



Summary Minutes

Rider Experience and Operations Committee Meeting April 2, 2026

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	
(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, congratulating staff and the agency on the successful opening of the Crosslake Connection on Saturday, March 28th. She also congratulated CEO Constantine on his first anniversary as Sound Transit CEO.

CEO Report

Crosslake Connection Opening

CEO Constantine thanked members of the Committee and the public for the successful opening of the Crosslake Connection. He noted that thousands of community members participated in opening festivities, and that early ridership figures indicated that nearly 205 thousand riders boarded Link on opening day.

Recent and Upcoming Maintenance Work

CEO Constantine reported that a 20-foot section of rail was replaced near Pioneer Square Station on the weekend of March 21st. He also reported that construction at Pinehurst Station has resumed, which is resulting in single tracking between Northgate and Shoreline South Stations. 2 Line trains are stopping at Northgate Station during this period, so riders traveling further north will need to transfer to 1 Line trains at Northgate to continue their trip.

World Cup Preparations

CEO Constantine noted that staff continue to work hard to prepare the agency to support the region during the World Cup, highlighting several improvements in wayfinding and signage that are being implemented to ensure riders can easily make their way to the games. He directed those who would like additional information on the agency's work to prepare, to visit the Sound Transit website.

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 virtual public comment:

Joe Kunzler

No written or in-person public comments were received.

Business Items

For Committee final action

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

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

Motion No. M2026-13: Authorizing the chief executive officer to increase the aggregate total amount authorized for the individual IT temporary contractor services contracts with Abacus Services Corporation, Infojini, Inc., Tryfacta, Inc., and 22nd Century Technologies, Inc. in the amount of \$10,000,000, for a new total authorized aggregate amount not to exceed \$20,000,000, plus applicable taxes.

Randi Levin, Chief Information Officer, Hughey Newsome, Chief Financial Officer, and Ted Lucas, Chief Procurement and Contracts Officer, provided a presentation on the action.

Chair Walker asked for clarification on the scope of the contract modification and whether it covered both internal IT support and external app development. Ms. Levin responded in the affirmative.

Board member Balducci requested that staff follow up on how the agency assesses its IT needs and whether there is adequate forecasting on staffing levels and other needs to support the agency's work. Ms. Levin responded that she and her team would follow up with her.

Board member Fain asked how the funding is split between ongoing agency IT support compared to short-term work. Ms. Levin responded that a majority of the work is short-term assignments and that there are efforts ongoing to determine what internal versus contracted partner work should look like.

Board member Fain asked how the funds in the modification will be allocated by task order. Ms. Levin responded that funds are dynamically applied based on agency needs and industry benchmarks for IT work and staff ratios.

It was moved by Board member Mosqueda, seconded by Committee Vice Chair Prince, and was carried by the unanimous vote of all committee members present that Motion No. M2026-13 be approved as presented.

Reports to the Committee

Communication Based Train Control Briefing

Shankar Rajaram, acting Core Infrastructure and Asset Management Executive Director, provided the report on a potential Communication Based Train Control (CBTC) pilot program.

Mr. Rajaram described CBTC, noting that it is an improved train signaling system that would allow for greater capacity and reliability over the current Automatic Train Protection (ATP) system that is used by the agency. He reported that the current ATP system will begin to suffer from obsolescence challenges in the next 15-20 years, which will result in increased maintenance costs. Mr. Rajaram said that the agency should explore CBTC now due to the long time needed to implement the new infrastructure and retrofit the current system.

Mr. Rajaram explained the differences in ATP and CBTC train acceleration profiles. ATP breaks the system into discreet blocks, with increases in speed occurring in steps based on the number of blocks between each train. CBTC allows trains to report their location and other trains' location in real time, allowing for active management of speed without the need for discreet blocks. He noted that moving to CBTC would allow for the system to better recover from service disruptions, as vehicles could get back to normal operating speeds quicker, lessening residual delays.

Mr. Rajaram noted that different CBTC pilot program proposals had been developed as part of the Enterprise Initiative Transit Operations opportunity register. The first proposal would see no change from the current plan, which would see no development of CBTC through the remaining period of the Long-Range Financial Plan (LRFP), or 2047. The second proposal would involve the phased implementation of CBTC, with new extensions including the technology and the current system being retrofitted starting in 2047. The third proposal would accelerate implementation of CBTC technology to see the full system retrofitted by 2036. Mr. Rajaram noted, however, that the third proposal would require financial resources outside what the LRFP has assumed.

Mr. Rajaram outlined that two CBTC feasibility studies are underway, that Series 3 Light Rail Vehicle procurement includes language for the inclusion of CBTC technology, and that \$4 million has been secured by the Washington State Congressional Delegation to initiate CBTC work. He further noted that future Board decisions regarding the Enterprise Initiative could include asking staff to develop a Board action to authorize a budget and formal direction for CBTC implementation.

Board member Fain asked whether other agencies currently use CBTC, and what risks exist in implementing the technology. Mr. Rajaram responded that several agencies use CBTC, such as the MTA in New York, BART in San Francisco, and Skytrain in Vancouver BC. He noted that the primary risk for CBTC implementation is the upfront cost when considering the agency's current financial challenges, as well as the coordination and planning needed to maintain current service while the retrofit is completed.

Board member Balducci asked for confirmation that investing in CBTC would allow for an increase in current service levels. Mr. Rajaram responded in the affirmative.

Board member Balducci asked whether it was accurate that CBTC would allow 30 trains per hour through the current Downtown Seattle Transit Tunnel (DSTT). Mr. Rajaram responded in the affirmative. Board member Balducci asked what the current maximum capacity is using ATP. Mr. Rajaram responded that current operations run approximately 15 trains per hour through the DSTT, with a theoretical maximum of 20 trains per hour.

Board member Balducci asked what the current expectations are for service through the DSTT with full ST2 service, and future full ST3 service through the current DSTT and the new tunnel. Mr. Rajaram responded that full ST2 service is the same as the current 15 trains per hour through the current DSTT, with future ST3 service being 20 trains per hour through the DSTT and new tunnel. Mr. Rajaram further noted that while the current ATP system could theoretically support 20 trains per hour, it would be more difficult to handle service disruptions and would prevent the system from accommodating increased service for large events.

Board member Balducci requested that staff follow up with her to provide data on what current and future service assumptions look like for both ATP and potential CBTC systems. CEO Constantine responded that staff would respond with that data at a later date in the format of her choosing.

Board member Mosqueda asked if there would be any direct impact on labor with the implementation of CBTC. Mr. Rajaram responded that there are no impacts on labor under the agency's current planning. Transit Operations Deputy CEO Ed Cobean added that he had previously worked with transit agencies that utilize CBTC, with operational levels of 90 second headways, and that there would be no impact on labor, as any increase in service would necessitate an increase in operators.

Chair Walker asked whether the Board needs to take any action to allow the \$4 million in federal funds to be used for CBTC work. Mr. Rajaram responded in the negative. Chair Walker asked for clarification on whether the \$4 million is sufficient to begin work, or whether a larger funding package authorized by the Board would be required. Mr. Rajaram responded that the \$4 million is sufficient to begin work, but that staff would like to come to the Board at a future date to explore full budgeting and implementation direction, following the Enterprise Initiative.

Chair Walker noted that the Committee would not be receiving a REO Metrics Report from staff, but that the monthly performance metrics report is included in Committee members' packets. She also noted that there is an upcoming service disruption on Tacoma Link between April 6th and April 9th, to repair a broken rail.

Chair Walker noted that there are town halls regarding the Enterprise Initiative in each subarea of the Sound Transit district, hosted by Transportation Choices Coalition, with one held in West Seattle on April 1st. A town hall in Snohomish County will occur on April 14th, in Pierce County on April 27th, and in Seattle on May 5th. South King will also have a town hall.

Board member Mosqueda noted that she attended the town hall in West Seattle and asked that staff share the materials presented at that meeting with the Committee.

Executive session

Chair Walker announced that the Committee would be going into executive session. She introduced General Counsel Desmond Brown, who explained that the committee was authorized to enter into executive session to consider the selection of a site for lease or purchase where public discussion would result in an increased cost to the agency per RCW 42.30.110(1)(b).

Chair Walker noted that the Committee would be in executive session for 20 minutes. The session began at 1:47 p.m. and was scheduled to end at 2:07 p.m.

The executive session was extended by 5 minutes, and the meeting was scheduled to resume at 2:12 p.m.

The executive session was further extended by 2 minutes, and the meeting was scheduled to resume at 2:14 p.m.

The meeting was called back to order at 2:14 p.m.

Other business – None

Next meeting

Thursday, May 7, 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 May 7, 2026, HRR.