

Resolution No. R2025-31

Transfer of contracted Security Mobile Patrol to an increase in internal staffing levels for the Field Activity Specialist Team

Meeting:	Date:	Type of action:	Staff contact:
Rider Experience and Operations Committee	12/04/2025	Recommend to Board	Ed Cobean, Service Delivery Deputy CEO
Board	12/18/2025	Final action	Brian de Place, Acting Security and Fare Engagement Executive Director Sue Kuwahara, Security and Fare Engagement Deputy Director

Proposed action

Authorizing the chief executive officer to increase Sound Transit staffing levels to transition the operations of the Sound Transit Mobile Security Patrol from contracted staff to full-time employees assigned to the Field Activity Specialist Team within the existing budget approved by the Board for contracting these services.

Key features summary

- The Field Activity Specialist Team (FAST) is composed of Sound Transit employees. The team is intended to operate as a 24/7 field-based team, providing critical incident response/coordination both internal and external to the agency.
- Current FAST shift staffing (10 Specialists over 24/7) is insufficient to ensure a timely response to critical incidents spread across the tri-county service area. Delays can occur, depending on the location of FAST units and the critical incident location. An additional 9 positions, included in the 2026 budget process, will supplement the current cadre but will not be sufficient to provide coverage over the entire system.
- The limited functions of contracted mobile security can be integrated into FAST's existing active patrol and critical incident response model. Doing so would enhance situational awareness, ensure timely communication during incidents, and support more effective resolution efforts.
- Board approval in December will allow Sound Transit teams to initiate hiring and onboarding 56 personnel, with a goal of 25 percent in time for the 2026 FIFA World Cup.
- This action authorizes the CEO to hire 56 full-time employees (FTEs) to provide enhanced in-house FAST functions, and two 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 expected to occur incrementally over the next 12 months to ensure appropriate coverage and business continuity and is congruent with the terms of the existing contracts.
- There is a positive impact on the overall agency budget. The removal of the contracted mobile patrol and replacement with Agency FTEs provides for long-term net savings of approximately \$84M over the next 20 years.

Background

Established in 2022, the Field Activity Specialist Team (FAST) has become a critical 24/7 field-based unit for incident response and system oversight and has expanded to meet growing system demands.

Structure & Growth: The FAST began with one Manager and 11 Specialists. In 2023 Supervisors were added for stronger oversight. A recent review recommends adding eight Specialists and one Supervisor (pending 2026 budget approval) bringing the team to 22 to support system expansion and increased FAST reliance.

Core Functions:

- Real-time incident response and coordination with internal teams and first responders.
- Oversight of contracted security through patrols, compliance monitoring, and reporting to Security Operations.
- System-wide situational awareness and liaison role during emergencies and major events.

Impact:

- Responds to 60–70 critical incidents monthly, including medical emergencies, service disruptions, and criminal activity.
- Supported major events (MLB All-Star Game, Taylor Swift concerts, FIFA Club World Cup).
- Launched QA inspection program in March 2025, conducting ~2,000 inspections and identifying \$119K in chargebacks for non-compliance.

Training & Integration: Specialists complete multi-week field training covering transit safety, emergency management, and Disability Services. They also perform exercises with King County Sheriff's Office Joint Transit Anti-Terrorism Team (JTATT) and perform field exercises and training with Fare Ambassadors).

Contracted mobile patrols currently provide baseline security coverage through scheduled routes and station presence, with limited flexibility for enhanced oversight. While these teams support emergency response and special events, their scope is primarily static, and compliance driven.

By internalizing this function and integrating it into an expanded, better-resourced FAST program, Sound Transit will achieve a more agile, efficient, and proactive security model—delivering improved safety outcomes and operational resilience while exceeding projected cost savings.

Implementation

Staff have initiated discussions with Human Resources (HR) and labor relations teams to implement hiring. Additional positions were allocated for HR in the previous approval for internalization of the Security Operations Center to support the hiring and ongoing maintenance of these new positions.

Board approval in December will allow Sound Transit teams to initiate hiring and onboarding of 80 personnel, with a goal of 25% in time for the 2026 FIFA World Cup.

Fiscal information

There is no direct fiscal action associated with this proposal and it does not change the 2026 adopted budget. This action does not impact the affordability of the Agency's financial plan.

This action is fully offset in the 2026 approved budget for contracted mobile patrol security, as the Agency reduces contracted services in alignment with the transition to in-house staff. Increases to the 2026 salary and benefits budget are estimated at up to \$4.7 million, reflecting the hiring of 56 Field

Activity Specialist Team (FAST) positions, which will bring staffing up to a total of 78 FAST positions, as well as two Human Resources onboarding positions by year-end 2026.

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

Any 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 initiate the stand up a mostly internal team for security coordination and incident response for the 2026 FIFA World Cup.

Environmental review – KH 11/17/25

Legal review – DLM 12/2/2025

Resolution No. R2025-31

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 Mobile Security Patrol from contracted staff to full-time employees assigned to the Field Activity Specialist Team 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 Field Activity Specialist Team (FAST) is intended to operate as a 24/7 field-based team, providing critical incident response/coordination both internal and external to the agency; and

WHEREAS, in 2022, the FAST was established with one manager and 11 specialists, and a recent review recommended adding eight specialists and one supervisor for total team of 22 staff to support system expansion and increase FAST reliance; and

WHEREAS, Sound Transit's interests would be better served if the FAST were staffed by employees to enhance situational awareness, ensure timely communication during incidents, and support more effective resolutions efforts; and

WHEREAS, ensuring a stable and skilled FAST is critical to Sound Transit successfully supporting passengers 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 Mobile Security Patrol from contracted staff to full-time employees assigned to the Field Activity Specialist Team 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