

Resolution No. R2025-13

Authorizing an increase in internal staffing levels for the Security Operations Center

| Meeting: | Date: | Type of action: | Staff contact: |
|---|------------|--------------------|---|
| Rider Experience and Operations Committee | 06/05/2025 | Recommend to Board | Marie Olson, Acting Service Delivery Deputy CEO |
| Board | 06/26/2025 | Final action | Brian de Place, Acting Passenger Success Deputy Executive Director Sue Kuwahara, Passenger Success Administration Deputy Director |

Proposed action

Authorizing the chief executive officer to increase Sound Transit staffing levels to transition the operations of the Sound Transit Security Operations Center from contracted staff to full-time employees, within the existing budget approved by the Board for contracting these services.

Key features summary

- The Security Operation Center (SOC) provides 24/7 dispatch and coordination for all security services, including coordinating security response with the Link Control Center, Sounder Operations, and Law Enforcement for safety and security incidents occurring within Sound Transit. The SOC monitors CCTV and responds to customer inquiries and requests for assistance via telephone, email, text, or emergency call stations.
- Sound Transit's Security Operations Center is currently staffed through two contracts. Sound Transit's interests would be better served if the SOC were staffed by employees to better meet expectations on dispatching, customer service level, reliability, and continuity of service.
- This action authorizes the CEO to hire 34 full time employees (FTEs) to provide the Security Operations Center functions, and 3 additional positions in Human Resources to support the hiring and ongoing maintenance of these new positions.
- The transition between contracted and Sound Transit FTEs is anticipated to occur incrementally over the next 12 months and is congruent with the terms of the existing contracts.
- There is no impact to the overall agency budget. The new positions will be funded using existing budget authorized by the Board for contracting this function.

Background

In 2008, staffing of Sound Transit's Security Operations Center was initiated through a single contractor (Motion No. M2008-56), which also provided Security Officer staffing. Over time, the level of service support provided by this single contractor declined to an unacceptable level requiring resolution.

In 2021 and 2022, under CEO authority and Board approvals of Motion Nos. M2022-61 and M2022-62 the Security contract expanded, from one provider to four to mitigate potential service failure of a single contractor. The SOC transferred from the previous contractor to Phoenix Protective Services.

Unfortunately, this contractor experienced ongoing staffing instability and another contractor, Allied Universal, was brought in to support services in 2024. The SOC is currently supported by these two contracts and continues to struggle with staffing consistency and the current contractor turnover rate is 101%, well above the industry standard of 32%.

Today, contracted SOC dispatch officers are overseen by one ST manager and six ST superintendents. These superintendents provide contract oversight and support for field agency personnel but cannot direct the work of the contracted staff without working through the contract manager. Bringing this work in-house will allow the agency to maintain direct control of the work in the Security Operations Center.

Ensuring a stable and skilled team within the Security Operation Center is critical to Sound Transit successfully supporting passengers during the Seattle-based 2026 FIFA World Cup. SOC staff internalization will increase likelihood of better staff retention, increase the level of staffing and training, and ensure a consistent response to unplanned events/incidents, particularly during a prolonged high-ridership period. Overall, this will allow for improved coordination for our passengers, front-line employees, and first responders.

Implementation

Staff has coordinated with Human Resources (HR) and labor relations teams to implement a phased hiring plan. Over the course of the next year, in approximately 90-day increments, 34 positions will be hired for the SOC through a competitive hiring process which will include assessment for key attributes associated with dispatcher success. An additional three positions will be provided to HR to support the hiring and ongoing maintenance of these new positions.

Board approval in June will allow Sound Transit teams to complete a transition to approximately 75% of contracted to in house personnel in time for the 2026 FIFA World Cup.

Fiscal information

There is no direct fiscal action associated with the action. Increases to the 2025 salary and benefits budget are estimated at \$687 thousand, accounting for hiring three HR positions and up to 16 of the total 38 SOC positions by year-end 2025. This increase will be fully offset by underspend in the 2025 approved budget for private security contracts as the Agency ramps down the contracted level of effort for SOC roles that are replaced by in-house staff. There is no change to the 2025 Adopted Budget.

The remaining 22 SOC positions will be hired throughout 2026. Budget for those positions will be requested as part of the 2026 Proposed Budget.

This action does not impact the affordability of the Agency's financial plan, as the full cost of the 38 in-house SOC positions and 3 HR support positions will be offset by a reduction in the projected spending for contracted security.

Disadvantaged and small business participation

Not applicable to this action.

Title VI compliance

Not applicable to this action.

Public involvement

Not applicable to this action.

Time constraints

A one-month delay would impact the timing of this project by delaying hiring and on-boarding of staff. This delay would negatively impact the agency's ability to stand up a mostly internal team for security coordination and incident response for the 2026 FIFA World Cup.

Environmental review – KH 5/19/25

Legal review – AJP 5/29/25



Resolution No. R2025-13

A RESOLUTION of the Board of the Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority authorizing the chief executive officer to increase Sound Transit staffing levels to transition the operations of the Sound Transit Security Operations Center from contracted staff to full-time employees, within the existing budget approved by the Board for contracting these services.

WHEREAS, the Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority, commonly known as Sound Transit, was formed under chapters 81.104 and 81.112 of the Revised Code of Washington (RCW) for the Pierce, King, and Snohomish Counties region by action of their respective county councils pursuant to RCW 81.112.030; and

WHEREAS, Sound Transit is authorized to plan, construct, and permanently operate a high-capacity system of transportation infrastructure and services to meet regional public transportation needs in the Central Puget Sound region; and

WHEREAS, in general elections held within the Sound Transit district on November 5, 1996, November 4, 2008, and November 8, 2016, voters approved local funding to implement a regional high-capacity transportation system for the Central Puget Sound region; and

WHEREAS, the Security Operation Center (SOC) provides 24/7 dispatch and coordination for all security services, including coordinating security response with the Link Control Center, Sounder Operations, and Law Enforcement for safety and security incidents occurring within Sound Transit; and

WHEREAS, in 2008, the Board approved initial contracted staffing for Sound Transit's Security Operations Center; and

WHEREAS, continued support through multiple other contractors has not resolved problems with staffing consistency; and

WHEREAS, Sound Transit's interests would be better served if the SOC were staffed by employees to better meet expectations on dispatching, customer service level, reliability, and continuity of service; and

WHEREAS, ensuring a stable and skilled team within the Security Operations Center is critical to Sound Transit successfully supporting passenger during the 2026 FIFA Men's World Cup.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of the Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority that the chief executive officer is authorized to increase Sound Transit staffing levels to transition the operations of the Sound Transit Security Operations Center from contracted staff to full-time employees, within the existing budget approved by the Board for contracting these services.

ADOPTED 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