

Summary Minutes

Board Meeting
May 22, 2025

Call to order

The meeting was called to order at 1:32 p.m. by Chair Dave Somers and was available for viewing in person and online.

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

Roll call of members

Chair	Vice Chairs
(P) Dave Somers, Snohomish County Executive	(P) Claudia Balducci, King County Councilmember (P) Ryan Mello, Pierce County Executive

Board members	
(P) Nancy Backus, City of Auburn Mayor	(P) Ed Prince, City of Renton Council President
(P) Angela Birney, City of Redmond Mayor	(P) De'Sean Quinn, King County Councilmember
(P) Shannon Braddock, King County Executive	(P) Kim Roscoe, City of Fife Mayor
(P) Cassie Franklin, City of Everett Mayor	(P) Dan Strauss, City of Seattle Councilmember
(P) Christine Frizzell, City of Lynnwood Mayor	(P) Peter von Reichbauer, King County Councilmember
(A) Hunter George, City of Fircrest Councilmember	(P) Kristina Walker, City of Tacoma Councilmember
(A) Bruce Harrell, City of Seattle Mayor	(P) Girmay Zahilay, King County Council Chair
(P) Ron Pate, Secretary of Transportation Alternate	

Katie Flores, Board Administrator, announced that a quorum of the Board was present at roll call.

Report of the Chair

Monthly Contract Report - The meeting packet included the monthly CEO contract report for April 2024.

Welcome Board member Braddock – Chair Somers welcomed newly appointed King County Executive Shannon Braddock. He noted that the Board is now fully constituted with 18 members and that an action later on the agenda would appoint Board member Braddock to the Executive and Finance & Audit Committees.

Upcoming Board Retreat – Chair Somers shared that the Board would hold a half-day retreat on Thursday, May 29 at the Meydenbauer Center in Bellevue, starting at 10:30 am. The retreat will focus on developing shared principles and priorities to guide the agency's work. He noted that the retreat would be open for public observation but would not be livestreamed due to technology constraints.

CEO Report

CEO Constantine provided the report.

Downtown Redmond Link Extension Opened - CEO Constantine celebrated the opening of the Downtown Redmond Link Extension. The opening day events drew thousands of riders to the first ST3

project to come online. He thanked all those in attendance and highlighted the over 100 community-based organizations which participated in activating the new stations.

COMTO Outstanding Leader Award - CEO Constantine congratulated Board member De'Sean Quinn for his recognition by the Conference of Minority Transportation Officials WA as the recipient as the 2025 Outstanding Leader award. The award recognizes Board member Quinn's exemplary leadership and the significant impact he has made on the chapter.

Daphne Cross hired as Chief Economic Development and Civil Rights Officer - CEO Constantine announced that Daphne Cross has accepted and assumed the role of Chief Economic Development and Civil Rights Officer. Ms. Cross has led the Civil Rights, Equity, and Inclusion department in an acting role over the last year, building on more than two decades of service at Sound Transit. She will work with executive leaders and the CEO to ensure that diversity, equity, and inclusion principles are embedded throughout the agency.

Introducing Penny Lipsou - CEO Constantine introduced to the Board Penny Lipsou, Director of Strategic Initiatives. Among other responsibilities, she will work to ensure strong communication and partnership with the Board, in collaboration with the CEO's office, the Agency Chief of Staff, and the Strategy Department.

Paullando Richards Sustainability Champion Award - CEO Constantine introduced Paullando Richards, Deputy Executive Director of the Quality Division within Agency Oversight and recognized his receipt of the Sustainability Champion Award from his alma mater, Anglia Ruskin University, for his career-long work, most notably for pioneering green track designs during this tenure at the Toronto Transit Commission.

East Link bridge milestone - CEO Constantine shared that the East Link Extension project successfully towed a light rail vehicle across the I-90 bridge yesterday. This kicks-off a series of necessary testing to prepare the extension for eventual service.

Public Comment

Chair Somers announced that the Board was accepting public comment via email and verbally through the virtual meeting platform.

The following people provided written public comment to the Board:

Steve Bose
Brien Chow
Betty Lau
Terry Scidmore and Kelly Finn
Donna Popich and Marilyn Kennell
Bill Hirt
Gale Sketchley
Mayor Victoria Woodards, on behalf of the Tacoma City Council
Paul Sweum
Sue Kay

The following people provided in-person verbal public comment to the Board:

Isabella Wolfhound
Day-Z Gould-Wong
Betty Lau
Brien Chow
Betty Lok

MaryKate Ryan
Paul Sweum
Rachtha Danh

The following people provided virtual verbal public comment to the Board:

Joe Kunzler

Consent Agenda

Voucher Certification: April 2025

Minutes of the April 24, 2025, Board of Directors Meeting

Motion No. M2025-23: Authorizing the chief executive officer to execute an amendment to modify the existing Operating Agreement with the National Railroad Passenger Corporation allowing intercity and interstate passenger service to operate on the Sound Transit-owned Lakewood Subdivision corridor between Nisqually and Tacoma.

Motion No. M2025-24: Authorizing the chief executive officer to execute a contract with PCL Construction Services, Inc. for construction services for the Stride Bus Rapid Transit Bus Base North project in the amount of \$228,344,322 with a 20 percent contingency of \$45,668,864 for a total authorized contract amount not to exceed \$274,013,186.

The consent agenda was moved by Board member Prince and seconded by Board member Birney.

It was carried by the unanimous vote of the 15 Board members present that the Consent Agenda be approved as presented.

Business items

Ratifying Motion No. M2025-25 approved by the Executive Committee on May 13, 2025 to authorize Sound Transit to join pending litigation in which Pierce, King & Snohomish Counties and other jurisdictions challenge the legality of new federal grant provisions barring locally funded efforts to promote workplace diversity, equity and inclusion programs and obligating the agency to use local transit resources to assist with federal immigration and customs enforcement.

Chair Somers noted that the Executive Committee approved Motion No. M2025-25 last week, on behalf of the Board in an emergency capacity. Yesterday, the agency joined the lawsuit along with a number of other jurisdictions to bar the administration from eliminating the agency's DEI programs or require the agency to assist with immigration enforcement efforts.

Chair Somers advised that the Board that should act today to ratify the Committee's approval and remarked on the unfortunate circumstances necessitating the action.

Board member Quinn acknowledged the duty of all Board members to act in the best interest of the agency, and remarked on the importance of ensuring that staff and community see themselves reflected in Sound Transit's work. He highlighted Sound Transit's work to remove barriers that limit access to opportunity and expressed a deep pride in staff and their efforts in service to the region.

Vice Chair Mello added his support and thanked fellow County Executives Somers and Braddock for leading their respective County Transit agencies as original plaintiffs in the lawsuit that Sound Transit intends to join. He criticized the federal regulations being placed on funding as vague and unlawful. In addition to maintaining funding, part of the lawsuit is to prevent punitive damages to the agency and its staff for non-compliance with the vague and unlawful provisions. He shared that over 20 additional jurisdictions have since joined the original eight in the lawsuit.

Board member Braddock added her thanks to all the legal teams involved, stressed that Sound Transit has had a productive relationship with the Federal Transit Administration, and hopes for that to be maintained.

Board member Frizzell thanked all the members for their comments and remarked that all jurisdictions are facing similar correspondence from the administration.

Board member Harrell opined on the collective values and pride that the Board is displaying today. He expressed his support for today's action and noted that similar pushes are occurring on multiple fronts.

It was moved by Board member Braddock, seconded by Board member Birney, and carried by the unanimous vote of the 15 Board members present that Motion No. M2025-25 be ratified.

Motion No. M2025-22: Adopting 2025 performance goals and objectives for Dow Constantine, Sound Transit chief executive officer.

Chair Somers reported that the Executive Committee discussed the action and the CEO goals at its meeting earlier this month and forwarded the action for consideration by the Board. He reminded all that the Board imposed a deadline of May 30, 2025 to establish these goals.

He noted that there were a few potential amendments from different Board members raised during discussion at the Committee, which he incorporated into Substitute Attachment A included in the meeting materials. He also highlighted that the Executive Committee will also plan to conduct routine performance check-ins that will support subsequent decision on performance reviews, future goal establishment, and potentially executing the options to extend the employment agreement. To help orient discussion, Chair Somers asked that a Board member move Motion No. M2025-22 with Substitute Attachment A.

Board member Birney thanked the Chair for working with her on some of the amended language.

It was moved by Board member Birney, seconded by Board member Backus, and carried by the unanimous vote of the 15 Board members present that Motion No. M2025-22 with Substitute Attachment A be approved as presented.

Motion No. M2025-13: Authorizing the chief executive officer to execute four individual 12-month contracts with Crunican LLC, Kenneth L. Johnsen, Roger M. Natsuhara and WSP USA (Charla Skaggs) to provide capital program consultant services in individual contract amounts not to exceed \$100,000.

Vice Chair Balducci described the action and reported on the history of the Technical Advisory Group (TAG). Staff believe there is still valuable insight to be gained from the group of experts, especially as the agency prepares to face acknowledged challenges. She added that she hopes that the TAG recommendations are fully engrained into the agency. The System Expansion Committee considered this action earlier this month and unanimously forwarded the item with a do-pass recommendation.

It was moved by Vice Chair Balducci, seconded by Board member Roscoe, and carried by the unanimous vote of the 15 Board members present that Motion No. M2025-13 be approved as presented.

Motion No. M2025-26: Updating committee members for 2025.

Chair Somers noted this is the action he alluded to in his Report of the Chair. The proposed action would appoint Board member Braddock to the Executive and Finance & Audit Committees for the remainder of her term on the Board.

Board member Backus expressed her excitement to welcome Board member Braddock to the Finance and Audit Committee.

Board member Braddock expressed her excitement to serve on the Sound Transit Board.

It was moved by Board member Birney, seconded by Board member Backus, and carried by the unanimous vote of the 15 Board members present that Motion No. M2025-26 be approved as presented.

Reports to the Board

Presentation on Draft At-Grade Crossing 5-Year Master Plan

Moises Gutierrez, Agency Oversight Deputy CEO, began the presentation by noting that while Sound Transit continuously reviews the system for safety improvements, this work on At-Grade Crossings (AGC) safety was initiated by Board direction in Motion No. M2024-45. He added that a presentation was given in November to provide a status update, and that his team is here today to provide information on two actions planned for next months.

Victoria Morris, Acting Project Director, introduced Andrea Trepadean, Acting Chief Safety Officer, and Hughey Newsome, Chief Financial Officer. Today's presentation would cover the updated Draft Master Plan, provide a summary of the program's projects, detail the budget amendment to be considered next month, highlight regional and internal coordination and engagement, and showcase next steps.

Ms. Morris noted that the AGC Program focuses on near and mid-term projects and covers all current and future operating Link lines and the Sounder Lakewood subdivision. The AGC Program has been especially focused on improvements in the Rainier Valley, as most At-Grade incidents occur in this segment. Long-Term improvements would be handled under future planning efforts in the Strategy Department.

From 2021-2024, the AGC Program, in coordination with Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT), completed 10 enhancement projects in the Rainier Valley and initial analysis of these improvements indicates a 33 percent reduction in pedestrian-train safety events, and a 3 percent reduction in car-train safety events. She noted that additional long-term analysis would be needed to further confirm the effectiveness of the enhancements.

Speaking directly to the Master Plan, Ms. Morris explained that it outlines the near and mid-term projects in the program, provides a transparent process for program and project decisions, and highlights engagement with the public and collaboration with regional partners. She added that the project list will continue to evolve as pilot projects, community and regional feedback, and best practices inform new enhancements.

Since November, the Program was able to consolidate the initial list of 17 projects down to 10 projects, which range from improving signage to leveraging new technology and infrastructure projects. The projected cost to implement the 10 listed projects is roughly \$74.5 million, of which \$3.7 million is already included in the program's budget. The request next month would be for a Budget Amendment for the difference of \$70.8 million. Funding for future enhancements will be included in the annual Budget process. There is no indication that funding this work would negatively impact the ability to delivery other projects, and the Budget Amendment would consolidate six Transit Improvement Plan projects under the AGC Program.

The list of projects is focused on enhancements that can be delivered by Sound Transit and overseen by the Board, while coordination and collaboration with other jurisdictions is also necessary to provide other improvements. Ms. Morris highlighted that several of the improvements most discussed by the Board and the community, such as vehicle speed limit changes, lane reductions, vehicle & pedestrian gates, and adjusting intersections - require action by jurisdictional partners.

Ms. Morris explained that the AGC Program has also developed and begun to implement a 3-Year Communications and Engagement Plan which covers the Master Plan, ongoing safety education and awareness, and project development and construction. She highlighted specific engagement efforts in

Winter 2024/25 and Spring 2025. The engagement efforts have returned positive or neutral response to most of the presented enhancements, except for elevating the volume of train bells. Specifically, there is support for physical barriers, traffic calming measures, grade separation of the tracks, and a preference for improvements that prioritize pedestrian and train movement. She also highlighted future efforts.

Shifting to next steps, Ms. Morris recapped the potential actions that the AGC Program intends to request the Rider Experience & Operations Committee and Board consider next month.

Chair Somers inquired into the estimated cost range on the Automatic Pedestrian Gate Pilot for the Rainier Beach station area. Ms. Morris responded that at the current design level, the AGC Program is relying on Washington State Department of Transportation (WDOT) criteria and guidance on allowances to develop the current cost range, which will be refined if further design is funded.

Board member Walker asked if there is a direct connection between the specific projects being recommended and the areas where strikes are most common. Ms. Morris noted that it is not a one-to-one correlation, but the strike/crash data is one of the criteria used to scrutinize the projects. Board member Walker asked if the specific crash data can be shared with the Board. Ms. Morris noted that some of the detail was included in the appendices, and staff can share additional information as needed.

Board member Birney asked that the maps be updated to account for recent openings, even if at-grade crossing sections aren't affected. She also suggested potentially including the future analysis on tracking the effectiveness of the improvements, as well as the coordination with the City of Seattle in the Rainier Valley into the Plan.

Board member Zahilay thanked the staff for their efforts and work to advance this important work, especially in the Rainier Valley. He asked if Ms. Morris could provide information on the status of discussion with regional partners to potentially implement the larger-scale improvements that are outside of Sound Transit's direct control. Ms. Trepadean responded that the conversations are ongoing and the AGC program has shared the findings with SDOT to support those conversations.

Board member Strauss thanked fellow Board members for their attention to ensuring a productive relationship with SDOT. He stated his gratitude that more recent At-Grade sections of light rail have been built more safely than the initial segment through Rainier Valley and noted his intent to ensure that SDOT is willing to move with the same urgency as Sound Transit in addressing the needs of the Rainier Valley community. He shared an anecdote about a personal vehicle-pedestrian event that has left him in chronic pain and stressed that improvements should do everything possible to protect others.

Vice Chair Balducci asked how Sound Transit compares to other agencies in regard to collisions and at-grade safety events. Ms. Morris responded that Sound Transit performs relatively well, landing in the upper third of agencies. She noted that a document in the appendix has more granular information. Vice Chair Balducci inquired into the most common interactions that result in these collisions. Ms. Trepadean responded that the two most common situations are pedestrians in the trackway when a train is inbound and illegal left turns by cars across the tracks. Ms. Trepadean added that she believes the list of currently identified projects are those most likely to address the most common instances. Vice Chair Balducci asked what else can the Board do to support staff in delivering the most effective enhancements. Ms. Gutierrez noted that staff would seek draw a more direct connection for the Board when the team presents in June on the actions themselves.

Board member Strauss recalled that train-pedestrian incidents used to be more common in Ballard and Northwest Seattle before additional safety fencing was installed. He noted that he would also push SDOT to move forward with supporting the Pedestrian Gates.

Tacoma Dome Link Extension DEIS Public Comment report

Lauryn Douglas, Tacoma Dome Link Extension Planning Director, provided the presentation. She was joined by High-Capacity Transit Development Managers Diane Wiatr and Kathy Leotta. Ms. Douglas explained that the presentation would review the key findings from the DEIS, report on the 60-day comment period, and preview the staff recommended preferred alternatives and other routes/stations for study in the Final Environmental Impact statement.

Ms. Douglas briefly recapped the project's history and noted that key upcoming milestones include the Board action to identify/modify the preferred alternative in June 2025 and publication of the FEIS in 2027. The project includes roughly 10 miles of alignment and four stations, 500 parking stalls at the Fife and South Federal Way stations (to be completed by 2038), and a light rail bridge over the Puyallup River.

She spoke to the overall comments from the DEIS comment period and noted that Ms. Wiatr and Ms. Leotta would cover segment-specific comments in their respective segments. Sound Transit held an extended 60-day comment period from December 13, 2024 to February 10, 2025. During that time, the agency hosted three in-person public meetings, an online public meeting, and an online, interactive open house. Individual conversations were also extended to property owners along the corridor. Ms. Douglas spoke to the numbers and types of interactions and highlighted critical engagement with the Puyallup Tribe of Indians and noted that their input will be essential to the project.

Along the entire project corridor, Ms. Douglas reported that most comments/engagements showed support for the project, desire to build the project sooner, concerns around impacts to wetlands and property displacements, concern over construction impacts and business access, desire to ensure close Tribal coordination, desire for multimodal transportation integration for each station, and jurisdictional concerns about parking. Before handing off the presentation, Ms. Douglas explained that she will move through the segments, report on key comments, and offer the staff recommendation for preferred alternatives. She highlighted that today's verbal remarks would be pared down from those provided to the System Expansion Committee earlier this month, but the full presentation has been included.

In the South Federal segment, there are four alignment and five station alternatives. There is currently no preferred alignment or station in the segment. The alignment alternatives along I-5 impact highly sensitive cultural resources that the Puyallup Tribe has explained that no amount of mitigation would be sufficient to resolve impacts. Comments primarily raised concerns about business displacements near station sites and shopping centers, Pacific Highway closures during construction, and displacements at mobile home parks. Overall comments also included community support for TOD surrounding the stations and concerns about potential impacts to the West Hylebos Wetlands. Staff's preliminary recommendation is for the Board to identify the 99-West alternative, with the design refinement, and the 99-352nd station as the preferred alternative in the South Federal Way segment.

In the Fife segment, there are three elevated alignment alternatives and three station alternatives in the segment. The alignments along Pacific Highway received comments highlighting concerns about construction impacts to businesses, specifically to Pick-Quick Drive In. The I-5 alignment alternative received comments with concerns about visual and visibility changes along I-5. And the stretch of alignment to the East of the potential station received comments raising concerns about impacts to St. Paul Chong Hasang parish and WSDOT's Hylebos Riparian Restoration Program. The preliminary staff recommendation in the Fife segment is for the Board to identify the Fife I-5 alignment and confirm Fife Station as the Preferred Alternative.

There are three sections of the Tacoma segment: the Puyallup River bridge, Portland Avenue station, and Tacoma Dome station. Ms. Douglas noted that Sound Transit recognizes the treaty rights afforded to the Puyallup Tribe and the project is actively engaging with the Tribe on this key area of the projects.

Staff are not offering a preliminary recommendation on the bridge and further coordination with the Tribe is crucial to this area.

Comments in the Portland Avenue station section highlighted concerns about transit access, general safety, and construction impacts. The eventual station design is highly contingent on the type of bridge constructed to cross the Puyallup River. The preliminary station recommendation is to confirm the Portland Avenue Station as the preferred alternative.

There are four station and alignment alternatives in the Tacoma Dome section of the segment, with the Tacoma 25th Street-West alternative identified as the preferred alternative. Comments in this section raised concerns about impacts to Freighthouse Square, the T Line and E 25th Street, and the Amtrak/Sounder station. Overall, the comments focused on seamless transit connections between bus services, Sounder, Amtrak, T Line, and Link as a regional transit hub. Other comments highlighted a desire to prioritize passenger experience and safety and accessibility in the station vicinity. The preliminary recommendation is to modify the preferred alternative to the Close to Sounder alignment and station alternative.

Ms. Douglas concluded the presentation by re-iterating the next steps including potential action next month on the alternatives to study in the FEIS.

Vice Chair Mello thanked staff for their work on addressing community impacts and for their earnest commitment to partnership with the Puyallup Tribe of Indians. He also asked that staff have more detail on the business impacts in Milton during the June discussions. He added that he believes the Preferred Alternative is moving the right direction, and simply wants that information highlighted.

Board member Birney thanked staff for the opportunity to tour the alignment. She also thanked staff for being thoughtful about impacts to mobile homes parks and affordable housing as previous ballot measures didn't have those concerns at the front of mind.

Executive Session – None

Other business – None

Next meeting

The next regular Board meeting would be held on June 26, 2025, 1:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. in the Ruth Fisher Board Room and as a virtual meeting via Zoom.

The Board will also hold its annual retreat on May 29, 2025, 10:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. in the Meydenbauer Center in Bellevue, Washington.

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 3:26 p.m.



Dave Somers
Board Chair

ATTEST:



Kathryn Flores
Board Administrator

APPROVED on June 26, 2025, AJM.