

System Expansion Project Scope and Betterments Policy Update

System Expansion Committee

06/11/2026



Why we are here

To provide an annual update on the System Expansion Project Scope and Betterments Policy passed by the Board in 2024, as required by Resolution No. R2024-11.

No decision or action requested today.

Agenda

- Background
- Betterments Defined
- Implementation
- Next Steps

Background

What is a betterment?

Betterment is a "project element beyond required scope to plan, build, and operate the regional transit system." (*Sound Transit System Expansion Project Scope and Betterments Policy Resolution No. R2024-11*)

Betterments are "enhancements or upgrades to a level beyond what is normally required for the base functioning of the transit Award." (*Federal Transit Administration C 5010.1E, Award Management Requirements*)
Note: Betterments are not eligible for federal grant funding.

Example:

- *Upsizing a Municipal Stormwater or Sewer Pipe Beyond Existing Capacity*

Why did the Board pass a Scope Control and Betterments Policy?

- One of six recommendations from the Technical Advisory Group to improve the delivery of projects: *"Strengthen and enforce an agency betterments policy"*
- To bring consistency and clarity to how Sound Transit identifies and addresses betterments
- To ensure timely resolution of disagreements with jurisdictions over project scope elements
- To provide transparency to Sound Transit leadership and the Board on the scale and potential costs of betterments

What did the policy do?

- Provided a definition of betterments (*referenced*)
- Identified the milestones at which a project's scope would be defined, to help determine what would constitute a betterment and what would not
- Outlined an escalation pathway to resolve disagreements with jurisdictions

Implementation

Betterments Tracking and Reporting

Data historically collected

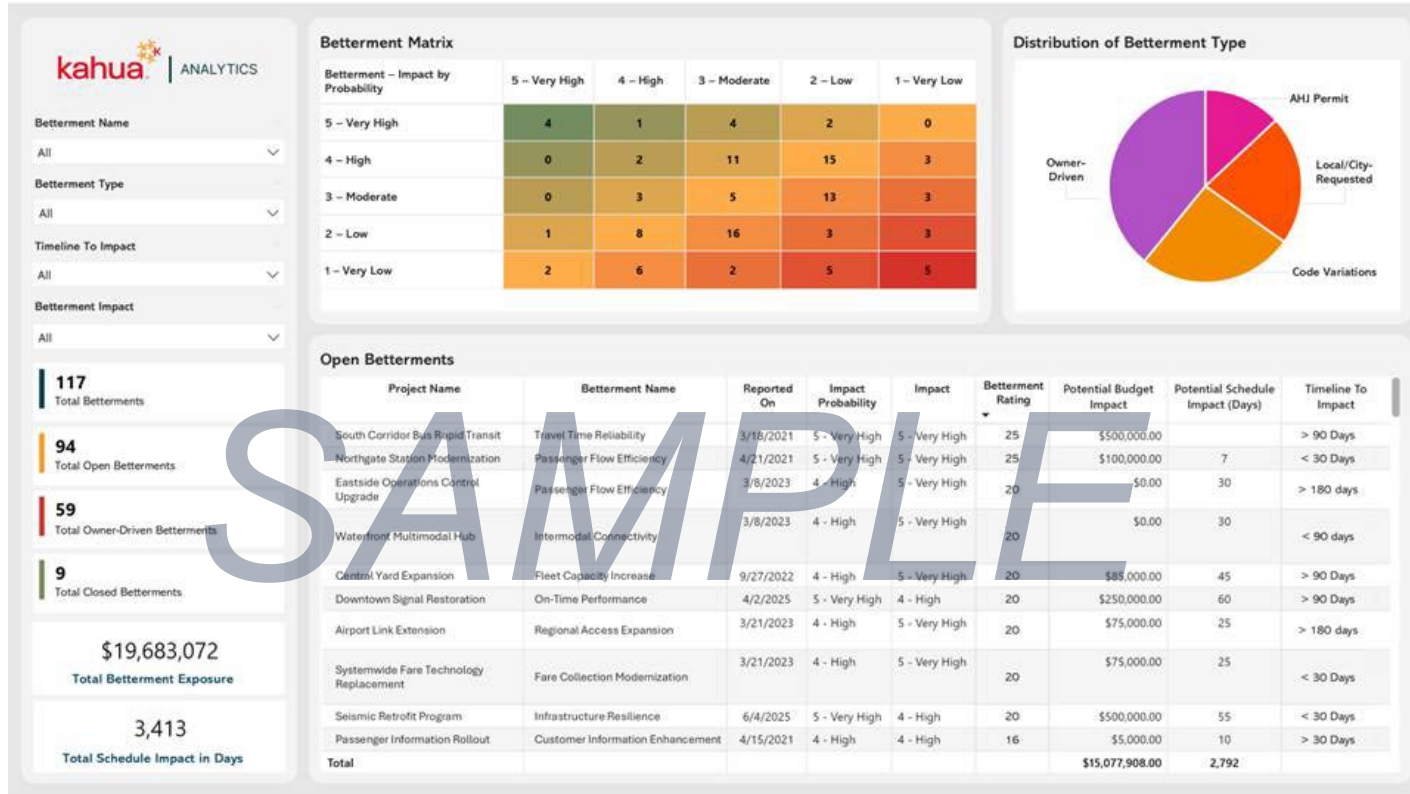
- Betterments that are local municipality requested enhancements and improvements paid for by jurisdictions
- Number of permits on each project*

New data planned to be tracked

- Other types of betterments
- Update accounting systems to capture data
- Dashboard and KPIs into the Project Management Information System (PMIS)
- Actively monitor and mitigate in project risk registers

* = does not provide data specifically on betterments, but permit negotiations can lead to requests for betterments

Example Betterment Dashboard



Betterments, Scope Control, and Cost

- Betterments, by definition, are not part of the project's initial scope – incorporating them introduces new project costs and can cause delays
- These costs increase as the project progresses – addressing scope changes in planning costs less than addressing them during the design or construction phase
- Reinforces the importance of early engagement with jurisdictions, which could include:
 - Execution of early development agreements
 - Design reviews throughout the project
 - Joint project offices

Policy & Legislative Changes

- In 2026, in alignment with Board-adopted legislative strategy, Sound Transit supported legislation to provide enhanced municipal permitting tools (SB 6309)
- SB 6309, which was signed by the Governor on 3/23/26, will allow jurisdictions to accept permitting applications from regional transit authorities prior to acquisition of properties, providing concurrent processing and speeding up delivery
- Sound Transit will continue exploring options to streamline project delivery and provide greater scope certainty

Next Steps

- Build out tracking and reporting in the Project Management Information System
- Define next milestones in implementation of the policy and identify Board decision points

Thank you.



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