

Fare Gate Pilot

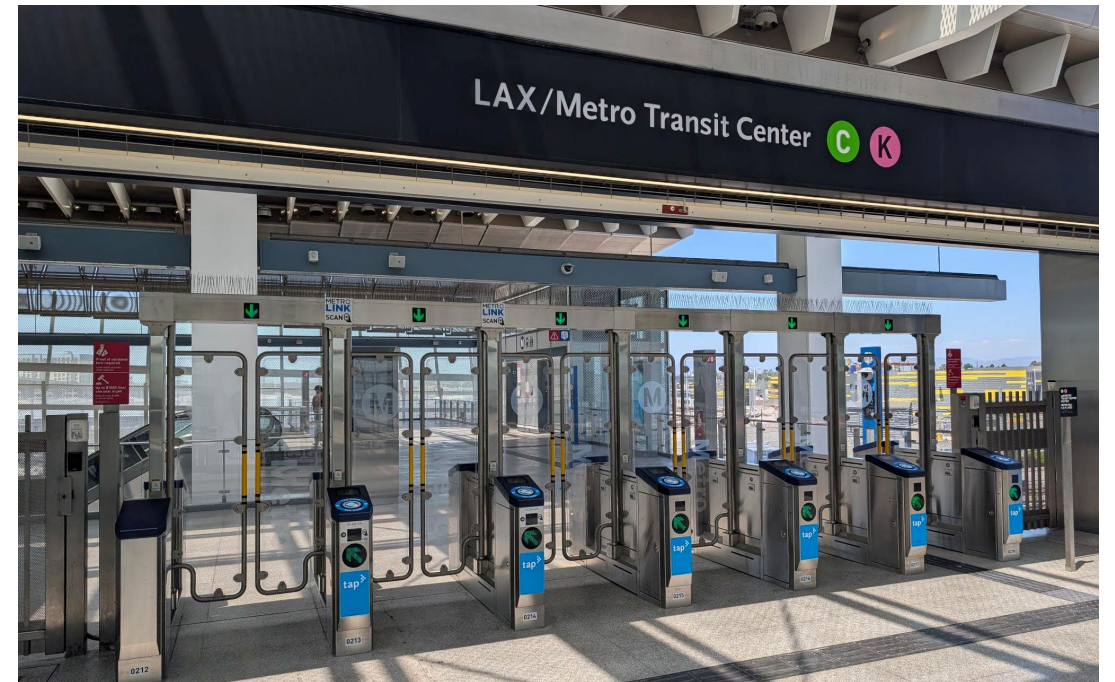
Pilot Project Implementation

Rider Experience and Operations Committee
8/6/2026



Why we are here today:

- Request a recommendation for Board approval of a fare gates pilot of up to 14 stations, including budgetary considerations.
- Discuss our findings from transit agencies and fare gates industry experts that will help guide us to successful implementation.
- Provide direction to include fare gates in ST3 station designs.
- Provide details of how we will ensure passenger and operational readiness for the fare gates pilot.



Recommended pilot stations

Our network has expanded to the point where fare gates make financial sense when balancing ridership and cost.

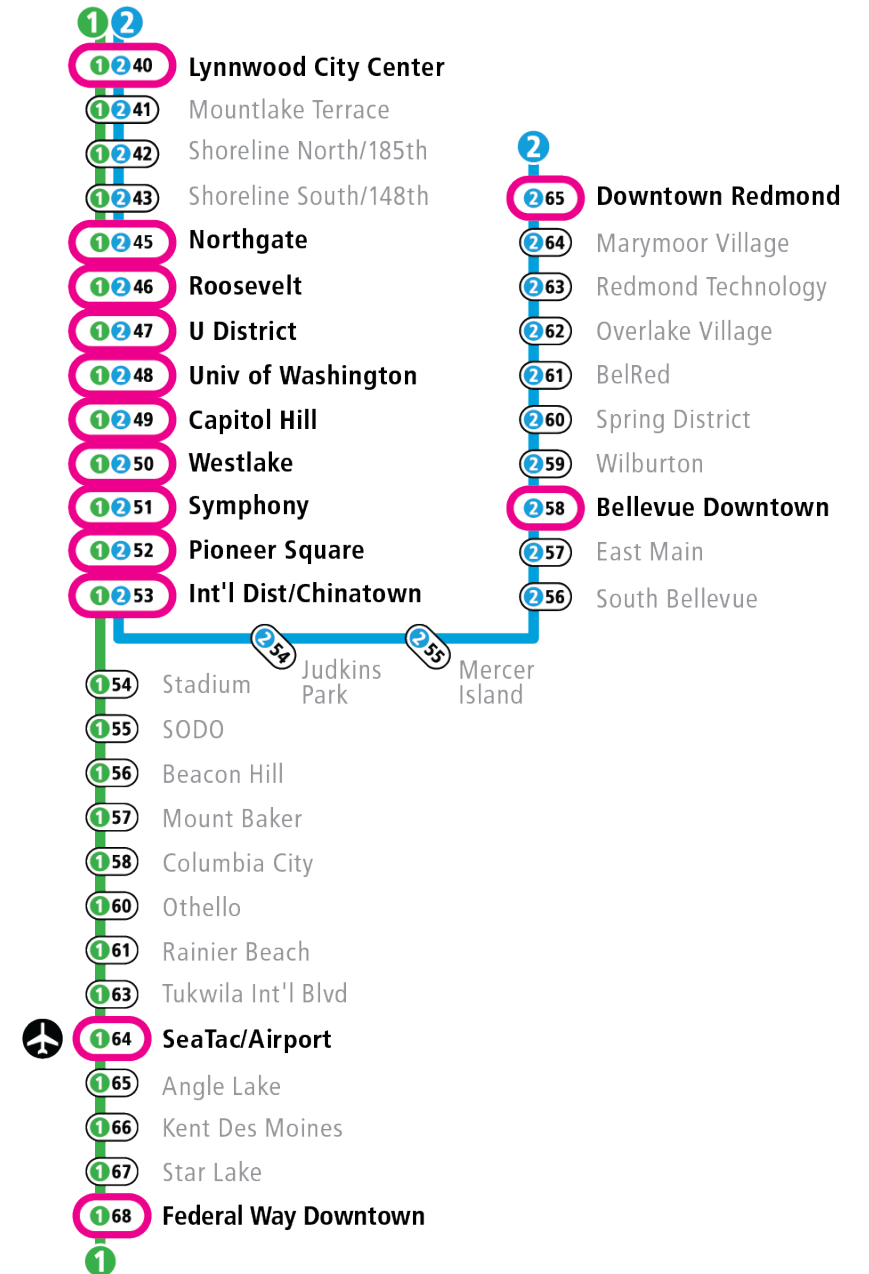
The report recommends:

- A pilot project could focus on up to 14 Link Light Rail stations
- Use bi-directional fare gates (passengers tap out to exit)

These recommendations draw on ridership, industry standards, and financial calculations.

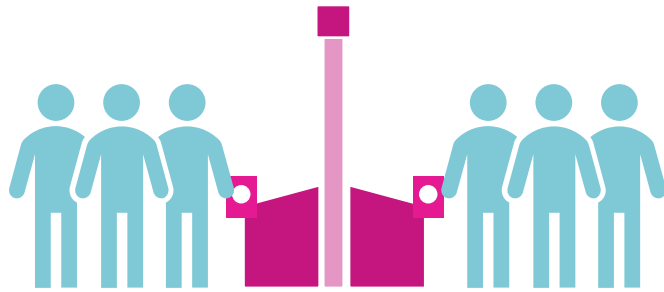
Developing the pilot project will include important equity, safety, and further costing.

Fare gate directionality is adjustable after implementation; uni-directional fare-gating is feasible.



Operating and Revenue Scenarios

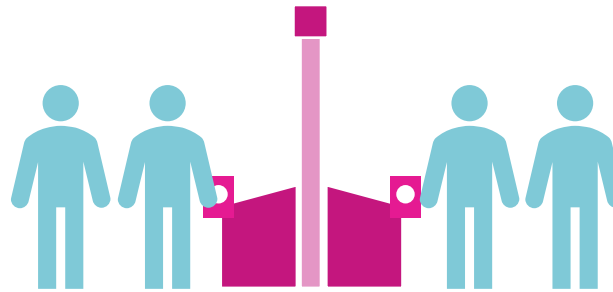
Scenario 1



↑ High Ridership

↔ Bi-Directional Gates

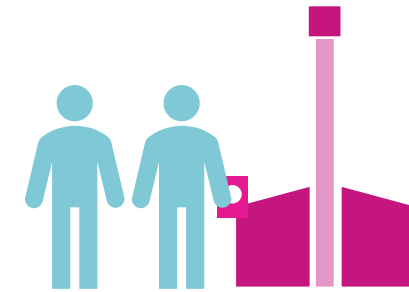
Scenario 2



↓ Low Ridership

↔ Bi-Directional Gates

Scenario 3



↓ Low Ridership

→ Uni-Directional Gates

Most likely pilot scenarios

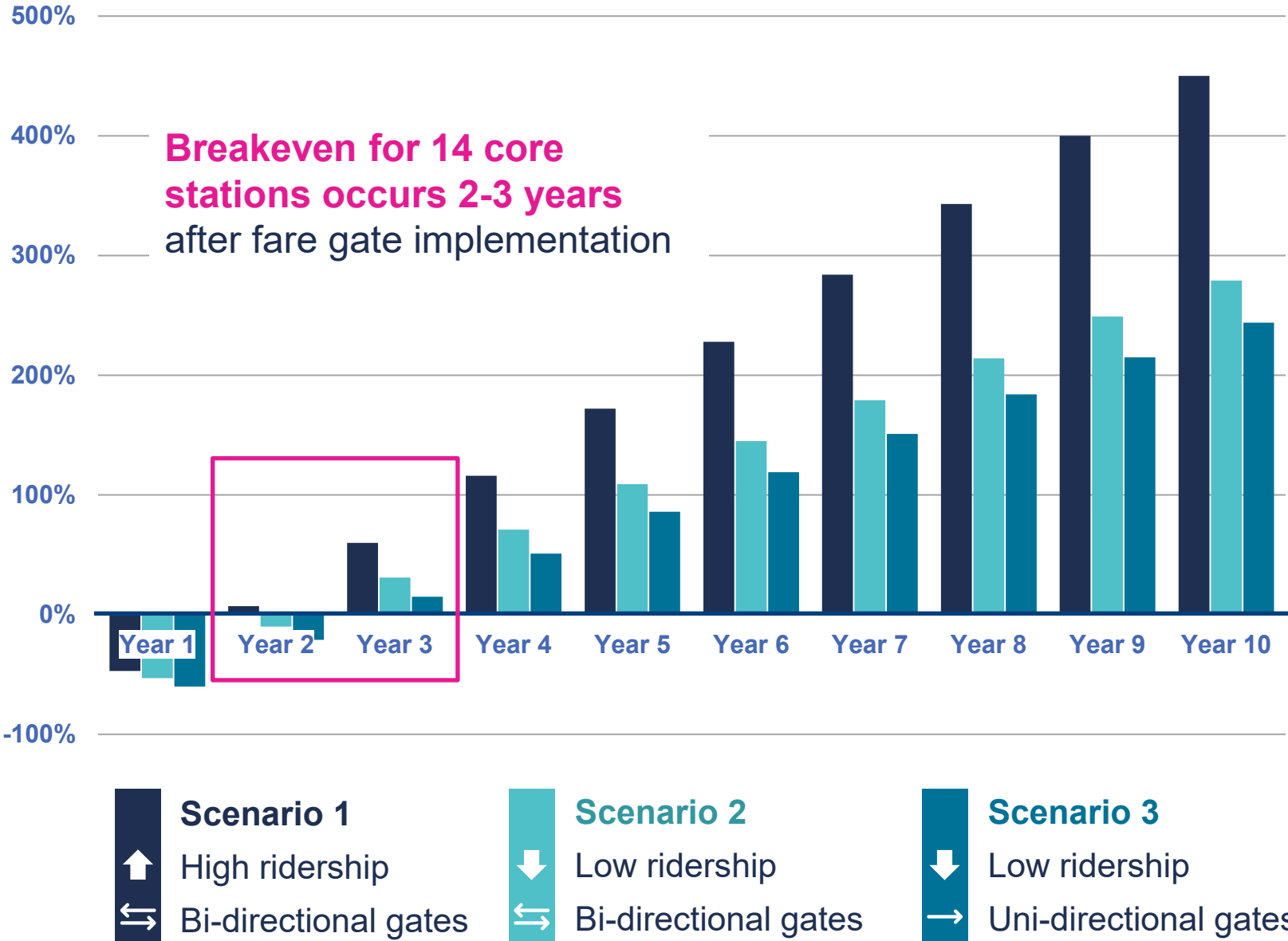
Preliminary ROI Findings*

Return on investment (ROI) accounts for:

- Cost of installation at each recommended station
- Ongoing maintenance costs
- Staffing costs
- Ridership and fare compliance projections

Does not include potential improvements in maintenance / security.

*Estimate only



What we've heard from industry

Timeline

- Discussed our assumptions for phase durations

Procurement

- Provide a Q&A period for vendors for collaboration
- Vendors can customize some gate operational features (time to close, force protection, etc.)
- Fare gate vendors generally do not want to also manage civil station design upgrades
- MTA intentionally utilized multiple vendors to give themselves additional flexibility in the future

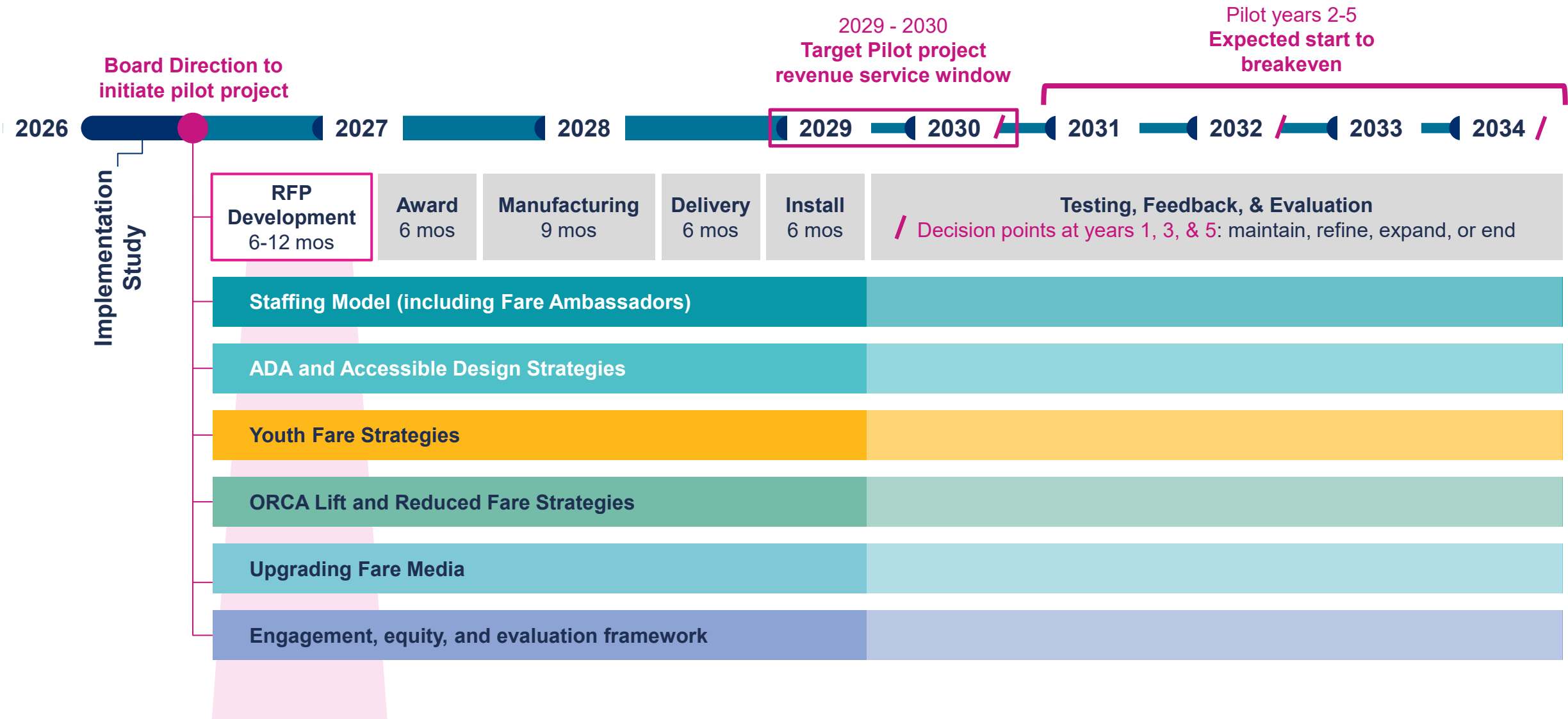
Engagement

- Develop a proactive and robust passenger educational campaign

System Integration

- Need to determine maintenance strategy - whether vendor will train ST staff or engage an additional vendor to provide
- Prepare our stations for gates to best realize positive outcomes
- Provide a period of commissioning and testing to better tune the gates to our system
- Develop a rapid response team and a local lab to test corrections

Implementation timeline (Assuming Q3 Start)



Motion No. M2026-30

Design

- Authorization to advance all work necessary for a fare gates pilot
- Provide an assessment and criteria for adding gates to further stations
- Include Fare Gates into all ST3 Link station designs

- Stations to be designed

- Upgrading Fare Media

- ADA and Accessible Design Strategies

Engagement, Equity, Passenger Readiness

Staffing Model (including Fare Ambassadors)

- Ensure front line passenger-facing support as riders adjust to fare gates

Youth Fare Strategies

- Provide easy and automated ways to get fare media in the hands of youth
- Identify partnership opportunities for youth fare distribution

ORCA Lift and Reduced Fare Strategies

- Determine how to increase reduced fare enrollment by removing barriers, streamlining processes, identify partnership opportunities
- Extend Sound Transit's participation in the Subsidized Annual Pass program (proposed action today)

Evaluation framework

- Clear metrics that capture critical issues

Today's recommendation

Action Requested

- **Recommendation for Board approval of Motion No. M2026-30, advancing a fare gates pilot and incorporation of fare gates into ST3 station designs.**

Budget Information

- \$6 million will be included in the 2027 proposed Budget and TIP to advance design, procurement, and implementation planning for the pilot project.
- Estimated project cost of \$87 million, to be requested as part of future Board actions.

Next Steps

- **Staff initiate task order to advance design and procurement documents**
- **Develop equitable engagement strategies** to increase Orca Lift and Youth Fare Media enrollment, ensure passenger readiness
- We will return to the Board of Directors to request required funding for the entire cost of the pilot project, including construction.

Thank you.



 *soundtransit.org*

