

Motion No. M2026-37

Contract with Northwest Landscape Services for System-Wide Right-Of-Way Corridor Landscape Maintenance

Meeting:	Date:	Type of action:
Rider Experience and Operations Committee	10/01/2026	Final Action

Staff name:	Staff title:
Ed Cobean	Transit Operations Deputy CEO
Shankar Rajaram	Infrastructure and Asset Management Executive Director
Erin Brumbaugh	Facilities Agreements and Contracts Deputy Director

Proposed action

Authorizes the chief executive officer to execute a 5-year contract with two optional one-year extensions with Northwest Landscape Services to provide guideway corridor landscape maintenance services in an amount not to exceed \$24,680,791, plus applicable taxes.

Key features summary

- Under this contract, Northwest Landscape Services will provide system-wide landscape maintenance within the Sound Transit landscape corridor non-station areas, sensitive areas including wetlands, wetland buffer, stream, stream buffer, steep slope or other, stormwater ponds and within selective WSDOT Right of Way in accordance with agreement obligations.
- The Link guideway corridor landscape has been constructed to include 80 acres of landscape, environmentally sensitive areas, and WSDOT right of way for maintenance and vegetation management.
- The contract has a five-year term with two optional one-year extensions.
- The amount requested is sufficient to cover the growth and the plant establishment agreement commitments with WSDOT that will end in 2027 and 2028 for the Federal Way and Downtown Redmond Link Extensions.
- Sound Transit is responsible for plant establishment and maintenance for the WSDOT right of way for an additional 11 years and Sound Transit property in perpetuity.
- Applicable taxes are currently estimated to be \$2,603,824.

Background

This landscape maintenance corridor contract addresses the expanded scope and long-term maintenance needs associated with Sound Transit's system expansion. As Sound Transit's footprint increases, so does the responsibility to steward publicly owned land, meet environmental commitments, and protect capital investments through planned lifecycle maintenance.

Along the existing 1 Line Link corridor, landscape maintenance has historically been conducted on an as-needed basis and focused primarily on vegetation clear-zone compliance, supporting operations safety and right-of-way security, and selective tree management. This approach aligned with corridor conditions that included a higher proportion of private property under Sound Transit easements and WSDOT right-of-way areas where plant establishment periods had been completed, limiting ongoing maintenance obligations.

The new system expansion corridor introduces substantially different conditions that require a more comprehensive and deliberate maintenance strategy. The corridor includes a significantly higher amount of Sound Transit-owned property, expanded restored areas within WSDOT right of way, landscaped shrub beds, stormwater ponds and water quality facilities, and multiple resource conservation and sensitive areas, including wetlands and buffers, streams, and steep slopes. Sound Transit is responsible for maintaining these assets to meet permit requirements, ensure environmental compliance, and preserve the intended function of restored and landscaped areas.

The strategy underpinning this contract is to consolidate corridor-wide landscape and environmental maintenance under a single, specialized contract to ensure consistent standards, predictable performance, and efficient delivery. This approach reduces regulatory and environmental risk, supports compliance monitoring, and minimizes long-term costs by addressing vegetation and invasive species issues proactively rather than reactively. It also supports safer, more reliable operations by maintaining clear sightlines and protecting infrastructure adjacent to sensitive areas.

This contract will provide landscape maintenance, noxious weed control, and sensitive area maintenance and monitoring for the system expansion corridor. Large tree maintenance and areas managed by Property Management are excluded. Executing this contract advances Sound Transit's long-term asset stewardship objectives and establishes a scalable maintenance framework aligned with continued system expansion.

Procurement information

On October 9, 2025, staff determined that a Request for Proposals method was appropriate for this procurement. The rationale for this method is as follows:

The services are performance or functional specifications; other circumstances such as the need for discussions or the importance of basing contract award on factors other than price alone are present.

Sound Transit received 11 submittals on February 3, 2026, in response to the solicitation.

The Evaluation Committee members were provided with the Proposals and evaluated the firms using the evaluation criteria provided in the RFP as follows: 1. Approach to Quality Industry Standards. 2. Firm(s) Experience and History. 3. Capacity and Project Organization or Project Approach. The Evaluation Team Meeting was held on February 18, 2026, and was conducted by procurement, and included employees representing the following subject matters: Ecosystems, Facilities Landscape, and the Office of Civil Rights, Equity, and Inclusion. The team determined the consensus scores for each evaluation criterion for each submittal.

Based upon the evaluation score summary, it was apparent that Northwest Landscape Services was the most successful proposer, and therefore the Evaluation Committee chose not to develop a competitive range in order to seek revised proposals. It was determined that revised proposals would not add value or change the initial ranking, as the second-ranked firm would need to gain too many points to be able to catch up and overcome the top ranked firm.

Sound Transit's Initial Cost Estimate (ICE) was determined to be \$29,323,144. Northwest Landscape Service's Total Proposed Price before taxes is \$24,680,791, which is \$4,642,353 less than the ICE and Requisition amounts. This is a savings of almost 16 percent when compared to the ICE.

Northwest Landscape Service's rates are fair and reasonable based on a comparison of the competitive market rates submitted by the other proposers and in comparison to the ICE.

Fiscal information

This action for \$27,284,614 including estimated applicable taxes, will be funded from the Federal Way Link Extension project as well as Transit Operations Department's annual operating budget.

Federal Way Link Extension

This project will fund \$2,763,750 of the contract. The authorized project allocation for Federal Way Link Extension is \$2,446,995,000. Within that amount, \$1,817,076,595 has been allocated to the construction phase and this action will commit \$2,763,750 (including applicable taxes) to this phase, leaving a budget balance of \$114,013,822.

Transit Operations Department

The remaining \$24,520,864 will be funded by the Transit Operations department. Within the Services category, the landscaping budget is \$1,972,416, of which \$648,690 including estimated sales tax is estimated to be spent from this contract in the remainder of 2026 and is currently within the agency's budget authority.

After this action's approval, sufficient budget remains to cover remaining annual expenditures; funding for the additional years of the contract will be included in future annual budget requests.

This action adds approximately \$104 million to the long-range financial plan. The impact of this cost increase on the agency's remaining legal debt capacity is a reduction of approximately -0.10% in the minimum year.

Contract Detail

(in thousands)

Northwest Landscape Services	Board Approvals to Date	Proposed Action	Proposed Total for Board Approval
Contract amount	\$	\$24,681	\$24,681
Contingency		0	0
Total Contract	\$	\$24,681	\$24,681
Estimated Taxes		2,604	2,604
Total with Estimated Taxes	\$	\$27,285	\$27,285
Percent Contingency	0%	0%	0%

Transit Operations Department

(in thousands)

Cost Category	2026 Annual Operating Budget	YTD Actuals ¹	Contract Spend Forecast Remainder of 2026	YTD Plus Action (Current Year Only)	Remaining Annual Operating Budget
Salaries and Benefits	\$81,635	\$51,859	\$	\$51,859	\$29,775
Services	183,059	121,730	649	122,379	60,680
Materials and Supplies	25,726	16,459		16,459	9,267
Utilities	18,742	13,513		13,513	5,229
Insurance		139		139	-139
Taxes	3,638	2,570		2,570	1,068
Purchased Transportation Services	438,636	295,794		295,794	142,841
Miscellaneous	2,193	1,133		1,133	1,060
Leases and Rentals	1,985	1,889		1,889	96
Total Annual Operating Budget	\$755,613	\$505,086	\$649	\$505,735	\$249,879
Services Category Detail					
Landscaping	\$1,972	\$847	\$649	\$1,496	\$476
Others	\$181,087	\$120,883	\$	\$120,883	\$60,204
Total	\$183,059	\$121,730	\$649	\$122,379	\$60,680

FEDERAL WAY LINK EXTENSION

(in thousands)

Project Phase	Baseline Budget	Commitment to Date	This Action	Total Commitment Plus Action	Uncommitted / (Shortfall)
ADMINISTRATION	\$105,579	\$82,904	\$	\$82,904	\$22,675
PRELIMINARY ENGINEERING	45,419	45,419		45,419	
FINAL DESIGN	6,840	5,358		5,358	1,482
CONSTRUCTION SERVICES	167,232	165,892		165,892	1,340
THIRD PARTIES AGREEMENTS	43,982	35,672		35,672	8,310
CONSTRUCTION	1,817,077	1,700,299	2,764	1,703,063	114,014
RIGHT OF WAY	260,866	251,117		251,117	9,749
Total Current Budget	\$2,446,995	\$2,286,663	\$2,764	\$2,289,426	\$157,569

Notes:

¹YTD Actuals as of August 2026.

Disadvantaged and small business participation

Sound Transit promotes and encourages small business participation. Small business goals are based upon an examination of subcontracting opportunities contained in the work of this contract and the number of small businesses available to perform such subcontracting work.

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

Small business goal: 0%

Small business commitment: 10.01%

Public involvement

Not Applicable to this action.

Time constraints

A one-month delay in approval of this contract would result in a shortened time frame for the selected contractor to mobilize staffing, equipment, supplies and organize work schedules relative to the start of the contract period. Extended seasonal weed growth and pressure will cause continued weed seed production, increasing labor needs.

Environmental review – KH 4/20/26

Legal review – DLM 9/17/2026

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A motion of the Rider Experience and Operations Committee of the Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority authorizing the chief executive officer to execute a 5-year contract with two optional one-year extensions with Northwest Landscape Services to provide guideway corridor landscape maintenance services in an amount not to exceed \$24,680,791, plus applicable taxes.

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Motion

It is hereby moved by the Rider Experience and Operations Committee of the Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority that the chief executive officer is authorized to execute a 5-year contract with two optional one-year extensions with Northwest Landscape Services to provide guideway corridor landscape maintenance services in an amount not to exceed \$24,680,791, plus applicable taxes.

APPROVED by the Rider Experience and Operations Committee of the Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority at a regular meeting thereof held on _____.

Kristina Walker
Rider Experience and Operations Committee Vice Chair

Attest:

Katie Flores,
Board Administrator