

RESOLUTION NO. R2015-22
Selecting the route, stations, and operations and maintenance facility expansion site for the Tacoma Link Expansion

MEETING:	DATE:	TYPE OF ACTION:	STAFF CONTACT:
Capital Committee	11/12/2015	Recommend to Board	Ric Ilgenfritz, Executive Director, PEPD Don Billen, Director, Capital Project Development
Board	11/19/2015	Final Action	Sue Comis, Light Rail Project Manager

PROPOSED ACTION

Selects the route, stations, and operation and maintenance facility expansion site for the Tacoma Link Expansion.

KEY FEATURES SUMMARY

- This action defines and selects the Tacoma Link alignment, stations, and associated infrastructure to be built between downtown Tacoma and Tacoma's Hilltop neighborhood.
- In February 2014, the Board identified the following alignment for environmental review:

Segment A: Theater District to intersection of Division Avenue/North 1st Street

Alignment A1 (Stadium Way) to connect from the existing Theater District Station north along Stadium Way, then southwest along North 1st Street to the intersection with Division Avenue.

Segment B: Intersection of Division Avenue/North 1st Street to South 19th Street

Alignment B1 (MLK) to extend from the intersection of North 1st Street and Division Avenue to the intersection of MLK Way and South 19th Street.

- This action also selects the site for expansion of the Tacoma Operations and Maintenance Facility (OMF) on the property located at 824 E. 25th St., adjacent to the existing OMF.
- The environmental review for the Board identified alignment has been completed and Board action is now needed to establish the project definition.

BACKGROUND

The Tacoma Link Expansion Project would extend Tacoma Link light rail from the Theater District in downtown Tacoma and the Hilltop neighborhood in the City of Tacoma. The alignment identified by the Board in 2014 consists of a 2.4-mile extension, running primarily in-street. The project would have six new stations and one relocated station.

Early scoping under the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) and National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) was completed in September 2012. The Tacoma Link Expansion Alternative Analysis Report and SEPA Addendum was completed in May 2013. In February, 2014, the Sound Transit Board identified the alignment for evaluation in the project-level environmental review. In September 2014, the Tacoma City Council recommended the proposed six new stations and a relocated Theater District station be included in the environmental review. Conceptual engineering on this alignment concluded in spring, 2015.

The project also includes traction power substations, an expansion of the existing Tacoma Link OMF, and the acquisition of additional Link vehicles.

In 2014, pursuant to Motion No. M2014-11, Sound Transit evaluated several potential sites in the vicinity of the existing OMF for expanding the OMF. After consideration of operational and other criteria, the preferred site was determined to be on the property located at 824 E. 25th St., adjacent to the existing OMF, and it was included in the environmental documentation prepared under NEPA and SEPA.

The project completed environmental review in compliance with both NEPA and SEPA with approval of a NEPA Documented Categorical Exclusion (DCE) on June 25, 2015, by the Federal Transit Administration and a SEPA Determination of Nonsignificance (DNS), issued by Sound Transit on July 13, 2015.

The extension of the Tacoma Link system from downtown Tacoma to Hilltop would run primarily along Stadium Way, North 1st Street, Division Avenue, and Martin Luther King Jr., Way (MLK), with new stations at:

- Stadium Way/South 4th Street
- Stadium District
- Martin Luther King Jr. Way/Division
- Martin Luther King Jr. Way/6th Avenue
- Martin Luther King Jr. Way/South 11th Street
- Martin Luther King Jr. Way/South 19th Street

The alignment supports local and regional growth management plans by providing transit service in the Vision 2040 designated urban center of downtown Tacoma. The extension provides high-quality transit service to Tacoma and is expected to carry more than 10,000 daily riders in 2035.

On August 11, 2015, the Tacoma City Council unanimously passed Resolution NO. 39255, recommending to the Sound Transit Board that the project to be built for the Tacoma Link Expansion be the alignment and stations examined in the environmental review.

Future Board actions will authorize final design (Phase Gate 4), authorize property acquisition, baseline the project budget and schedule at approximately the mid-point of final design (Phase Gate 5), and authorize construction at the completion of final design (Phase Gate 6).

PROJECT STATUS

Project Identification	Alternatives Identification	Conceptual Engineering	Preliminary Engineering	Final Design	Construction
			○		

Projected Completion Date for Preliminary Engineering: 4Q 2015

The preliminary engineering cost estimate is approximately \$175 million in Year of Expenditure (YOE\$).

FISCAL INFORMATION

Although the proposed action does not result in a direct fiscal action, it will have subsequent financial impacts as the preferred alternative is implemented in the future.

Funding sources include Sound Transit and the City of Tacoma. Sound Transit has committed \$50 million in ST2 funds and a federal Small Starts Grant of \$75 million is proposed in the President's

budget. The City of Tacoma has signed a term sheet with Sound Transit to provide \$40 million in funding should the project be advanced, of which \$33 million is already secured in grant funding (including the recently announced TIGER grant of \$15 million). Sound Transit and the City of Tacoma will finalize the project funding plan and present a Memorandum of Understanding to the Board at the time of project baselining.

SMALL BUSINESS/DBE PARTICIPATION, APPRENTICESHIP UTILIZATION, AND TITLE VI COMPLIANCE

Not applicable to this action.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

Sound Transit conducted extensive public outreach to inform preliminary engineering and decision on the project alignment, station locations, and Operations and Maintenance Facility expansion by the Board. Public involvement included email notifications, an open house, online surveys, stakeholder roundtables, community and Tacoma City Council briefings.

In summer 2015, additional outreach advertised the availability of the environmental documents and DNS comment period providing the public opportunities for input before the Board's project decision. Outreach included:

- Notification postcard to approximately 14,000 corridor residents and property owners.
- Website, newspaper, and SEPA Register notices of availability received 251,219 impressions.
- E-mail notice to approximately 3,000 interested persons.
- Eight community and agency briefings.
- Participation in three fairs/festivals.
- A 14-day public comment period on the DNS with 36 comments received.
- An in-person open house with 78 attendees.
- A 14-day online open house with 244 site views.

The outreach effort and comments received are summarized in the Public Involvement and SEPA Comment Summary Report, August 2015 which has been provided to the Board.

TIME CONSTRAINTS

A one-month delay would not create a significant impact to the project schedule.

PRIOR BOARD/COMMITTEE ACTIONS

Motion No. M2014-11: Identified the Tacoma Link Expansion light rail alignment to advance into environmental review.

Motion No. M2013-31: (1) Selected E1 – North Downtown Central as the corridor and LRT as the mode for detailed study in the Tacoma Link light rail expansion environmental review, and (2) approved Gate 2 within Sound Transit's Phase Gate process.

Resolution R2008-10: Adopted a revised Sound Transit 2 Regional Transit System Plan.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

JI 11/5/2015

LEGAL REVIEW

PW 11/6/2015

RESOLUTION NO. R2015-22

A RESOLUTION of the Board of the Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority selecting the route, stations, and operations and maintenance facility expansion site for the Tacoma Link Expansion.

WHEREAS, the Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority, commonly known as Sound Transit, was formed under RCW Chapters 81.104 and 81.112 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 Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority district on November 5, 1996 and November 4, 2008, voters approved local funding to implement a regional high-capacity transportation system for the Central Puget Sound region, known respectively as Sound Move and Sound Transit 2 (ST2); and

WHEREAS, Sound Move and ST2 are the first two phases of project and service investments reflected in Sound Transit's Regional Transit Long-Range Plan; and

WHEREAS, the environmental impacts of the Regional Transit Long-Range Plan were evaluated in a plan-level supplemental environmental impact statement (November 26, 2014); and

WHEREAS, ST2, the plan for expanding high-capacity transit in the central Puget Sound region programmed funds, in the form of a capital contribution, for the expansion of the Tacoma Link light rail system if other public or private entities provide matching funds; and

WHEREAS, the Tacoma Link Expansion will expand the Tacoma Link system from the Theater District Station in Tacoma to the Hilltop neighborhood to provide transit access between and within high-growth population areas and employment centers; and

WHEREAS, in August 2012, Sound Transit initiated an Alternatives Analysis process with early scoping under the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) and National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) to solicit comments on the purpose and need for the project, the range of alternatives to be examined, and proposed evaluation criteria; and

WHEREAS, in May 2013, Sound Transit issued the Tacoma Link Expansion Alternatives Analysis Report and SEPA Addendum; and

WHEREAS, on May 23, 2013, following completion of the Alternatives Analysis and SEPA Addendum, the Board identified the E1-North Downtown Central Corridor (Hilltop via the Stadium District) as the preferred corridor and light rail transit (LRT) as the mode for further study in the Tacoma Link light rail expansion environmental review; and

WHEREAS, the Tacoma Link Expansion included extensive community outreach, formal meetings and public comment opportunities to solicit input on the alternative alignments and stations for detailed analysis; and

WHEREAS, on February 27, 2014, the Board identified the route and stations to be studied in detail in the Tacoma Link Expansion environmental review; and

WHEREAS, the project also includes traction power substations, an expansion of the existing Tacoma Link Operations and Maintenance Facility (OMF), and the acquisition of additional Link vehicles; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to Motion No. M2014-11, Sound Transit evaluated several potential sites in the vicinity of the existing OMF for expanding the OMF. After consideration of operational and other criteria, the preferred site was determined to be on the property located at 824 E. 25th St. adjacent to the existing OMF, and it was included in the environmental documentation prepared under NEPA and SEPA; and

WHEREAS, Sound Transit held community and neighborhood outreach meetings to allow citizens and groups to comment on the station locations, design and technical and environmental

analysis to be included in the environmental review. Sound Transit also considered comments from other agencies and local governments to inform preparation of the environmental review; and

WHEREAS, the FTA approved the Tacoma Link Expansion Documented Categorical Exclusion (DCE) on June 25, 2015 in compliance with NEPA; and

WHEREAS, Sound Transit adopted the DCE and issued a SEPA Determination of Nonsignificance (DNS) on July 13, 2015; and

WHEREAS, the adopted DCE and DNS were distributed to the public; affected local jurisdictions, regional, state, and federal agencies; Native American tribes; community organizations; environmental and other interested groups; and interested individuals; and

WHEREAS, Sound Transit provided a 14-day comment period on the DNS, which closed on July 27, 2015. The comment period included an in-person and an online open house; and

WHEREAS, the DCE, DNS and the Public Involvement and SEPA Comment Summary Report, and other relevant documents and materials were provided to the Board for review and consideration before the Board's decision on the Tacoma Link Expansion; and

WHEREAS, the Tacoma Link Expansion will help meet growing transit and mobility demands by providing a transportation system in the E1-North Downtown Central Corridor (Hilltop via the Stadium District), and will strengthen the transportation linkages in the major urban employment and residential centers of downtown Tacoma by providing fast, reliable, all-day transit access to major employment and activity centers; and

WHEREAS, the Tacoma Link Expansion will support the Tacoma adopted land-use plans to create concentrated centers of high-density, mixed-use, and pedestrian-oriented development consistent with the State of Washington Growth Management Act and the Puget Sound Regional Council's transportation and land-use plans (Transportation 2040 and Vision 2040), directing high-capacity transit to centers within communities actively planning for growth; and

WHEREAS, after due consideration of the environmental, social, economic and other relevant factors and information, the Board finds that it is in the best interest of and will best serve the people in the Sound Transit district to select and implement the Tacoma Link Expansion described below.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of the Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority as follows:

Section 1: The route, stations, operation and maintenance facility expansion site, and other features of the Tacoma Link Expansion are described in the following paragraphs:

- A. The alignment extends north from the existing Tacoma Link terminus at the Theater District Station at Commerce and 9th Street via Stadium Way, continues west via N 1st Street and Division Avenue, and then continues south on MLK Jr. Way to S 19th Street.
- B. Stations would be located as follows:
 - Stadium Way/South 4th Street
 - Stadium District
 - Martin Luther King Jr. Way/Division
 - Martin Luther King Jr. Way/6th Avenue
 - Martin Luther King Jr. Way/South 11th Street
 - Martin Luther King Jr. Way/South 19th Street
- C. In addition, one station (Theater District) would be relocated to the median on Commerce Street in the vicinity of the Old City Hall Building.
- D. The terminus of Tacoma Link is north of the MLK Jr. Way/S 19th Street intersection.
- E. The project would include tail tracks at both S 19th Street and the Tacoma Dome Station, where Tacoma Link vehicles could be parked to accommodate approximately 10-minute headways that are planned during the peak period. The project also includes the acquisition of additional Link vehicles.

F. An expansion of the existing Tacoma Link Operations and Maintenance Facility (OMF) on the property located at 824 E 25th Street, Tacoma, adjacent to the existing OMF.

Section 2: Sound Transit will implement the Tacoma Link Expansion consistent with Board policy, and will involve local jurisdictions, businesses, community groups, affected institutions, and the public in its implementation. In addition, Sound Transit will provide opportunities for affected neighborhoods to have input on the design of the Tacoma Link stations and other project elements to ensure cost-effective, community-sensitive design solutions. Sound Transit will continue to work with Pierce Transit to develop integrated transit plans for Tacoma Link, to connect the Link line to the surrounding communities, and encourage Link ridership.

ADOPTED by the Board of the Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority at a regular meeting thereof held on November 19, 2015.


Dow Constantine
Board Chair

ATTEST:


Kathryn Flores
Board Administrator