



## Summary Minutes

**Board Retreat  
March 18, 2026**

### Call to order

The retreat was called to order at 10:02 a.m. by Chair Dave Somers in the Tacoma Art Museum, 1701 Pacific Avenue, Tacoma, Washington.

### Roll call of members

| Chair                                       | Vice Chairs  |
|---|--|
| (P) Dave Somers, Snohomish County Executive | (P) Claudia Balducci, King County Councilmember<br>(P) Ryan Mello, Pierce County Executive |

| Board members                                      |   |
|--|---|
| (P) Angela Birney, City of Redmond Mayor           | (P) Ed Prince, City of Renton Councilmember         |
| (P) Steffanie Fain, King County Councilmember      | (P) Kim Roscoe, City of Fife Mayor                  |
| (P) Cassie Franklin, City of Everett Mayor         | (P) Dan Strauss, City of Seattle Councilmember      |
| (P) Hunter George, City of Fircrest Councilmember  | (P) Peter von Reichbauer, King County Councilmember |
| (P) Thomas McLeod, City of Tukwila Mayor           | (P) Kristina Walker, City of Tacoma Councilmember   |
| (P) Julie Meredith, WSDOT Secretary                | (P) Katie Wilson, City of Seattle Mayor             |
| (P) Teresa Mosqueda, King County Councilmember     | (P) Girmay Zahilay, King County Executive           |
| (P) David Parshall, City of Lynnwood Councilmember |   |

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

### Welcome and introductions

Chair Somers opened the retreat by welcoming the Board, Sound Transit staff, and members of the public to the retreat. He thanked the Tacoma Art Museum and the Pierce County Delegation for hosting. He explained that the Board will continue to take on a series of interrelated financial, capital, and operations challenges with the aim of ensuring that Sound Transit remains financially sustainable and capable of serving the public for future generations. He highlighted the upcoming completion of the 2 Line across Lake Washington and the completion of ST2 light rail projects as a moment for regional celebration.

He reminded the Board of the goal to adopt a new System Plan by the end of Q2, and that direction from the last retreat was for staff to develop approaches to be representative examples of tough choices and trade-offs to address the agency's financial gaps. Chair Somers stressed that the approaches being reviewed today are illustrative and not a final answer. Today's retreat is not about choosing one approach or a final outcome, but rather to narrow the range of plausible paths for staff to develop a blended outcome.

Chair Somers encouraged Board members to ask questions, challenge assumptions, and share how the trade-offs may impact communities and the region. He stated that after lunch, the Board members will engage in small groups across the four workstreams: policy and planning, transit operations, capital delivery, and finance.

Chair Somers reiterated that general economy-wide inflation, economic uncertainty, and higher financing costs have made the current ST3 plan unaffordable, and that staff have begun identifying and implementing efficiencies to lower projected costs in key areas. He also wanted the Board to become more accustomed to continuous affordability work as economic forecasts change across the life of the finance plan.

CEO Constantine thanked the Piece County delegation for hosting the retreat and thanked all Board members for their attendance. He echoed Chair Somers on the importance of delivering the ST3 plan within what current projected revenues can support. He highlighted that staff have developed the upcoming approaches as starting points which highlight different trade-offs between project scope, delivery timelines, and system performance. Staff required Board input and feedback as work continues to refine the options on how to update the ST3 plan. He also noted that the trade-offs will have real impacts on every sub-area and committed to providing information. He concluded by asking Board members to think regionally for a system that works for everyday riders.

Jennifer Haury, retreat facilitator, provided an overview of the day's agenda and led the Board in a warm-up team-building activity.

## **Capital program approaches**

Alex Krieg, Enterprise Planning Deputy Executive Director, began by reminding the Board of previous retreats over the last year, including the history of Sound Transit successfully navigating previous financial constraints. He also covered the 6 specific recommendations issued by the Technical Advisory Group in 2023 and the scope of the expansion program focused 2021 Realignment. General macroeconomic conditions have continued to stress project costs, both at Sound Transit and at agencies across the country.

Mr. Krieg explained that three plausible approaches for a revised, affordable capital program will be presented as starting points for today's retreat. Each approach reflects different points of emphasis to allow for trade-offs and priorities to be surfaced for the Board to engage with and provide feedback. He also defined several key terms for consistency.

Victoria Wassmer, Finance and Business Administration Deputy CEO, reported that \$34.5 billion in cost-savings or new funding is required to fully fund the ST3 program, with approximately \$22-30B more in year-of-expenditure (YOE) cost growth in the capital program and roughly \$5B more in YOE cost pressures on transit operations. The fall 2025 Long Range Financial Plan update incorporated updated revenue projections and financing improvements which increased the agency's financial capacity by \$4B. An affordable ST3 System Plan includes sufficient funding to pay for operations, maintenance, state of good repair, system expansion, and agency administration, and will rely on the agency's ability to issue debt and borrow within two key constraints: State law constraining the agency's ability to issue new debt to 1.5% of the assessed value of real property in the taxing district, and the Board's adopted policy setting the debt service coverage ratio (the agency's ability to repay debt after paying annual operating costs) to 1.5x net revenues over annual debt service costs in any given year. Ms. Wassmer explained that current borrowing constraints and capital project cost growth result in affordability issues starting in 2033-2034 through the ST3 expansion period.

An affordable ST3 System Plan will be affordable at both a system-wide level and comply with Board financial policies requiring subarea equity. While system affordability is constrained by the year-to-year constraints above, subarea affordability is measured across the life of the Long-Range Financial Plan. No subarea's projected expenditures can exceed projected revenues by more than 5% and subareas cannot fund projects and services that do not benefit the residents and ratepayers within a particular subarea. Under current conditions, all subareas are out of balance, and today's focus on system affordability will inform follow-on work to ensure compliance with subarea equity.

Mr. Krieg reintroduced the four workstreams that make up the Enterprise Initiative work and highlighted that the approaches discussed today fall into the Capital delivery workstream, which has the largest share of cost growth and the largest potential for cost savings.

Terri Mestas, Capital Delivery Deputy CEO, explained that her staff have been engaged in cost-savings work since 2024 when the Board gave direction to develop a cost-savings work plan. She explained that opportunities are being identified as programmatic or project-level and seek to provide benefits to the passenger experience and operating/maintenance costs. Projects included in the cost-savings opportunity work include the Ballard Link Extension (BLE), Tacoma Dome Link Extension (TDLE), Everett Link Extension (EVLE), Link Infill Stations, Sounder Program, Operations and Maintenance Facility North (OMF North), Operations and Maintenance Facility South (OMF South), and West Seattle Link Extension (WSLE). She added that opportunities are categorized into one of four levels with increasing challenge to implement. Lever 1 opportunities can be implemented at the project level and have no significant impact to passenger experience or operations; lever 2 opportunities require internal agency coordination with other departments; lever 3 opportunities, such as scope reduction, will require coordination with the Board and external partners; and Lever 4 opportunities, such as project phasing, require engagement with the Board and external partners.

Ms. Mestas showed the state of possible cost savings on the four ST3 Link Extension projects in development (BLE, WSLE, TDLE, and EVLE). Currently, the four projects' cost estimates total to \$39.4-44.4B (2025\$). Application of Lever 1 opportunities results in a 1-10% cost reduction; Adding Lever 2 opportunities results in cumulative savings of 10-13%; Adding Lever 2 opportunities results in cumulative savings of 13-20%; and inclusion of Lever 4 opportunities can result in cumulative savings of 42-48%.

Ms. Mestas explained the project development lifecycle, noting that the time frames included are general but vary by project complexity. She stressed that greater information and clarity is gained as projects advance through development. Currently, the South Kirkland to Issaquah Link Extension (SKILE) and T Line Extension are in pre-planning; the Sounder South improvements, Boeing Access Road Infill Station, S Graham Street Infill Station, BLE, EVLE, OMF North, and TDLE are in planning; WSLE and OMF South are in design; and Stride BRT projects and the Pinehurst Infill Station are in construction.

Mr. Krieg reminded the Board of its direction given in Motion No. M2025-36 which established guiding principles for the Enterprise Initiative, such as advancing regional connectivity, supporting future growth, prioritizing the passenger experience, and protecting public investment with fiscal integrity. The Motion also directed specific process elements, including community engagement, transparent governance, and data-driven decision-making. When developing the illustrative approaches, Mr. Krieg explained that staff worked to ensure meaningful differences would be highlighted to reveal real trade-offs and policy considerations for Board members, including a focus on components that can truly move the affordability needle, keeping approaches simple and clear, and building on existing work, and that Board members should expect a blended outcome that combines elements from the approaches.

The first approach – Keep active light rail extension projects moving – emphasizes Link light rail expansion over Sounder improvements. The WSLE would be constructed to Alaska Junction (without an Avalon Station); the BLE would complete environmental planning and 30% design on the full project while only constructing to Seattle Center (without a South Lake Union station); the EVLE and TDLE would be fully constructed; the Graham Street and Boeing Access Road infill stations and the SKILE would complete environmental planning and 30% design but be deferred; and the T Line extension would be deferred. For Sounder, additional trips would be maintained but the DuPont extension would be deferred.

The second approach – Advance regional connectivity – emphasizes delivering projects across the region. The WSLE would defer final design and construction; the BLE would complete environmental planning and 30% design on the full project while only constructing to Smith Cove (without a South Lake

Union station); EVLE, TDLE, and SKILE would be fully constructed; the Graham Street and Boeing Access Road infill stations would complete environmental planning and 30% design but be deferred; and the T Line extension would be deferred. For Sounder, additional trips would be maintained but the DuPont extension would be deferred.

The third approach – Phase all light rail extensions to advance other ST3 elements – prioritizes delivering not-Link Extension projects. The WSLE would complete environmental planning and 30% design on the full project while only constructing to Delridge; the BLE would complete environmental planning and 30% design on the full project while only constructing to Seattle Center (without a South Lake Union station); the EVLE would complete environmental planning and 30% design on the full project while only constructing to SW Everett Industrial Center; the TDLE would complete environmental planning and 30% design on the full project while only constructing to Fife; the T Line Extension and SKILE would complete environmental planning and 30% design on the full project while only constructing yet-to-be-defined initial segments; and the Graham Street and Boeing Access Road infill stations would be constructed. For Sounder, additional trips and the DuPont Extension would be maintained.

Mr. Krieg summarized the differences between the approaches with a table mapping the assumed outcomes against the Board's principles. He re-iterated that this is not intended to be taken as staff recommendations.

Board member Wilson asked if future information regarding ridership numbers over time to see which approach would deliver higher ridership sooner.

Board member Birney flagged that the consolidation of the South Lake Union station on the BLE is a big decision and more information on the impact is needed given the area is a major job center. Mr. Krieg noted that additional information can be provided at the Capital Delivery table during the afternoon break-out session.

Board member Franklin inquired into what funding assumptions were used when measuring the fiscal integrity of the approaches. Mr. Krieg responded that the assumptions are based on when projects are expected to advance toward more concrete work; he also flagged that Approach 3 may be less attractive for federal funding since the reach of the system is reduced. Board member Franklin noted that the assumptions may weigh more favorably for some projects, such as WSLE.

Vice Chair Balducci inquired into the ridership impact of consolidating the South Lake Union station. Mr. Krieg noted that staff used standard modeling tools which are rough and crude but are best used to show the directionality of impacts. Most of the assumed ridership for BLE is in Downtown Seattle so making changes to the ends of the lines have less of an impact. He noted that the daily rail boarding metrics in the table seem to account for the consolidation. Vice Chair Balducci also asked how the Operations and Maintenance Facilities are factored in. Mr. Krieg answered that the facilities are held as necessary and the system-wide costs are assumed to be delivered on necessary timelines.

Board member Mosqueda opined that today is focusing on the wrong question and believes that all light rail projects should be advanced to see the benefits on cost-savings work, just as WSLE has accomplished. She also added the importance of additional engagement with the State Legislature for additional revenue tools. She added that a firm decision should not be made at this time and more time should be given to staff to complete more cost-savings work.

Chair Somers noted that the ideal goal would be to find an approach that could deliver everything included in ST3, and highlighted that there are essential policy and legal frameworks that must be met to allow for continuing project development. Mr. Krieg added the frameworks need to be met as key high-spend phases are required to complete additional cost-savings work on all projects. CEO Constantine

added that the current information on cost estimates and assessments is an initial starting point and the agency will incorporate cost-savings work on projects as they advance.

Board member Mosqueda noted that these are not the only solutions and the only potential dollars to complete ST3. The Agency should aggressively pursue cost-cutting before the Board gives further direction.

Board member Birney inquired into having information on what financial commitments and opportunities come with advancing the design work and what population/job center growth looks like with respect to potential riders.

Vice Chair Mello noted that the policy workstream trade-offs will be important to consider. He added that he is leaning toward advancing design work to support continued project refinement. He asked for a common definition of deferral and suggested that a bridge solution is needed to tackle what we know now and push out decisions to when more information is known. Chair Somers stated that deferral means the project stays within the ST3 plan but is pushed out beyond the current financial plan.

Board member Roscoe cautioned against assuming that the same cost-savings that have been realized on WSLE can be achieved in equal measure on other projects and added that some projects, such as the Sounder DuPont Extension, could be largely covered by grants. She also noted a risk is assuming future new revenue and advised that the Board focus on prioritizing new riders.

Board member Wilson stated her hope to avoid pitting shovel-ready and projects in planning against one another. She logged a bias toward moving forward on construction and a request to develop a plan that includes reaching Ballard.

Vice Chair Balducci asked for a clarification on the definition of deferral. Mr. Kireg responded that deferral means full construction cannot be afforded under current constraints. He noted that ST3 provided funding to complete or fund projects planned under ST2, such as Downtown Redmond Link Extension. He also added that while construction is not funded, planning and design work could take place. Vice Chair Balducci noted the stark difference in project development between the WSLE and the SKILE and asked how cost-savings work can be conducted on pre-development projects. Mr. Kireg noted that only some assumptions are being made on projects not yet being advanced.

Vice Chair Balducci acknowledged that landing on an updated System Plan is necessary to move forward other assumptions. Citing analyses that show WSLE and BLE are the most cost-inefficient projects in the work, she asked why the agency's costs and timelines are off the charts on those projects. She asked that analysis continue to pursue changes that can reduce that metric. Ms. Mestas responded that she is confident her team can continue to find additional savings in advanced design work.

Chair Somers, responding to an earlier question from Board member Wilson, stated that the purpose of the retreat is not to decide on an approach today but rather to bring the Board together, with the current information, to have a general plan instead of taking up project actions based on timelines, depleting dollars from projects that started later.

Board member Franklin added that regional connectivity has been a key priority of the Board and agency. The spine is a key deliverable that should not be deferred and highlighted that the WSLE is still unaffordable despite impressive cost-savings work. She recognized the high ridership estimate of the BLE and advocated for completion of the light rail spine, rejecting Approach 3.

Board member McLeod asked if one of the approaches is contemplated as prioritizing smaller projects. He noted that South King County has seen many deferrals over the years and advocated for completing smaller projects while design work advances on larger extensions. Mr. Krieg responded that feedback from today could inform direction to prioritize smaller projects.

Board member Strauss noted that none of the approaches allow for full construction to Ballard. He stated the importance of completing the spine for taxpayers across the district to benefit from the light rail, including key system upgrades that enable WSLE and BLE. As the BLE is estimated to be the greatest contributor to daily ridership, Board member Strauss stated that none of the current approaches maximize ridership. He recognized the regional importance of the Seattle Center to International District core, while stating that additional zoning updates could give future rider growth. He restated his concerns with the cost-sharing arrangement for the Downtown Tunnel.

Board member Parshall, noting that the ridership changes among the three approaches is negligible, asked if there's data on who is being lost or gained in terms of riders. Mr. Krieg answered that that type of analysis is not included at this point. Board member Parshall asked for an explanation on why Approach 2 is considered better for work/regional centers. Mr. Krieg responded that more analysis would be helpful but he believes it is due to the number of stations being constructed. Board member Parshall inquired into whether deferral can include scope elements, such as parking. Mr. Krieg responded that the Board has already uncoupled some parking investments, but additional scope reduction is possible. Chair Somers noted that deferring stations is costly in the long run.

Board member Prince inquired into why the other workstreams are being presented alongside this information. Mr. Krieg stated that staff don't want to assume any Board decisions on revenue drivers when developing the approaches.

Board member Zahilay noted that the King County delegation has a strong desire to advance all projects, especially by pushing shovel-ready projects into construction. He supported Board member Strauss's appeal to develop a plan that includes reaching Ballard. He also asked Chair Somers if May remains the goal to make a decision. Chair Somers confirmed May is still the expected target.

Board member George highlighted that a deep amount of work is needed to meet the short decision timeline. He noted his disagreement with the term "shovel-ready" given previous Board comments calling for off-ramps while allowing limited design work to continue. He stressed that each subarea needs to have tough conversations on their own priorities, and North King County certainly has a challenging task.

## **Afternoon preview: Enterprise Initiative workstream breakouts**

Ms. Haury provided a preview of the afternoon breakout sessions to go in-depth on the four Enterprise Initiative workstreams. Board members will have the opportunity to identify any additional information required to support decision-making and provide feedback on the most promising opportunities staff should pursue in a proposed update to the ST3 System Plan. She also notified the Board members of which group they are a part of.

Group 1: Chair Somers and Board members Fain, George, and Wilson.

Group 2: Board members Franklin, Meredith, von Reichbauer, Walker, and Zahilay

Group 3: Vice Chair Mello and Board members Birney, Mosqueda, and Parshall

Group 4: Vice Chair Balducci and Board members McLeod, Strauss, and Roscoe

After the explanation, Chair Somers announced that the Board would recess for lunch. No business conversations would occur until the retreat reconvenes at 12:45 pm in the breakout sessions. After the breakout exercise, Board members will return to the main room at 2:15 pm for further discussion. The Board entered recess at 12:03 pm.

## **Enterprise Initiative workstream breakouts: policy & planning, transit operations, capital delivery, finance**

The Board reconvened at 12:45 pm.

### Group 1

At the Capital Delivery table, the Board members raised questions and considerations related to the potential consolidation of the BLE South Lake Union station, the decisions behind where some projects could be truncated, the definition of “shovel-ready”, the differences in construction timelines for segments of BLE, the need for future extensions to serve planned Operations and Maintenance Facilities, and the potential for future increases on projects in pre-planning.

At the Transit Operations table, the Board members heard information on possible cost-savings and revenue generating options, such as Communications-based Train Control (CBTC), resiliency improvements, and system automation. Board members also raised questions on the current work on replacing aging vertical transportation assets, studying the implementation of fare gates, contemplating third-party naming rights, updating parking fees, and investing in passenger restrooms.

At the Finance table, the Board members discussed opportunities to lease light rail vehicles, increase/maintain grant and loan competitiveness, and pursue cost-sharing with local jurisdictions.

At the Policy and Planning table, the Board members noted the importance of utilizing air space above stations for development and potential value capture, working with the legislature to unlock meaningful tools for the agency, coordinating with local transit agencies to cover loss of service due to project deferral. They also provided feedback on long-term engagement, maintaining ST Express service to compliment Link extensions, the resources needed to negotiate on future expanded Sounder service, possible equity issues related to car tab payments, and a potential rental car tax increase.

### Group 2

At the Capital Delivery table, the Board members inquired into the definition of “shovel-ready”, possible upcoming off-ramps regarding more advanced projects, the status of the BLE Draft Environmental Impact Statement, the rationale behind the possible truncation solutions for BLE, ridership impacts of truncation, work to optimize station designs, the financial impacts of eliminating tail tracks where possible, the resources needed to develop pre-planning projects up to a 30% design standard, and the status of cost-savings related to the Operations and Maintenance Facilities. They also noted that the light rail spine is the completion of a decades-long regional promise.

At the Transit Operations table, the Board members provided feedback on Condition-based Maintenance, CBTC, the planning for longer Series 3 Light Rail Vehicles, and long-term parts-management and vehicle reliability. They also inquired into additional parking fees, the current planning for the Sounder operations base and future additional trips, how opportunities that require Board approval may be packaged, and how much revenue additional ridership could be provided due to operational investments.

At the Finance table, the Board members provided feedback on pursuing an increase to the rental car tax, modifying the debt constraints within the Board’s control or seeking Legislative approval on changes, utilizing less-conservative modeling to not force unnecessary decisions, and expecting cost-sharing with local jurisdictions. They also inquired into what financial levers can be pulled now and which would require additional action or outcomes later on, what opportunities would require voter-approval and when, and third-party construction and operations of parking facilities.

At the Policy and Planning table, the Boardmembers inquired into cancelling Sounder and/or ST Express services once a comparable Light Rail alignment is complete, reducing or eliminating remaining planned parking improvements, increasing parking rates and expanding paid parking areas, changing

the Board's approach to approving affordable Transit Oriented Development, and implementing fare gates. They also provided feedback on permitting streamlining given new state legislation and advocacy for federal law changes. The Board members also asked for support on how to best advocate for Sound Transit's interests.

### Group 3

At the Capital Delivery table, the Board members provided feedback on seeing more granular information on project-specific cost-savings opportunities and thinking outside the three prepared approaches. They also inquired into the scale of potential cost-savings across projects, the resources needed to reach 30% design and cost-savings work (design validation) on all ST3 projects, whether additional detail on construction timelines will be included, the definition of "shovel-ready", the status of grant funding, and what populations are being served or left-out by the different approaches.

At the Transit Operations table, the Board members inquired into when certain operational systems will be obsolete and require new solutions, what physical parameters current capital projects have that constrain operations decisions, the inclusion of a test track in the OMF South design, and the interface of these investments with other workstream opportunities. They also provided feedback on fare collection tactics, investing in long-term resiliency projects, the cost-effectiveness of pursuing a new Series of light rail vehicles, avoiding fare increases, and current parking practices.

At the Finance table, the Board members inquired into possible impacts of changing the debt coverage ratio and the metrics history, subarea equity implications, current strategies on how to pursue third-party agreements, capital investment grant assumptions and risks, utilizing private funding to construct stations with Transit Oriented Development opportunities, the debt capacity constraint, and leveraging regional debt capacities. They also provided feedback on ensuring the agency's credit rating is protected, avoiding tax increases, coordinating with local jurisdictions regarding potential for parking, fully utilizing all currently authorized revenue sources, and seeing which projects have the best grant opportunities.

At the Policy and Planning table, the Board members inquired into possible Sounder trip reductions and accelerating TOD opportunities by altering future terms of development. They also provided feedback on avoiding service reductions (especially on ST Express routes), maintaining TOD as a possible bolster to ridership assumptions, permitting support and collaboration with local jurisdictions, building support and trust with local communities. They also asked for more support when it comes to advocating for the agency's interests, both in Olympia and Washington, D.C.

### Group 4

At the Capital Delivery table, the Board members inquired into developing a plan that maximizes ridership, the impact of cutting the WSLE Avalon station, the impacts of operating termini at different stations than original envisioned, the potential for cutting low-ridership stations and deferring as infill stations, methods to accelerate the build-out of the spine, and whether the Board could shift its timeline if additional information is unsatisfactory. They also provided feedback on the difficulty of deciding on SKILE without meaningful project development, the Board's previous use of deferral as a tool, accelerating work on projects in pre-planning, the need to continue to include off-ramps for more developed projects, and the use of the term "shovel-ready" to describe WSLE.

At the Transit Operations table, the Board members inquired into whether the planned Downtown Seattle tunnels could be built to allow for full operations to swap between tunnels, the potential cost-savings associated with a new model wholistic model of dividing maintenance functions among the OMFs, possible constraints with implementing CBTC while Automatic Train Protection (ATP) is still in use, whether newer technology would be available by the time ATP is obsolete, the timing of expected savings given the need for upfront investments and the timeline for the closure of the current Downtown

Seattle Transit Tunnel. They also provided feedback on the need for strategic cross-over and storage tracks.

At the Finance table, the Boardmembers inquired into the state of Sound Transit's reserves and whether the current assumptions are overly-conservative, the differences between reserves, contingency, and the debt constraints, the differing layers of policies that the agency must abide by, and the financial differences between increasing the rental car tax or updating fare collection tactics. They also provided feedback on pursuing an increase to the rental car tax and showcasing the information in more detail.

At the Policy and Planning table, the Board members provided feedback on plans related to eliminating redundant services when Link extensions open, maintaining one-seat rides as much as possible, coordinating with local transit agencies to fill gaps if ST Express routes are realigned, the difference between train-to-bus and bus-to-train transfers, and the possibility of an ST4 without completing the spine. They also inquired into the service planning for the future Sounder DuPont Extension, the possibility of pursuing Environmental Planning reforms in policy direction, the plans for potential fare gates, and the use of Tax Increment Funding.

### **Debrief small group activity**

CEO Constantine thanked the Board for their engagement with all the workstreams included in the Enterprise Initiative and reminded them to work collaboratively to provide staff feedback and direction on how the agency should proceed with fulfilling the promises of ST3.

Chair Somers took the opportunity to reiterate the Federal Transit Administration's definition of "shovel-ready" and noted that it is only related to the ability to start construction.

Board member Mosqueda noted that WSLE is very close to being able to start construction.

Board member Strauss thanked his fellow members for good discussions and pushed staff to deliver a scenario that maximizes ridership and lays a plan on how to get to Ballard. He reminded the Board of the regional nature of the second Downtown Seattle Tunnel.

Ms. Haury attempted to use Mentimeter software to generate visual displays of Board member feedback from the small group activity but switched to discussion given technological issues.

Board member Zahilay asked how all the information can be best implemented. CEO Constantine responded that the approaches are not true starting places but catalysts for additional feedback to the Board Chair to provide staff direction.

Board member Franklin urged staff to incorporate opportunities that heard strong support across the Board member groups during the breakout exercise.

Vice Chair Mello noted that there are real opportunities to pursue in the policy, transit operations, and finance workstreams that may allow for less difficult decisions on the capital program.

Board member Fain asked about the next step in the process. Calli Knight, Agency Chief of Staff, responded that staff will mobilize to respond to questions and feedback given today, and plan to provide an update at the April Executive Committee meeting. Chair Somers confirmed the plan for an update at the April Executive Committee and reminded the Board that all members are invited to participate.

Vice Chair Balducci added that impacts to riders should be prioritized and could fuel another approach example. She also requested that staff present a possible plan to fund completing the projects should they need to be truncated at this time, similar to how ST3 provided the funding for the Downtown Redmond Link Extension. She noted that the decision of CBTC will be a major investment for which timing is crucial. She also asked if policies could be put in place to avoid future crisis decision-making.

Chair Somers noted that the Board can continue this discussion but noted that the retreat was at the scheduled end time.

Board member Wilson asked for more support in understanding all the trade-offs at play and pushed back on incorporating opportunities that would negatively impact the rider experience. She added that movement on shovel-ready projects will help to keep Sound Transit's momentum.

Board member Birney concurred with avoiding rider experience impacts whenever possible. She added that the agency should leverage all the current tools it has to show a true need for more to the Legislature.

Board member McLeod asked for a list of Sound Move and ST2 projects that are not yet shovel-ready, stating that those and infill stations may provide quick wins for the agency.

Board member Mosqueda pushed for the agency to build as much as possible within the current constraints and find a path forward for projects that are deferred or truncated.

Board member George expressed shock with how unreceptive the State Legislature was to Sound Transit during the last sessions. He noted that work is needed to resolve any lingering old anger. CEO Constantine responded that Government and Community Relations Executive Director Jessyn Farrell will be in on how to best support the Board in discussions with legislators.

### **Wrap up and next steps**

CEO Constantine thanked the Board for their active engagement and commitment to the ST3 program. He looks forward to the remaining work and hopes to see members at the Crosslake Connection.

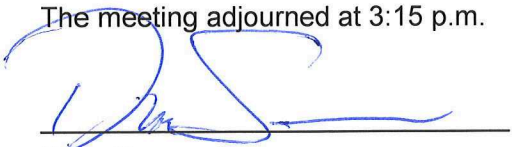
Chair Somers noted that discussions today showed an interest in combining elements and considerations from all of the sample approaches. He will be directing and working with staff to refine a blended approach that reflects the priorities heard and bring creativity to delivering the ST3 System Plan. At the April Executive Committee meeting, there will be a report on today's discussions and future meetings will dive deeper. He thanked all the members for their attendance and commitment to Sound Transit's regional promise.

### **Next meeting**

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

### **Adjourn**

The meeting adjourned at 3:15 p.m.



Dave Somers  
Board Chair

ATTEST:



Kathryn Flores  
Board Administrator

APPROVED on April 23, 2026, AJM.