



# Summary Minutes

## System Expansion Committee Meeting December 8, 2022

### Call to order

The meeting was called to order at 1:30 p.m. by Committee Chair Balducci.

### Roll call of members

Chair	Vice Chair
(P) Claudia Balducci, King County Chair	(P) Kim Roscoe, Fife Mayor

Board Members	
(P) Nancy Backus, Auburn Mayor	(P) Kent Keel, University Place Mayor
(P) David Baker, Kenmore Councilmember	(P) Joe McDermott, King County Council Vice President
(A) Cassie Franklin, Everett Mayor	(A) Dave Somers, Snohomish County Executive
(P) Bruce Harrell, Seattle Mayor	

Alejandro Monzon, Board Relations Specialist, announced that a quorum of the System Expansion Committee was present at roll call.

### Report of the Chair

#### Monthly Contract Report and Agency Progress Report

The meeting packet included the monthly contract report and the October agency progress report.

#### Catenary System Testing for East and Downtown Redmond Link

Chair Balducci shared that she had the opportunity to ride a functioning light rail train from Bellevue to Redmond as testing for the overhead catenary system, which powers the vehicles, is underway. She thanked the team for their hard work and the opportunity to experience riding light rail in East King County.

#### Mercer Island Update

Chair Balducci re-iterated an update from the Executive Committee regarding an agreement between Sound Transit and the City of Mercer Island to settle the current litigation related to the Mercer Island Transit integrations construction that is part of the Agency’s East Link expansion project. This litigation arose in 2020 after disagreements emerged regarding the 2017 Settlement Agreement between Sound Transit and the City that had settled several years of previous disputes.

By settling this current litigation both the City and Sound Transit will avoid significant costs associated with the legal proceedings and including a trial scheduled for February 2023.

Under the terms of this settlement, the City will pay Sound Transit a total of \$2.1 million over two years, and current legal disputes between the City and Sound Transit will be dismissed.

Sound Transit appreciates the significant time our staff and the City staff spent preparing for and participating in good faith negotiations to resolve this dispute.

## **CEO Report**

CEO Timm provided the report.

### WSBLE Open House and Next Steps

CEO Timm announced that the WSBLE team will be holding the first session of a two-part series focused on further studies in the Interbay and Ballard areas with an Open House at Lawton Elementary on December 12, 2022. The second Workshop is scheduled for January 11, 2023.

Additionally, the third Workshop pertaining to the Chinatown-International District will take place on December 14, 2022 and an online survey is live to provide feedback and allow people to get involved.

### Hilltop Tacoma Link Extension

Ms. Timm announced further challenges in the Agency's work to open the Hilltop Tacoma Link Extension. At this point, the project will not open by the end of the Q1 2023, as has been scheduled.

During ongoing system testing and final preparation for service, an issue regarding width of the track installation geometry along one segment of the alignment was identified. Experts have been contacted to provide an independent assessment of the severity of the issue and, possibly, corrective actions for evaluation.

While this is an emerging concern, CEO Timm noted the importance of being transparent as early as possible with the issue. She also stated that Sound Transit is in close contact with the City of Tacoma and is cognizant of the impacts to the local businesses and residents.

### Downtown Redmond Link earns Vision Platinum Award for Sustainable Infrastructure

CEO Timm announced that the Downtown Redmond Link extension has earned a Vision Platinum Award for its sustainable infrastructure. She thanked the team for their work that led to the receiving of the award and expressed hope that it would not be the last.

## **Public comment**

Chair Balducci announced that public comment would be accepted via email to [meetingcomments@soundtransit.org](mailto:meetingcomments@soundtransit.org) and would also be accepted verbally.

### Written public comments:

Bill Hirt  
Denise Moriguchi

### In-person Verbal Public Comments:

Gei Chan  
Betty Lok  
Su Kay

### Virtual Verbal Public Comments:

Joe Kunzler

## **Business items**

### For Committee Final Action

Minutes: November 10, 2022 System Expansion Committee meeting

**It was moved by Boardmember Backus, seconded by Boardmember Baker, and carried by unanimous voice vote that the minutes of the November 10, 2022 System Expansion Committee meeting be approved as presented.**

Motion No. M2022-95: Recommending that the portions of the Proposed 2023 Budget and Transit Improvement Plan reviewed by the System Expansion Committee be forwarded by the Finance and Audit Committee to the Board with a do-pass recommendation.

Chair Balducci asked Ryan Fisher, Deputy Executive Director of Financial Planning, Analysis, & Budget, to begin the staff presentation.

Following the presentation, Chair Balducci thanked the team for their comprehensive work in both preparing and presenting the annual budget.

**Motion No. M2022-95 was moved by Boardmember McDermott and seconded by Boardmember Baker.**

**Chair Balducci called for a roll call vote.**

**Ayes**

Nancy Backus  
David Baker  
Bruce Harrell  
Kent Keel  
Joe McDermott  
Claudia Balducci

**Nays**

**It was carried by unanimous vote of the six members present that Motion No. M2022-95 be forwarded to the Board with a do-pass recommendation.**

**For Recommendation to the Board**

Motion No. M2022-96: Authorizing the chief executive officer to execute a Consolidated Transit Way Agreement with the City of SeaTac to grant Sound Transit non-exclusive use of a light rail transit way within city right-of-way to construct, operate, maintain, and own a light rail transit system.

Vice Chair Roscoe arrived at this time.

Chair Balducci asked Bob Nichols, Light Rail Development Manager for the Federal Way Link Extension, to begin the staff presentation.

Chair Balducci thanked Mr. Nichols and the city staff for their collaborative work to consolidate these agreements. She also asked for clarification on how the city has responded to the request to consolidate. Mr. Nichols answered that the City of SeaTac had already approved the consolidation.

**Motion No. M2022-96 was moved by Boardmember Backus and seconded by Boardmember Keel with a do-pass recommendation.**

**Chair Balducci called for a roll call vote.**

**Ayes**

Nancy Backus  
David Baker  
Bruce Harrell  
Kent Keel  
Joe McDermott  
Kim Roscoe  
Claudia Balducci

**Nays**

**It was carried by unanimous vote of the seven members present that Motion No. M2022-96 be forwarded to the Board with a do-pass recommendation.**

Motion No. M2022-97: Authorizing the chief executive officer to increase the contract contingency with HDR Engineering Inc. for construction management services for the East Link Extension in the amount of \$7,500,000 for a new total authorized contract amount not to exceed \$118,440,000.

Chair Balducci asked Jon Lebo, Executive Project Director for the East Link Extension, to begin the staff presentation.

Chair Balducci asked whether this extension of contingency would be enough to cover the remaining costs for the contracted work on the segment or if staff is preparing to return at a later date. Mr. Lebo responded that he believed this additional contingency would be satisfactory to complete the contracted work.

Boardmember Keel noted that he is relieved that the funds being committed to the contingency have already been allocated to the project budget. Mr. Keel also asked whether any recommendations made by Board Independent Consultant Dave Peters, or the Technical Advisory Group (TAG), were utilized in this decision or are planned to be implemented in the near future. Mr. Lebo clarified that most of what influenced this decision was learned from circumstances with the Northgate Extension project. Ron Lewis, Executive Director of Design, Engineering, and Construction Management, added that staff are still working on implementing recommendations from Mr. Peters in regard to reporting, but the Technical Advisory Group's more construction management-focused recommendations are still in development, although staff have been in close contact with the TAG. Mr. Lewis also noted that some of the practices from the contractor are now being applied to the I-90 segment of the East Link Extension to remedy the previously communicated construction issues.

Chair Balducci responded by brainstorming a way to compare the work performed by different contractors for similar services, as it may be useful data as ST3 Projects begin advancing. Mr. Lewis said this is a part of the process that goes into the initial baselining process, and the committee would have an opportunity to see that in an upcoming baselining action.

Boardmember Keel added that believes management is improving on the rate at which information reaches the Board from the field, and he would like to see that rate quicken with regard to financial cost.

**Motion No. M2022-97 was moved by Boardmember Keel and seconded by Boardmember Baker with a do-pass recommendation.**

**Chair Balducci called for a roll call vote.**

**Ayes**

Nancy Backus  
David Baker  
Bruce Harrell  
Kent Keel  
Joe McDermott  
Kim Roscoe  
Claudia Balducci

**Nays**

**It was carried by unanimous vote of the seven members present that Motion No. M2022-97 be forwarded to the Board with a do-pass recommendation.**

Motion No. M2022-98: Authorizing the chief executive officer to execute contract modifications with HDR Engineering, Inc. to provide additional project development services to complete Phase 2 of the Tacoma Dome Link Extension project, in the amount of \$10,002,573 with a 10-percent contingency of \$1,000,258 for a new total authorized contract amount not to exceed \$93,653,336 contingent upon Board approval of the Proposed 2023 Budget through Resolution No. R2022-35.

Chair Balducci asked Chelsea Levy, Acting Deputy Executive Director of Capital Project Development, to begin the staff presentation. Ms. Levy started the presentation and introduced Curvie Hawkins, Project Development Director, who continued the presentation.

Boardmember Backus inquired about the budgetary infographic in the presentation, as it seems to be missing the allocated funds necessary to commit toward the contract. Mr. Hawkins noted that the funds to be allocated are part of the 2023 System Expansion Budget. Don Billen, Planning, Environmental, and Project Development Executive Director, noted that the table in the prepared Staff Report shows the funds that would be allocated should the Board approve the Proposed 2023 Budget at the Board of Directors Meeting on December 15, 2022.

Boardmember McDermott conveyed that Boardmember Backus's audio cut in and out during her question, but also noted that staff was able to understand the question.

**Motion No. M2022-98 was moved by Boardmember Keel and seconded by Boardmember Backus with a do-pass recommendation.**

**Chair Balducci called for a roll call vote.**

**Ayes**

Nancy Backus  
David Baker  
Bruce Harrell  
Kent Keel  
Joe McDermott  
Kim Roscoe  
Claudia Balducci

**Nays**

**It was carried by unanimous vote of the seven members present that Motion No. M2022-98 be forwarded to the Board with a do-pass recommendation.**

**Reports to the Committee**

Update on Link Projects in Construction and Programmatic Quantitative Risk Assessment Process

Chair Balducci asked Deputy CEO Kimberly Farley to bring the Presentation. Ms. Farley is joined by Eric Beckman, Ron Lewis, and Matt Shelden.

MS. Farley began by framing this presentation as a follow-up to last month's report on the four Link projects in construction, including the results of the Programmatic Quantitative Risk Assessment that was completed this fall. While focusing on the challenges and risks associated with the current construction, Deputy CEO Farley noted that at the end of the report, staff are looking for discussion and questions from Board members to shape further work and analysis.

Ms. Farley reminded Board members that the original schedule for opening the Link Extensions was East Link (mid 2023), Lynnwood (mid 2024), Federal Way (late 2024), and Downtown Redmond (late 2024). In recent months, agency staff have reported on schedule impacts across the Link projects in construction, with each project facing challenges and delays. While the Lynnwood and Downtown Redmond Link Extensions were primarily impacted by pandemic-related stresses and the regional concrete strike, both the East Link and Federal Way Link Extension projects faced unique issues with construction quality and geological instability, respectively.

In response to these challenges, staff performed individual risk assessments on the projects, as well as a Programmatic Quantitative Risk Assessment across all four, to see what paths are ahead for opening these projects as soon and as safely as possible.

Ms. Farley began by stating the importance of planning for East Link to be opened first in the original sequence. Completion of the East Link extension would enable access to the Operations & Maintenance Facility (OMF) East to support the planned tripling of the Light Rail Vehicle fleet to meet the demand of the additional extensions. This will impact service when the 1 Line is extended to Federal Way and Lynnwood.

Deputy CEO Farley shared that a key consideration in the schedule of service openings is the focusing of the activation support team on a single project at a time. In order to safely and effectively open any of the extensions, a six-month period is needed for each one.

Ms. Farley reported that the results of the Programmatic Quantitative Risk Assessment show that the best new option to sequencing the project openings follows the order in which they will be completed. This would have the opening order be re-sequenced to Lynnwood (Summer/Fall 2024), East & Downtown Redmond (Spring 2025), all followed by Federal Way (not yet determined).

In response to the Committee's and Board member requests, the staff reviewed the possibility of opening a portion of East Link, along with Downtown Redmond Link, while construction along the impacted I-90 segment continues. Ms. Farley shared that in their review, the Starter 2 Line would make the most sense running service from South Bellevue to Redmond Technology Station, with service and support from the OMF-East. While opening the Starter 2 Line would allow for some increased efficiency by consolidating pre-revenue service for East and Downtown Redmond Link, it would delay the opening of Lynnwood Link by as much as a quarter. If ultimately feasible and approved by the Board, the scheduled openings could be re-sequenced as Start 2 Line (Spring 2024), Lynnwood (Fall/Winter 2024), a full 2 Line (Spring 2025), and Federal Way (not yet determined).

Regardless of the decision on the Starter 2 Line, opening Lynnwood Link without access to the OMF-East will pose significant challenges to vehicle storage and potential overcrowding on the 1 Line. Ms. Farley stressed the importance of working alongside the agency's partners in Community Transit and King County-Metro to analyze impacts to their services.

Deputy CEO Farley stated the most significant risk identified related to skilled labor, operator and maintenance work shortages. While a national issue that is affecting transit agencies across the country, Sound Transit must double the current hiring rate in key operating positions to meet the needs of the expanded Link system.

At this point, Ms. Farley asked the committee members for questions they need answered prior to a potential action on the Starter 2 Link in January.

Chair Balducci thanked Ms. Farley for the presentation and opened the floor to other committee members to pose questions.

Boardmember Backus asked about the possibility of opening portions of the Federal Way Link extension, north of the impacted area as they open instead of waiting for the full completion of the project. Ms. Farley noted that she doesn't currently have the information but will bring that question back to the team and answer it in the January reports.

Chair Balducci noted that through previous schedule impacts, the agency has always adapted to make completed resources available to the public as soon as possible. She also suggested may be formalizing this unofficial policy.

Boardmember Keel expressed agreement with Chair Balducci on the idea of creating an official policy around opening projects. He also noted a keenness to receive financial information corresponding with resequencing during the reports in January. Boardmember Keel also inquired as to the impacts of implementing the Starter 2 Line on the wider non-Link expansion projects, if any exist. Mr. Keel also noted the importance of teeing up big decisions for Board members.

Chair Balducci noted the significant issue of the inaccessibility of the OMF-East to the main 1 Line once Lynnwood Link is opened. She also requested that staff investigate the feasible operating limits with the reduced capacity due to operator shortages across all the projects, and how those compare to the expected full service.

Ms. Farley answered one of Boardmember Keel's questions, stating that decisions made regarding the Link projects should not have an impact on other Sound Transit work.

Boardmember Baker brought up the opening date of the Bus Rapid Transit S3 line which would connect to a station along the Lynnwood Link extension and reach to East King County. Chair Balducci framed this as a question to staff if there would be any foreseeable impacts on the BRT projects with the rescheduling. Ms. Farley and CEO Timm both expressed that the BRT projects are unlikely to be impacted by the Link project resequencing.

Chair Balducci inquired as to whether conversations have been started with our partners to help coordinate operations. CEO Timm reported that those conversations have begun, especially in regard to Lynnwood Link.

Chair Balducci noted that the current plans in the presentation show no reduction in bus services along the Starter 2 Line but asked if staff would consider freeing up operating capital by truncating parallel bus routes.

Finally, Chair Balducci asked Ms. Farley to summarize the decision staff will ask the Board to make in January. Ms. Farley stated the question is whether the agency should move forward on implementing the Starter 2 Line.

Ms. Timm put forward the idea of having this presentation at the December Board meeting as well. Boardmember Keel agreed and was hopeful to have the full Board briefed.

**Executive session** - None.

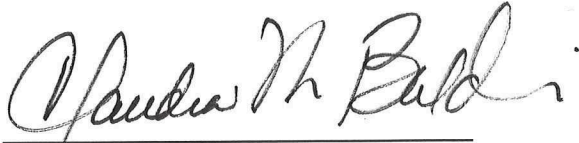
**Other business** - None.

## **Next meeting**

Thursday, January 12, 2023  
1:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.  
Ruth Fisher Board Room &  
Virtually via WebEx

## Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 3:16 p.m.



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Claudia Balducci  
System Expansion Committee Chair

ATTEST:



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Kathryn Flores  
Board Administrator

APPROVED on January 12, 2023, AJM.