



Resolution No. R2024-04

Selecting the Project to be Built for the Lakewood Station Access Improvements Project and Amending the ST2 Plan

Meeting:	Date:	Type of action:	Staff contact:
System Expansion Committee Board	03/14/2024 03/28/2024	Recommend to Board Final action	Don Billen, Executive Director, PEPD Chelsea Levy, Deputy Executive Director – Capital Project Development, PEPD Melissa Flores Saxe, Project Development Director, PEPD Zac Eskenazi, HCT Development Manager, PEPD

Proposed action

Selects the non-motorized and transit improvements to be built to improve access to the Lakewood Station as part of the Lakewood Station Access Improvements Project, amending the ST2 Plan.

Key features summary

- This action defines and selects the bicycle, pedestrian, transit, and station area improvements to be built for the Lakewood Station Access Improvements project. The ST2 Plan originally defined the Lakewood Access Improvements Project as structured parking, but authorized the Board to construct these alternative improvements.
- The proposed scope is a permitted plan amendment to ST2 because, due to changed ridership patterns following the Covid-19 pandemic, the originally contemplated parking garage is impracticable to meet the stated project purpose of enhancing rider access to the station, and structured parking is unaffordable within the allocated project estimate in the financial plan. The proposed scope was included in the voter-approved plan as alternative improvements which still fulfill the stated purpose of enhancing rider access to the station area to the parking garage.
- Sound Transit has completed the conceptual design and engineering of these proposed improvements and an opinion of probable cost, and that information helped inform the staff recommended set of improvements to advance through this action to final design and construction.
- Sound Transit has completed environmental review under the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA). As the SEPA lead agency, Sound Transit determined the project does not have a probable significant adverse impact on the environment and issued a SEPA Determination of Nonsignificance in January 2024.
- The City of Lakewood has agreed with the approach, documented in a Letter of Concurrence signed in April 2023, to do preliminary engineering, final design and construction for all the improvements located in the City right-of-way. The City would own and maintain all improvements located in the City right-of-way. This will be administered through a funding agreement to be approved by the Sound Transit Board of Directors through a future Board action targeted for Summer 2024.

- Sound Transit will do the final design and construction of the improvements located in the Sound Transit right-of-way and the 47th Ave SW bridge sidewalk as identified in the staff recommended list of improvements as this will require additional coordination with WSDOT.

Staff Recommendation

- **Additional Parking:** Project staff are recommending that surface parking not advance further. The global pandemic and work-from-home schedules has changed travel patterns and reduced ridership on existing transit service and demand for parking at some transit centers. In 2019 there were 402 average daily Sounder boardings at Lakewood Station and in 2023 the average daily boardings was 216. Ridership decline has had a corresponding impact on parking demand. While the station's 600-stall parking garage was nearly filled to capacity most weekdays in 2019, today it is only about 28% full midweek, and likely less on Mondays and Fridays, due to work-from-home and hybrid schedules.
- Compared to a weekday average utilization rate at Kent Station of 57% and at Auburn Station at 67% this further demonstrates that parking demand at the Lakewood Station is unusually low and has not reached close to pre-pandemic levels. A surface parking lot at the station was identified as a potential improvement in the alternatives analysis and was studied in Phase 2 but at this time that investment is likely to simply yield additional unused parking.
- These changed conditions in ridership are the primary justification for the recommendation to amend the project scope to build the non-parking alternatives identified as part of the ST2 Plan. Because the current parking facilities are already substantially underutilized, construction of additional parking is impracticable to deliver the enhanced access benefits to riders identified prior the global pandemic. Accordingly, building these alternative access improvements is in the best interest of Sound Transit to deliver the benefits contemplated by the ST2 plan.
- Sound Transit staff recommend that the following non-motorized and transit stop improvements be carried forward for further design and construction and that the surface parking lot not advance:
 - **Station accessibility and safety upgrades** – includes curb ramp retrofits, shelter retrofits, a public address system, addition of bird deterrents and improvements for enhanced accessibility including additional tactile wayfinding at Lakewood Station.
 - **115th St Ct SW trail to station** - adds a multi-use trail in Sound Transit right-of-way from the end of 115th St. Court SW to the pedestrian bridge over the railroad tracks connecting to Lakewood Station.
 - **Bridgeport Way connections via 115th St Ct SW** – adds a pedestrian/bike activated signal, curb ramps and crosswalk at the intersection of Bridgeport Way SW and 115th St. Court SW. On 115th St. Court SW adds sidewalks and curb ramps on the north side of the street and bike sharrows.
 - **47th Ave SW bridge sidewalk** – reconfigures the bridge over I-5 to provide a 5 – 8 foot sidewalk on the west side of the roadway and remove the sidewalk on the east side (may require upgrades to the bridge structure).
 - **47th Ave SW sidewalk connections** – north of the bridge over I-5 adds a southbound bike lane, northbound sharrows, and sidewalks on the west side of 47th Ave. SW. South of the bridge over I-5, adds sidewalks on the west side of the street, bike sharrows, and a mill and overlay of the street.
 - **Station area curb and sidewalk improvements** - improve curbs and sidewalks within a half mile radius of the station area.

- **112th SW connections** – adds sidewalks, curb ramps, gutter, planting strips and bike lanes on the south side between Gravelly Lake Dr. and Highland St. SW and on both sides from Highland St. SW to Bridgeport Way SW.
- **Kendrick St SW connections** – rebuilds Kendrick St. SW from 111th St. SW to 108th St. SW including sidewalks, curb ramps, gutter, lighting, bike lanes and speed humps.
- **Route 206 bus stops and sidewalks in Springbrook** – improves access to
- the Pierce Transit bus route 206 by completing sidewalks and upgrading curb ramps to meet ADA standards on Lincoln Ave. SW, McChord Dr. SW/New York Ave. SW (north side only and raised curb and gravel shoulder on the south side).
- **Clover Creek Dr SW connections** – adds new sidewalks, curbs, signage and railroad crossing improvements between Hillcrest Dr. SW and Pacific Hwy. SW.
- **Pierce Transit Route 206 bus stop at Lakewood Station** – modify the intersection of Pacific Hwy. SW and Bridgeport Way to improve the bus turning radius, which makes a Pierce Transit stop at the station more feasible.
- Additionally, if funding remains, the following set of non-motorized improvements would be delivered:
 - **Davisson Rd SW connections:** rebuild the street and add bike lanes, sidewalks, and curb ramps on Davisson Rd. SW from 108th St. SW to 111th St. SW and Highland St. SW from 111th St. SW to 112th St. SW.
 - **Clover Park High School connections** – rebuild 111th St. SW next to Clover Park High School to include bike lanes, sidewalks and curb ramps from 60th Ave. SW to Highland St. SW.
 - **Springbrook area sidewalk and bike connections** - complete sidewalks, upgrade curb ramps and add bike lanes on Boston Ave. SW, Chicago Ave. SW, San Francisco Ave. SW, 47th Ave SW from 127th St. to McChord Dr. SW, McChord Dr. SW from Bridgeport Way to 47th Ave. SW.
- The current Financial Plan estimate for the project is \$54 million (2023\$). A conceptual engineering opinion of probable cost was developed during Phase 2 of the project and a Quantitative Risk Assessment was conducted. All proposed improvements listed above, combined, do not exceed the Financial Plan estimate for the project. While the list of proposed improvements does not exceed the Financial Plan estimate, the list is further broken down to show a prioritization of improvements to be delivered should actual costs exceed the conceptual cost estimate. However, staff anticipate that the City of Lakewood could realize cost savings on the improvements, for example by not having to pay permit costs. A funding agreement will be developed with more details on the approach for the City to deliver the majority of the proposed improvements. This funding agreement will be brought to the Board later along with a budget amendment and baseline action.

Equity considerations

During Phase 1: Alternatives Analysis, equitable access was built into all evaluation criteria. The three key criteria were:

- Providing a benefit to underserved communities
- Address a major barrier to access
- Proximity to the station

In Phase 1, staff held two online open houses to engage the community in identification of improvements. Staff also met with other community stakeholders. This resulted in the identification of

improvements in underserved communities in Lakewood including many improvements proposed in the Springbrook neighborhood, which is a low-income neighborhood south of I-5 and the Lakewood Station. These improvements will create better non-motorized access to the Lakewood Station and surrounding amenities for this neighborhood. Extensive external engagement was conducted during Phase 2 (see more detail in the Public Involvement section below), including online open houses in Fall of 2022 and 2023, as well as in-person events. The online open house was translated into Spanish and Vietnamese. Staff partnered extensively with the community group Lakewood Connections, which represents residents in the Springbrook neighborhood.

Additionally, the project team completed an abbreviated Racial Equity Toolkit analysis. The outcomes confirmed that the Springbrook community is historically underserved and further supported the decision to site most of these non-motorized investments in this part of Lakewood.

Background

In November 2008, voters approved funding for access improvements to Lakewood Station as part of the ST2 ballot measure to expand mass transit throughout the region. Subsequently, the Sounder Station Access Study was conducted to identify potential access improvements at Sounder stations. However, funding for the Lakewood Station access project was suspended as a result of the reduced revenue during the great recession. The Sound Transit Board restored funding for the Lakewood Station access improvements in November 2020. The Lakewood Station project was able to begin Phase 1 – Alternatives Analysis starting in March 2021. At the conclusion of the Agency realignment process in August 2021, the project was identified as a Tier 1 project to be completed with a target date of 2030 and affordable date 2032.

During Phase 1 – Alternatives Analysis, Sound Transit, in collaboration with City of Lakewood, Pierce Transit, Pierce County and Washington Department of Transportation (WSDOT), assessed current conditions for walking, rolling, and taking transit to and from Lakewood Station. A list of improvements was identified and evaluated, including pedestrian, bicycle, pick-up/drop-off, parking, and transit integration improvements. Equity was emphasized in the goals and criteria used in the evaluation of the proposed improvements. The three key criteria were:

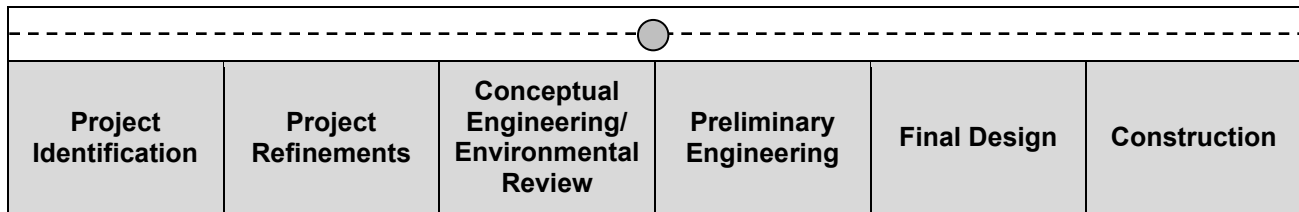
- Providing a benefit to underserved communities
- Address a major barrier to access
- Proximity to the station

At the conclusion of Phase 1, two groups of improvements were identified for further study:

- Priority 1 (higher performing) – these improvements scored high on the 3 key criteria with a focus on providing connections to underserved communities
- Priority 2 (middle-performing) – these improvements scored high on at least 2 of the key criteria with a focus on providing connections to underserved communities

In March 2022, the Sound Transit Board was consulted on the identified list of improvements to bring forward in to Phase 2 – Conceptual Engineering and Environmental. During Phase 2, a conceptual design and conceptual cost estimate were completed on all the proposed improvements on the Priority 1 and 2 list. A Quantitative Risk Assessment was conducted on the conceptual cost estimate. A Value Engineering Workshop was also conducted. Sound Transit evaluated these improvements and issued a Determination of Nonsignificance and supporting environmental documents under the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) on January 16, 2024.

Project status



Project Identification	Project Refinements	Conceptual Engineering/ Environmental Review	Preliminary Engineering	Final Design	Construction
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Projected completion date for Phase 2 – Conceptual Engineering and Environment: 1Q 2024

Project scope, schedule and budget summary are located on page 155 of the January 2024 Agency Progress Report.

Fiscal information

The current cost estimate for the Lakewood Station Access Improvements project is \$54,074,686 in 2023\$ with an assumed in-service date of 2032. As this project is pre-baselined, both the authorized project budget for project development work and a forecasted cost estimate for the remaining project delivery and construction work are reasonably assumed in the existing Long Range Financial Plan forecast.

As described in the Staff Recommendation section, the proposed improvements list has been developed to fit within the Financial Plan estimate. Additionally, there is prioritization of these items should actual costs exceed the conceptual cost estimate. As a result, the defined and selected improvements in this action are affordable within the financial plan.

Disadvantaged and small business participation

Not applicable to this action.

Public involvement

Sound Transit conducted two rounds of outreach during Phase 1 to introduce the project to the public and solicit input. In April of 2021, staff held an online open house to gather ideas for improving station access. In October of 2021, staff released proposals for feedback in an online open house and held a Virtual Question and Answer Session and an information table at Lakewood Station. Staff also gave briefings to local organizations, including Springbrook Connections, Lakewood Boys and Girls Club, Lakewood Library and Clover Meadows Apartments.

Staff conducted two rounds of outreach during Phase 2, to continue to share updates with the community and solicit input as designs advanced. In late 2022, staff held an online open house with detailed information on four key proposals and staffed information tables at the Nourish Mobile Food Bank, the Lakewood Library Pop-Up, and the Springbrook Connections Holiday Giveaway. In fall of 2023, staff solicited input on how to prioritize among the Priority 2 proposals through an online open house. Staff also staffed information tables at the Lakewood Farmers Market, Springbrook Connections Community Meal, and at Lakewood Station. All online open house materials were translated into Spanish and Vietnamese. While the number of survey respondents was small, there was a preference expressed for more non-motorized improvements over surface parking. This helped inform our recommended set of improvements to carry forward.

Time constraints

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

Prior Board/Committee actions

Motion No. M2022-19: Authorized the chief executive officer to execute a contract modification with David Evans & Associates to exercise a contract option for consultant services for the South Tacoma Access Improvements Project and Lakewood Access Improvements Project in the amount of \$4,759,995 with a 10 percent contingency, for a new total authorized contact amount not to exceed \$9,389,853.

Motion No. M2020-68: Authorized the chief executive officer to execute contract modifications with David Evans & Associates Inc. for Phase 1 Alternatives Analysis for the Lakewood Station Access Improvements project and the South Tacoma Access Improvements project in an amount of \$1,448,853 with a 10 percent contingency of \$144,885 totaling \$1,593,738, for a new total authorized contact amount not to exceed \$3,312,627, contingent upon Board approval of Resolution No. R2020-19 and Resolution No. R2020-20.

Motion No. M2018-120: Authorized the chief executive office to execute a Sounder Planning and Preliminary Engineering consultant contract with David Evans & Associates to provide planning and engineering consultant services for the Sounder South Capacity Expansion program in the amount of \$1,562,626, with a 10% contingency of \$156,263, for a total authorized contact amount not to exceed \$1,718,889 plus applicable taxes, and contingent on Board approval of Resolution No. R2018-36 authorizing the Sounder South Capacity Expansion program and establishing program allocation and a 2018 annual budget.

Environmental review – KH 2/28/24

Legal review – MT 3/7/24



Resolution No. R2024-04

A RESOLUTION of the Board of the Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority amending ST2 and selecting the project to be built for the Lakewood Station Access Improvements project.

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;

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;

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;

WHEREAS, the ST2 Plan included access improvements to the Lakewood Sounder Station which primarily consisted of a parking structure but the improvements were suspended due to reduced revenue during the great recession;

WHEREAS, funding was restored for the Lakewood Station Access Improvements project in 2020, and the project was identified as Tier 1 in the 2021 Realignment process;

WHEREAS, a State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) Determination of Nonsignificance (DNS) was issued by Sound Transit on January 16, 2024 for the project.

WHEREAS, the System Expansion Committee and Board were briefed on the Lakewood Station Access Improvements project in March 2022;

WHEREAS, the Board's action to select the Lakewood Station Access Improvements project to be built identified in this resolution is informed by review of the SEPA analysis, comments and input from the public, the City of Lakewood, WSDOT and Pierce Transit;

WHEREAS, the ST2 Plan authorizes the Board to amend the ST2 Plan and the Lakewood Station Access Improvements project to construct identified alternatives to the parking structure to meet rider access demands and needs if the original scope is deemed impracticable or unaffordable;

WHEREAS, due to changed ridership patterns following the unforeseen Covid-19 pandemic, the originally contemplated parking garage is impracticable to meet the stated project purpose of enhancing rider access to the station, and structured parking is unaffordable within the allocated project estimate in the financial plan;

WHEREAS, after consideration of the substantially changed and unforeseen reduced parking demand after the pandemic, and ,environmental, social, economic and other relevant factors, including public and agency comment and environmental review, the Board finds that it is in the best interest of and will best serve the people in the Sound Transit district to amend the ST2 Plan to select and implement the Lakewood Station Access Improvements project described below.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of the Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority that ST2 is amended as follows:

Section 1: The Lakewood Station Access Improvements project to be built is adopted as follows (as described in the SEPA Environmental Checklist and DNS):

The project would be located along and near the Sounder Lakewood Station.

The proposed project would involve construction and operation of the following non-motorized and transit stop improvements:

- **Station accessibility and safety upgrades** – includes curb ramp retrofits, shelter retrofits, a public address system, addition of bird deterrents and improvements for enhanced accessibility including additional tactile wayfinding at Lakewood Station.
- **115th St Ct SW trail to station** - adds a multi-use trail in Sound Transit right-of-way from the end of 115th St. Court SW to the pedestrian bridge over the railroad tracks connecting to Lakewood Station.
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Additionally, if funding remains after the above improvements are designed and constructed, the following set of non-motorized improvements would be delivered:

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ADOPTED by a supermajority vote of the Board of the Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority at a regular meeting thereof held on March 28, 2024.



Dow Constantine
Board Chair

Attest:



Kathryn Flores
Board Administrator