

This action falls within the current board authorized budget but requires additional dollars be added to this contract.

Motion

It is hereby moved by the Board of the Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority authorizing the chief executive officer to execute a contract modification with HNTB Corporation to provide project development services for the Ballard Link Extension project in the amount of \$16,277,000, with a 20% contingency of \$3,255,400 totaling \$19,532,400, for a new total authorized contract amount not to exceed \$345,638,236.

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