



Summary Minutes

Rider Experience and Operations Committee Meeting March 5, 2026

Call to order

The meeting was called to order at 1:01 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	(A) Ed Prince, Renton Council President

Board Members	
(P) Claudia Balducci, King County Councilmember	(P) Teresa Mosqueda, King County Councilmember
(P) Steffanie Fain, King County Councilmember	(P) David Parshall, Lynnwood Councilmember
(P) Hunter George, Fircrest Councilmember	(A) Peter von Reichbauer, King County Councilmember

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

Report of the Chair

Chair Walker provided the report, noting that the monthly REO Metrics performance report was included in committee members' packets for their reference, and that the REO committee work plan was updated to include topics of special interest identified by committee members at the February 5, 2026 REO meeting.

CEO Report

Federal Grant Funds

CEO Constantine thanked Senators Patty Murray and Maria Cantwell, as well as other federal partners for securing \$8.4 million in federal funds to support Seattle-area transit agencies in the lead up to the 2026 World Cup. He noted that these investments will allow the agency to ensure that visitors to the region have a positive experience during the event.

Stride S3 Groundbreaking

CEO Constantine highlighted the recent groundbreaking for the Stride Bus Rapid Transit S3 Line.

System Operations

Ed Cobean, Transit Operations Deputy CEO highlighted recent successes in system operations, noting the reliability of the system during the Seahawks parade, which saw record breaking Link and Sounder ridership figures at 220 thousand and 20 thousand, respectively.

Board member Balducci asked if any information could be given on a recent disruption to 2 Line service. DCEO Cobean responded that a disruption was caused to damage in the Overhead Catenary System, which forced service to be suspended. A Bus Bridge provided redundant coverage in the affected areas while crews identified the root cause and made repairs. Analysis determined that improperly tightened wire clamps on the OCS collided with a train's pantograph, causing the damage. A systemwide review of those clamps was conducted to prevent any future reoccurrence.

Board member Fain asked for additional details on how the federal funds will be utilized. Agency Chief of Staff Calli Knight responded that a work plan has been established on how the funds will be distributed and utilized, and that she would follow up at a later date with further details. Board member Fain asked whether Sound Transit is receiving the entirety of the funds. CEO Constantine responded that the funds will be distributed amongst the different transit agencies throughout the Puget Sound region.

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 person provided written public comment:

Paul R. Sweum
Betty Lau
Brien Chow
Paul Pitkin

The following people provided in-person public comment:

Kirk Hovenkotter
Jack Whisner

No virtual public comments were received.

Business Items

For Committee final action

February 5, 2026, Rider Experience and Operations Committee meeting minutes

It was moved by Board member Mosqueda, seconded by Board member George, and carried by the unanimous vote of all committee members present that the minutes of the February 5, 2026, Rider Experience and Operations Committee meeting be approved as presented.

Motion No. M2026-10: Authorizing the chief executive officer to execute a five-and-a-half-year lease agreement with two one-year options with DM VENTURES FW Center, LLC consisting of 13,418 rentable square feet of space on the fifth floor at 2505 S 320th St. in Federal Way, in an amount not to exceed \$3,895,093.

Mike Bauck, Infrastructure Asset Management Director, and Well Lawson, Real Estate Deputy Executive Director, provided a presentation on the action.

Board member Balducci asked what alternative would be needed if this lease was not executed. Mr. Bauck responded that in such a case, all maintenance staff would need to operate and deploy from OMF Central, which would result in incident response times between 30-60 minutes, and a potential for up to two-hour gaps between shifts. DCEO Ed Cobean emphasized that allowing this lease would be a strategic move that would better allow crews to respond to incidents and maintain a high level of service in the case of any problems in the southern part of the 1 Line.

Board member Fain asked for additional context on the use of space. Mr. Bauck responded that the space will have office spaces for up to 90 staff members, as well as storage space for tools and equipment to be used in the regular course of field maintenance activities.

Chair Walker asked whether this lease would constitute an ongoing expense past this initial lease term. Jenny Stephens, Financial Planning, Analysis and Budget Director, responded that the lease was a temporary solution until a permanent Maintenance of Way South Facility could be built.

It was moved by Board member Balducci, seconded by Board member George, and was carried by the unanimous vote of all committee members present that Motion No. M2026-10 be approved.

For Recommendation to the Board

Resolution No. R2026-04: Adopting Part Two of the 2026 Service Plan and approves major service changes to ST Express routes.

Emily Yasukochi, System and Service Planning Director, provided a presentation on ST Express changes for the 2026 Service Plan.

Chair Walker asked for a reminder as to why this was being approved at this point, rather than in the Fall of 2025. Ms. Yasukochi responded that the usual Fall approval cadence is based on a desire to implement major service changes in the Spring of the following year, but in this case staff desired to implement changes to ST Express service in the Fall of 2026.

Board member Balducci noted that with the discontinuation of Route 550, service along Bellevue Way would be lost, and asked how the agency is ensuring that the corridor still receives service going forward. Ms. Yasukochi responded that changes proposed to Route 556 would have that route stop at current Route 550 stops along Bellevue Way.

Board member Balducci noted that proposed changes to Routes 554 and 556 show a loss of coverage across the SR-520 bridge and on the east side of Lake Sammamish, and asked what service would serve that area going forward. Ms. Yasukochi responded that service along both areas would be maintained by King County Metro routes.

Board member Balducci asked if there would be any ability to increase frequency and connections of ST Express Route 522 to Woodinville. Ms. Yasukochi responded that staff could look into increasing service on the eastern portion of Route 522 but may have cost barriers due to operator and vehicle availability.

Board member Balducci asked for additional detail on what the Overnight Bus service proposals would look like in practice. Ms. Yasukochi responded that terms of service operations are still being finalized, but each route would mirror current Link light rail stops or stops currently served by current ST Express routes.

Board member Fain noted that Title VI analysis found disproportionate burdens for the proposed changes to Route 574, and that staff's mitigation was increased service on Link. She asked for a response to public feedback on Route 574 raising concerns about travel time between SeaTac Airport station and the terminal. Ms. Yasukochi responded that a shuttle service provided by the Port of Seattle operates between the station and terminal and will be maintained following the ST Express changes, and noted that the current bus stop is located at the end of the arrivals terminal, which in some cases has an equal walking distance to a passenger's destination in the terminal. Chair Walker added that she has experienced the trip both by using the 574 stop and via the Link station and noted that using the Link station was a more positive experience in her view.

Board member Fain asked why the 2023-2026 timeframe was used for the Title VI equity analysis. Ms. Yasukochi responded that the timeframe is based on FTA guidance.

Chair Walker asked whether the intention is to move back to the usual Fall cadence for service plan approvals going forward. Ms. Yasukochi responded in the affirmative.

It was moved by Board member Balducci, seconded by Board member Mosqueda, and was carried by the unanimous vote of all committee members present that Resolution No. R2026-04 be forwarded to the Board with a do-pass recommendation.

Reports to the Committee

Resiliency Effort Update

Shankar Rajaram, acting Core Infrastructure and Asset Management Executive Director, provided the report, summarizing resiliency work completed since December 2025 and trends in unplanned disruptions.

Mr. Rajaram highlighted that an additional nine recommendations from the Resiliency Report have been implemented, with a further 14 recommendations to be completed before the start of the 2026 World Cup in June.

Mr. Rajaram discussed the trends in unplanned disruption hours, noting that in 2024, the agency experienced an average of 38 hours of unplanned disruptions per month, which dropped to 15 per month in 2025. He noted that January 2026 was the lowest on record, with only 6 hours of disruption for the month, halving the previous Q4 2025 average of 12 hours. Mr. Rajaram noted that several efforts have been made to decrease response time and better isolate incidents from impacting the system at large, which decreases the overall disruption time.

Mr. Rajaram highlighted improvements in Series 2 Light Rail Vehicle reliability, based on the average distance between delays for a vehicle. In 2023, a Series 2 LRV would travel 29 thousand miles between delays, with that rising to 53 thousand between delays in 2024. Throughout 2025, this number saw improvements, with the average distance between delays increasing to 90 thousand miles in Q4 of 2025.

Mr. Rajaram noted that continued progress is being made through the use of extended maintenance windows, with various projects across traction power, track, signals, IT, and facilities between October 2025 and January 2026.

Passenger Impact Program

Kevin Mizuta, Link Right of Way Access Deputy Director, provided the report, highlighting work completed since January 2026.

Mr. Mizuta noted that three Crosslake Connection testing periods were completed on January 16, 2026 and 17, 2026, as well as a full weekend closure on the weekend of January 24, 2026. Additionally, a Traction Power maintenance project between Angle Lake and Federal Way Downtown Stations was completed on February 7, 2026.

Mr. Mizuta detailed upcoming planned work through Q2 2026. On the weekend of March 21, the Downtown Seattle Transit Tunnel will be closed to repair a rail break that occurred at Pioneer Square Station. A Bus Bridge will provide service between Stadium and Capitol Hill Stations. Full weekend closures will occur between SeaTac Airport and Tukwila International Boulevard Stations on April 25 and 26, 2026, as well as on May 9 and 10, 2026. A Bus Bridge will provide service in the area during the disruption. A Bus Bridge will also be provided between Spring District and Overlake Stations on the 2 Line from the start of service until noon on April 26 and 27, 2026, and May 2, 2026, to allow for repairs to be completed on various crossing panels.

Mr. Mizuta reported that work on Pinehurst Station has been suspended to accommodate Crosslake Connection needs, with nightly single tracking expected to resume on April 14, 2026, from 8 P.M. to the close of service. During those periods, riders should expect headways to remain at 12 minutes systemwide, although work will be suspended on nights with high attendance events.

Mr. Mizuta discussed upcoming extended maintenance windows. Service will end at 11 P.M. for three consecutive weeknights on the following dates and areas: April 14-16, 2026 between Bel Red and Redmond City Center Stations, April 28-30, 2026 between South Bellevue and Overlake Stations, and May 26-28, 2026 between Federal Way Downtown and Angle Lake Stations. The extra windows in April and May are being conducted to avoid disruptions during the 2026 World Cup.

Executive session – None

Other business – None

Next meeting

Thursday, April 2, 2026
1:00 to 3:00 p.m.
Ruth Fisher Boardroom and Virtually via Zoom.

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 2:14 p.m.



Kristina Walker
Rider Experience and Operations Committee Chair

ATTEST:



Kathryn Flores
Board Administrator

APPROVED on April 2, 2026, HRR.