



Summary Minutes

Rider Experience and Operations Committee Meeting November 6, 2025

Call to order

The meeting was called to order at 1:02 p.m. by Committee Chair Walker 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 Chair
(P) Kristina Walker, Tacoma Councilmember	(P) Ed Prince, Renton Council President

Board Members	
(A) Angela Birney, Redmond Mayor	(P) De'Sean Quinn, King County Councilmember
(P) Christine Frizzell, Lynnwood Mayor	(A) Peter von Reichbauer, King County Councilmember
(P) Hunter George, Fircrest Councilmember	(P) Girmay Zahilay, King County Council Chair

Hunter Rancipher, Board Relations Specialist, announced that a quorum of the committee was present at roll call.

Report of the Chair

Chair Walker noted that the committee will not be receiving a REO Metrics presentation from staff, but that the standard monthly performance report is included in members' packets.

CEO Report

CEO Dow Constantine provided the report, noting that simulated service had begun on the Federal Way Link Extension, with a media availability on November 30, 2025, featuring Board members Backus, Quinn, and von Reichbauer, and that system integration testing has begun on the I-90 Floating Bridge. CEO Constantine also thanked Pierce Transit CEO Mike Giffith for his welcome as CEO Constantine attended Pierce Transit's all-staff meeting.

Public comment

Committee Chair Walker announced that public comment would be accepted via email to emailtheboard@soundtransit.org, in person, and would also be accepted virtually.

The following people provided written comments:

Kelli Refer
Unnamed Commenter

The following person provided verbal public comment:

Zakariya Osman

The following person provided virtual public comment:

Joe Kunzler

Business Items

For Committee final action

October 2, 2025, Rider Experience and Operations Committee meeting minutes

It was moved by Committee Vice Chair Prince, seconded by Board member George, and carried by the unanimous vote of all committee members present that the minutes of the October 2, 2025, Rider Experience and Operations Committee meeting be approved as presented.

Motion No. M2025-55: Recommending that the portions of the Proposed 2026 Budget and Transit Improvement Plan reviewed by the Rider Experience and Operations Committee be forwarded by the Finance and Audit Committee to the Board with a do-pass recommendation.

Ryan Fisher, Finance Executive Director, Jenny Stephens, Financial Planning, Analysis, and Budget Director, and Stephanie Ball, Financial Planning, Analysis, and Budget Director, provided a presentation on the action.

Chair Walker asked for clarification on where Resiliency Effort investments were reflected in the proposed 2026 budget. Ms. Ball responded that such investments are included in both the operating and capital expansion portions of the budget. Mr. Fisher said that there were specific projects highlighted in infrastructure portfolio investments portion of the budget presentation, but that other Resiliency Effort investments are included in other areas.

Chair Walker asked where State-of-Good-Repair (SOGR) work falls within the budget. Ms. Ball responded that SOGR work is reflected in various portfolios under the Service Delivery Programs portion of the budget.

It was moved by Committee Vice Chair Prince, seconded by Board member Quinn, and was carried by the unanimous vote of all committee members present that Motion No. M2025-55 be approved.

For Recommendation to the Board

Motion No. M2025-56: Authorizing the chief executive officer to execute a contract with MV Transportation Inc. to provide Stride Bus Rapid Transit Contracted Service Provider services in the amount of \$431,597,114, with a contingency of \$2,000,000 for a total authorized contract amount not to exceed \$433,597,114.

Rick Capka, Bus Rapid Transit Executive Project Director, Lucien Bruno, Bus Rapid Transit Operations Deputy Program Executive, and Benjamin Marx, acting Service Delivery Operations Executive Director, provided a presentation on the action.

Board member Frizzell asked for clarification on whether the action included funding for the option years of the contract. Mr. Bruno responded in the affirmative. Board member Frizzell asked for clarification on the scope of work included in the first two years of the contract. Mr. Bruno explained that all Phase One and Phase Two work, which includes vehicle inspections and testing, finalizing staff and vehicle readiness, and establishing operator assignments for revenue service, would be the scope for the first two years.

Board member Quinn asked what contract compliance actions would look like if the contracted service provider did not adhere to the labor practices provisions of the contract. Chris Elwell, Labor and Workforce Development Executive Director, noted that there are provisions that would allow Sound Transit to terminate the contract if the service provider was found to not comply with the labor standards outlined.

It was moved by Board member George, seconded by Board member Quinn, and was carried by the unanimous vote of all committee members present that Motion No. M2025-56 be forwarded to the Board with a do-pass recommendation.

Reports to the Committee

Regional Fare Forum Summary and Discussion

Meg Cederoth, Strategic Planning, Policy, and Programs Executive Director, and Chad Davis, Fares Director, provided the report.

Mr. Davis provided an outline of the Regional Fare Forum, a meeting of various ORCA agencies to align regional fare policy for a ten year period. The Forum is tasked with collaborating to ensure clear policy directions and recommendations on individual and regional fare policy decision-making, definition of priorities to drive future ORCA implementation, and commitment to work with governing bodies to examine opportunities to advance policy alignment changes.

Mr. Davis gave a summary of the forum's recommendations across three categories: Values, Outcomes, and Actions. The values recommendations provide a list of guiding principles to assist in the development of new fare policy. Outcomes recommendations include key provisions of prioritizing (1) Eligibility and enrollment, (2) Fare Alignment, and (3) Affordability. The Actions recommendations provide a roadmap of key actions that would allow individual agencies within the ORCA network to move swiftly in accomplishing the outcomes previously noted.

Chair Walker noted that she, as well as Board members Frizzell and Quinn, served as delegates to the Regional Fare Forum, and invited them to provide any comments on the experience of participating. Board member Frizzell reflected on the broad spectrum of groups represented within the Forum and noted that while the group may not have come to consensus on all issues, all parties had the opportunity for their voices to be heard. Board member Quinn noted his appreciation for the facilitation of the Forum's meetings and also highlighted the importance of regional collaboration as different agencies navigate the complexity of the regional transit network. Chair Walker highlighted the fact that many members of various agencies had spent a significant amount of time working in the Forum, and that while this group is usually convened every 10 years, that there is a desire to have more frequent touchpoints to allow for better tracking of the implementation of the Forum's recommendations over time.

Chair Walker asked if the final Regional Fare Forum Report had been distributed to the Sound Transit Board. Mr. Davis responded that he was unsure if it had been distributed. Chair Walker requested that if not done so already, that the report be distributed to the full Sound Transit Board.

Q3 Fare Engagement Update

Brian de Place, acting Security and Fare Engagement Executive Director, and Tanya Starke, Frontline Passenger Support Deputy Director, provided the report.

Ms. Starke provided an overview of the presentation, which includes the Fare Ambassador (FA) program's staffing levels, fare compliance data, and additional program updates.

Mr. Starke noted that the FA program currently has 26 staff, with a further 10 employees currently being onboarded to backfill previously open positions. She further noted that an additional hiring process is underway with the goal of onboarding an additional 15 FAs. Once those new positions are filled, the

program would have a staffing total of 51. Ms. Starke provided additional details on the training regimen for new hires, which include approximately 200 hours of training, consisting of a mix of internal training, external subject matter expertise training, and more than 40 hours of in-field shadowing.

Mr. de Place provided information on program Fare Inspection compliance, which has steadily increased to 93 percent, with approximately three percent of overall ridership inspected on a given month. He noted that fare media compliance is considerably lower, at approximately 70 percent, though both are trending upwards. Mr. de Place noted that the physical presence of FAs in the system may help promote fare inspection compliance where seen, but that additional work is needed to increase overall fare media compliance. Mr. de Place highlighted that FAs provide passenger support during service disruptions, with FAs responding to 59 service disruptions in 2025 thus far.

Ms. Starke provided a summary of additional program updates, including the development and implementation of new uniforms for FAs, safety mitigation work in the form of a Radio pilot program and improvements via the Cell Tunnel Connectivity Project, as well as future plans for zone-based deployments and developing work on fare compliance for Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) service.

Board member Quinn asked how FA hiring and training interfaces with the Safety Task Force. Mr. de Place responded that Safety Task Force recommendations are being implemented within the FA program to enhance system safety and responsiveness.

Chair Walker noted that BRT is being worked on as a future step for the FA program and asked for clarification on the program's current role relating to ST Express buses. Ms. Starke responded that FAs do not inspect fares on ST Express buses, and that conversations are ongoing with the Stride BRT team to discuss what fare compliance efforts and staffing should look like on BRT service.

Chair Walker asked whether conversations on BRT fare compliance policy would then extend to ST Express busses as well. Mr. de Place responded that ST Express buses are not currently included in the scope of conversations about fare compliance work on BRT.

Passenger Impact Program

Kevin Mizuta, Link Right-of-Way Access Deputy Director, provided the report.

Mr. Mizuta reported that work scheduled for Q4 2025 included continued construction on the Pinehurst Station stairwell, which was delayed in October. Resuming December 3, 2025, single tracking on weekdays will occur from 7 p.m. to the end of service. SCADA switch upgrades at Beacon Hill Station on October 26, 2025, which will result in a full day closure of the station with a bus-bridge between SODO and Mt. Baker Stations for impacted riders. A 12-hour closure of UW and Capitol Hill Station will occur on November 8, 2025, for switch upgrades, with a bus bridge being provided during the disruption period.

Mr. Mizuta noted that a full closure of the Downtown Seattle Transit Tunnel will occur on Sunday, November 16, 2025, to repair cracked rails near Westlake Station. While this repair work is ongoing, additional East Link connection work will take place. A bus bridge will provide replacement service between Stadium and Capitol Hill Stations, with regular service resuming the morning of Monday, November 17, 2025.

Mr. Mizuta reported that the first extended monthly maintenance window, resulting in the closure of Link service between Angle Lake and Rainier Beach Stations from 11 p.m. to the end of service on October 21-23, 2025, was successfully completed. He noted that two additional maintenance windows have been planned; service between SoDo and Capitol Hill Stations will be closed at 11 p.m. from November 18-20, 2025, and service between Capitol Hill and Northgate will be closed at 11 p.m. from December 2-4, 2025.

Mr. Mizuta gave information on signal upgrades necessary for the opening of the East Link Cross Lake Connection, which will result in extended non-revenue periods in the DSTT from 10 p.m. to 11 a.m. the

following morning on the following days: Friday, December 12, 2025; Saturday, December 20, 2025; Saturday, December 27, 2025; and two full weekends in January which are currently in planning.

Board member Birney asked what additional service is being provided to assist in the expected crowds resulting from various large-scale events over the weekend. Benjamin Marx, acting Service Delivery Operations Executive Director, responded that ongoing planning efforts are taking place to provide additional service across all modes. He specifically noted that agency partners at King County Metro have committed to provide additional Link service, and additional Sounder service has been planned in coordination with BNSF. Further conversations with operating partners at Pierce Transit and Community Transit is ongoing to potentially provide additional ST Express bus service.

Vertical Transportation Update

Shankar Rajaram, acting Asset Management and Core Infrastructure Executive Director, and John Carini, Vertical Conveyances Deputy Director, provided the report.

Mr. Carini outlined the agency's current Vertical Transportation (VT) portfolio and additional assets that will be brought online with new extensions opening. He noted that there are currently 249 VT assets, split between 109 escalators and 140 elevators, with a further 15 and 10 assets being added with the Federal Way Link Extension and East Link Cross Lake Connection, respectively. Mr. Carini described the growth in the VT portfolio over time, with the number of assets increasing from 71 in 2015 to an expected 575 assets by 2041.

Mr. Carini discussed the primary causes of VT asset outage. He noted that there are six categories that track unplanned VT outages: Misuse, vandalism, environmental, power, mechanical, and accidents. Of those categories, the majority of outages come from misuse, at 35 percent, and mechanical failure, at 31 percent. Mr. Carini noted that availability and performance targets for VT assets are at 97 and 95 percent for elevators and escalators, respectively. This compares to an actual 2025 year-to-date performance of 98.3 and 96.6 percent, respectively.

Mr. Carini highlighted the trends of VT asset outages, showcasing that while the number of assets has expanded dramatically between 2022 and 2025, the raw number of out-of-service hours has fallen from 147,223 in 2022 to only 43,217 in 2025. He then outlined the primary operations and maintenance challenges for the VT program, which include continued growth and standardization of assets, qualifying new technicians, and global supply chain constraints.

Mr. Carini shared current improvements that are being made to the VT program, including live real-time equipment monitoring, enhanced communications, data gathering and analysis efforts, annual deep cleaning, and the VT modernization program for end-of-life assets.

Chair Walker and Board member George both shared their happiness in seeing the large-scale improvements to the VT program over time, recalling previous issues that were regularly highlighted with the agency's escalators and elevators.

Chair Walker noted the annual deep clean project that is in progress for the VT program and asked what the current cleaning schedule looks like for VT assets. Mr. Carini responded that various custodial contracts are currently responsible for the day-to-day cleaning of both escalators and elevators across the system, and that the deep cleaning contract provides the ability for a more in-depth response that includes graffiti and etching removals.

Chair Walker noted that the budget included additional spending in anticipation of increased ridership for the World Cup, asking whether the VT maintenance and cleaning contracts have enough capacity to meet the needs of the system or if additional contracts will need to be brought before the Board to assist. Mr. Carini responded that current contracts are expected to ramp up at key stations and are currently projected to meet the needs of increased ridership during the World Cup.

Executive session – None

Other business

Chair Walker noted that public comments raised concerns regarding the 2026 Service Plan Survey, particularly surrounding ST Express route 542. Chair Walker asked that staff encourage members of the public to take the survey and asked when the Committee will receive information on the results of the survey. Emily Yasukochi, System and Service Planning Director, responded that the 2026 Service Plan Survey is still open until November 11, 2025, and that staff is actively promoting the survey through social media and other methods. She further responded that the Committee would receive a summary of the survey's results in January 2026, with an action on ST Express changes occurring in March 2026.

Next meeting

Thursday, December 4, 2025

1:00 to 3:00 p.m.

Ruth Fisher Boardroom and Virtually via Zoom.

Adjourn

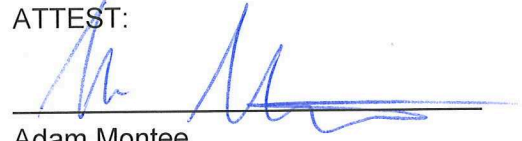
The meeting adjourned at 2:28 p.m.



Kristina Walker

Rider Experience and Operations Committee Chair

ATTEST:



Adam Montee,

On behalf of Katie Flores

APPROVED on December 4, 2025, HRR.