



Summary Minutes

System Expansion Committee Meeting January 11, 2024

Call to order

The meeting was called to order at 1:39 p.m. by Committee Vice Chair Roscoe.

The meeting was recorded and can be found at <https://www.soundtransit.org/get-to-know-us/board-directors/livestream-video>.

Roll call of members

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

Board Members	
(P) Nancy Backus, Auburn Mayor (P) Cassie Franklin, Everett Mayor	(P) Bruce Harrell, Seattle Mayor (P) Dave Somers, Snohomish County Executive

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

Report of the Chair

Vice Chair Roscoe announced that Chair Balducci was on her way and would take over chairing the meeting when she arrives.

Monthly Contract Report and Agency Progress Report

The meeting packet included the monthly contract report and the November agency progress report, as well as a link to the Project Performance Tracker.

CEO Report

Chief System Quality Officer Moises Gutierrez provided the report.

Changes to Monthly Contract Reports

Mr. Gutierrez reported that, beginning in February, the monthly contract reports that are supplied to the committees will be replaced with a single report prepared for the full Board meetings. The new report will account for the updated Delegation of Authority policy and include formatting changes to enhance readability.

Activation Update

Mr. Gutierrez reported that the agency expects to announce an opening date for the Overlake Village Station pedestrian bridge in the next few days. Additionally, the Redmond Technology Station Connector Bridge is anticipated to open towards the end of the quarter. Sound Transit is working with Microsoft to coordinate on the exact date.

Operator familiarization of the East Link Starter Line alignment recently completed, and the Agency has advanced work on items identified during testing. Later this month, King County Metro will proceed with simulated service and continue the testing for service. Safety campaigns are also taking place along the new corridor.

Systems integration testing continues on the Lynnwood Link Extension, and the shift to pre-revenue service is expected later this Spring. Mr. Gutierrez noted that conversation with Community Transit and King County Metro continue to work to improve projected transit service in the corridor to supplement Link capacity.

Passenger Impact Portfolio Plan Update

Mr. Gutierrez reported that a planned major service disruption is scheduled to begin on Saturday, January 13th and last through February 4th to allow the Agency to advance several safety and maintenance projects in the Downtown Seattle Transit Tunnel. He recapped the service plan for the disruption, which included single-tracking during the weekdays and bus bridge on the weekends. He emphasized that Sound Transit staff would be at station throughout the disruption to answer questions and help passengers.

Public comment

Vice Chair Roscoe announced that public comment would be accepted via email to meetingcomments@soundtransit.org and would also be accepted verbally.

Written public comments:

John Ho

In-person Verbal Public Comments:

Alex Tsimmerman
Betty Lau
Brien Chow
Ashley-Nichole Holland

At this time, Chair Balducci arrived and gave the instructions for Virtual Public Comment.

Virtual Verbal Public Comments:

Joe Kunzler
Kathleen Barry Johnson
Zakariya Osman

Project Performance Tracker Update

Moises Gutierrez, Chief System Quality Officer, shared that the information for the most recent update to the online Project Performance Tracker is from the end of November 2023 and was updated on January 5, 2024.

Beginning with Projects in Planning, Mr. Gutierrez reported that there were no status changes to report this month.

For Projects in Construction, Mr. Gutierrez noted that there were three status changes. For the Downtown Redmond Link Extension project, the schedule risk status has shifted from red to yellow, due to staff working with the contractor to accelerate portions of work resulting in recuperated scheduled contingency balance. For the Series 2 LRV Fleet Expansion project, Mr. Gutierrez highlighted that the schedule risk has shifted from red to green. This change is driven by the Board's decision in Resolution

No. R2023-35 to re-baseline and amend the project. For the Stride BRT SR 522/NE 145th St. project, the schedule risk status has shifted from green to yellow, due to late permitting-driven design changes leading to new right-of-way requirements which may impact the beginning of construction in some areas.

In concluding, Mr. Gutierrez highlighted two emerging issues. An updated draft opinion of probable cost in support of the Tacoma Dome Link Extensions Draft Environmental Impact Statement continues to be under review. At this stage, the estimate is trending higher than the Finance Plan. Similarly, an updated draft opinion of probable cost in support of the West Seattle Link Extension Final Environmental Impact Statement is under review. It is currently too early to state whether the cost estimate will exceed the Finance Plan, but more should be known later this quarter.

Board member Franklin asked about the update from last month regarding the delay to the next milestone for the Everett Link Extension. Mr. Gutierrez asked Don Billen, Executive Director of Planning, Environmental, and Project Development, to respond. Mr. Billen responded that the delay is an accumulation from the realignment pause and a few instances of delayed decision-making during the scoping period.

Vice Chair Roscoe asked about the statuses of the Operations and Maintenance Facility South project, and whether that could delay the Tacoma Dome Link Extension project. Mr. Billen answered that at the beginning of the project, there was concurrence from the Federal Highway Administration that an Environmental Impact Statement under the National Environmental Protection Act would not be needed. As work progressed, the Federal guidance changed, resulting in the need to prepare an EIS, which has impacted the project's schedule. Regarding cost, he noted the Q4 2023 briefing that staff presented the updated opinion of probable cost and the recovery plan to seek to align the project back towards affordability. He stated that, at this time, the OMF South delays would not impact the Tacoma Dome Link Extension, as the facility is needed to also support the West Seattle Link Extension and Infill Station projects.

Business items

For Committee Final Action

Minutes: December 14, 2023 System Expansion Committee meeting

It was moved by Board member Roscoe, seconded by Board member Backus, and carried by unanimous voice vote that the minutes of the December 14, 2023, System Expansion Committee meeting be approved as presented.

For Recommendation to the Board

Motion No. M2024-01: 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 \$7,000,000 for a new total authorized contract amount not to exceed \$125,440,000.

Jon Lebo, East Link Extension Executive Project Director, gave the staff presentation for this action.

Chair Balducci asked if the additional contingency is sufficient to get the project through to opening or if the Board can expect further increases. Mr. Lebo responded that this contract is specifically for the Bellevue segment of the project and there are other Construction Management Services contracts for the I-90 Bridge segment, which staff expect to bring back to the Board at a later date.

Chair Balducci shared that she had an opportunity to stop by the South Bellevue Station and saw the ORCA ticket machines being stocked.

It was moved by Board member Roscoe, seconded by Board member Backus, and carried by the unanimous voice vote of all committee members present that Motion No. M2024-01 be forwarded to the Board with a do-pass recommendation.

Resolution No. R2024-01: Authorizing the chief executive officer to acquire certain real property interests, including acquisition by condemnation to the extent authorized by law, and to reimburse eligible relocation and reestablishment expenses incurred by affected owners and tenants as necessary for the SR 522/NE 145th Street Stride Bus Rapid Transit project.

Faith Roland, Real Property Director, gave the staff presentation for this action.

Chair Balducci summarized that she had heard some communications from the Sheridan Beach Club Association on working with Staff, and that it appears those concerns were assuaged.

Board member Backus thanked Ms. Roland for proactively addressing whether there were full acquisitions planned.

It was moved by Board member Roscoe, seconded by Board member Backus, and carried by the unanimous voice vote of all committee members present that Resolution No. R2024-01 be forwarded to the Board with a do-pass recommendation.

Reports to the Committee

Status of Implementing the Technical Advisory Group recommendations

Moises Gutierrez, Chief System Quality Office, began the presentation and stated he was providing only a verbal update this month. After the quarterly update from the Technical Advisory Group (TAG) and Dave Peters to the Executive Committee in December 2023, Agency Leadership has opted to engage in a sharp pivot on the direction of the work going forward. This month's update will be statement of the renewed path and commitments.

He reported that work around implementing the recommendations will be centered on three key principles: simplicity, focus, and timeliness. Staff will pare down the amount of the work to directly address the aspects of the recommendations that TAG members believe are the most effective and pressing. Executive Leaders will also be encouraging further transparency by meeting more with TAG members, Dave Peters, and Board members to discuss the work and recommendations.

In addition to working on improved reporting structure to the Board, staff will also "re-baseline" the schedule for implementing the recommendations and share that with the Board and public.

Mr. Gutierrez highlighted that staff are especially focused on improving contracting and payout practices, as well as pushing decision-making down to project staff with proper procedural controls in place.

For Recommendation 1: Rebuilding Trust, staff are developing replicable strategies to communicate staff recommendations to the Board for major project decisions.

For Recommendation 2: Hiring a Mega-project Executive, the sourcing phase is complete, the TAG has reviewed the candidate packets and sent comments to the Board for review. Work with the Chief Human Resources Officer is also underway to prepare the deputy positions that would oversee the ST2 and ST3 programs.

For Recommendation 5: Strengthening the Agency Betterment Policy, staff prepared a memo for Board leadership that is currently under review.

For Recommendation 6: Regarding Federal Partnership, staff continue discussions with FTA on the NEAP milestones through 2027. There is currently agreement on the paths for the Everett Link Extension, Operations and Maintenance Facility North, and Tacoma Dome Link Extension schedules, near agreement on the West Seattle Link Extension and Operations and Maintenance Facility South schedules, and discussions continue on the Ballard Link Extension schedule.

Chair Balducci noted that the new path forward is the result of internal meetings with staff and is hopeful for the future of the work.

Vice Chair Roscoe, referencing a 2023 motion to direct work on the TAG recommendations, asked if there is an expectation that the Board take action on a new motion or if the work continues within those previously approved guidelines. Chair Balducci responded that the previous motion was broad enough to encompass the work and noted that the current improvements are more in line with how to go about implementing the recommendations and reporting the work.

Project in Planning quarterly report

Don Billen, Executive Director of Planning, Environmental, and Project Development, and Chelsea Levy, Deputy Executive Director of Capital Project Development, began the presentation noting that this is a trial run of this planned quarterly presentation, which was introduced as a mechanism to keep the Board aware of Projects in Planning, especially as not all are regularly in front of the Board with actions.

Since ST3, Sound Transit has completed 7 environmental reviews and advanced 8 projects to final design and construction, which includes 6 new light rail stations, 25 new Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) stations, and 56 miles of light rail and BRT.

For Sounder, this has included the Kent & Auburn Parking and Access Improvement projects, the Sound Strategic Plan, and the Auburn Platform Extension feasibility study.

Regarding Light Rail expansion, post-ST3 related planning includes the Federal Way and Downtown Redmond Link extensions and the NE 130th Infill Station. Mr. Billen shared that Sound Transit has the 4th highest ridership light rail system in the country; these expansions would only add to that metric.

For projects currently in planning, Mr. Billen briefly noted that each slide will include the assumed next board action, a cut of the Project Performance Tracker that Mr. Gutierrez presented early, and a few brief notes.

The Lakewood and South Tacoma Sounder Access Improvements were part of ST2 but paused and rescheduled due to financial constraints. Mr. Billen noted that the current preferred alternatives for the projects focus heavily on non-motorized access improvements.

The King Street Station Access Improvements project seeks to enhance areas of the passenger experience and is occurring concurrently with planning for the Ballard Link Extensions project and the Hub improvement plan.

Planning for the Sounder Double-Track and Signal Projects was accelerated due to the receipt of a federal grant last year. Completion of the planning work now will hopefully set up the Agency for being competitive for design and construction grants later on in the project.

For the West Seattle Link Extension, Mr. Billen noted that the Board took action in July 2022 to advance the project to the Final EIS and work continues on completing the environmental review in the hopes of publication in late Spring to prepare the Board to select the project to be built later this year.

The Operations & Maintenance Facility South project plans to publish the Final EIS within the next two quarters to prepare the Board to select the project to be built. Staff are also working on the cost recovery plan to bring the project back into alignment with the Finance Plan.

Just last quarter, the Board approved the start of project development for the Graham Street and Boeing Access Road Infill Stations. Key focuses for staff include staff at the Graham Street Station and the impacts to operations of the existing 1 Line.

Staff expect to publish the Draft EIS for the Tacoma Dome Link Extension later this year to prepare the Board to confirm or modify the preferred alternatives later this year for the Final EIS.

The Board has taken actions to identify preferred alternatives and direct additional feasibility work for the Ballard Link Extension. Staff continue to advance preliminary engineering and additional environmental review and community engagement.

Last year, the Board selected alternatives for study in the Draft EIS for the Everett Link Extension. Staff are also conducting environmental review of the three potential sites identified for the Operations and Maintenance Facility North.

Mr. Billen concluded the informational portion of the presentation by briefly touching on the timeline for Opinions of Probable cost for project expected in the next year.

Mr. Billen asked if there is any feedback and that it may be appropriate to communicate that offline, as the meeting is running long.

Chair Balducci thanked the staff and re-iterated the feedback points for Board members. Vice Chair Roscoe noted that the layout was easy to understand.

Discussion on the 2024 System Expansion Committee Workplan

Chair Balducci briefly walked through the process that goes into the Work Plan and highlighted the Special Topics of Interest to the Committee portion. She noted that the topics currently included were carried over from last year's workplan. She asked fellow committee members to provide feedback on additional topics either to her or to agency staff, while suggesting a briefing on long-term system expansion planning.

Executive session - None.

Other business

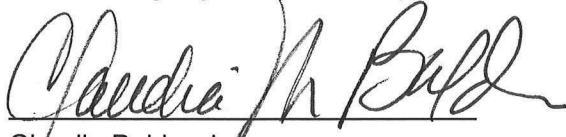
None.

Next meeting

Thursday, February 8, 2024
1:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.
Ruth Fisher Board Room &
Virtually via WebEx

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 3:04 p.m.



Claudia Balducci
System Expansion Committee Chair

ATTEST:



Kathryn Flores
Board Administrator

APPROVED on February 8, 2024, AJM.