

TAB February Meeting Minutes (2/26/25)

Agenda:

- Introductions
- Public Comment, Approval of Previous Minutes
- Sound Transit 3 City Team
 - Sara Maxana, ST3 Program Director, SDOT
- Bus Lane Projects Update
 - Christine Alar, SDOT
- Board Business
 - Presentations Follow-up / Action Items
 - Major Items Update

Members in Attendance:

Priyadharshini Balan
Deborah Barnard
Ashwin Bhumbla
Zachary Burton
Shirley Chu
Dana Coppernoll-Houston
Katie Freeman
Art Kuniyuki
Kyler Parris
Sandro Pani
Carolyn Tillinger

Carolyn Birkenfeld (SDOT Liaison)

Public Comment Time

No comments

Approval of Previous Minutes

Zach motions to approve. Art seconds. Motion passes unanimously. January meeting minutes approved.

Sound Transit 3 City Team

Background: Sara Maxana, ST3 Program Director, SDOT joins TAB to give an overview of Sound Transit 3 (ST3) projects happening in Seattle and the ST3 City team that manages them.

Ballot measure Sound Transit 3 was passed in 2016 with support of over 70% of Seattle voters. ST3 is the largest infrastructure investment program in Seattle history and will greatly expand the existing light rail system

ST3 Projects in Seattle

The major ST3 projects in Seattle include:

- Pinehurst infill station (2026)
- South Graham Street infill station (2031)
- West Seattle Link Extension (2032)
- Ballard Link Extension (2039)

ST3 City Team, Roles and Structure

- The ST3 City Team is an interdepartmental team within SDOT that partners with Sound Transit to implement ST3 projects within the city of Seattle.
- ST3 City Team provides coordination among city departments, facilitates elevation pathways to the Mayor's office, and communicates with the community.
- ST3 City Team supports ST3 projects through three roles:
 - Regulatory
 - Partnering
 - Delivery

Examples of how ST3 City Team Supports ST3 Projects:

- Mitigating and minimizing impacts to Pigeon Point and West Duwamish Greenbelt
 - Develop restoration plan
 - Support creation of Tree & Vegetation Management Plan
 - Identify new parkland
- Collaborating with Sound Transit on early efforts to build SODO Segment
 - Support Utility relocation
 - Manage proximity of new light rail guideway to City properties
 - Redesign 4th Ave S
 - Plan for safe access and transit-oriented development
- Developing Light Rail Transit Facility Design Guidelines
 - Share the City's expectations for station and public realm design to guide development
 - Create standards for evaluation
- Adopting West Seattle Light Rail Station Area Street Concept Plan

Major Activities of ST3 in 2025

Citywide:

- Transmit land use code amendments to support light rail transit facilities
- Develop ST3 City Team workplan and resource plan

West Seattle Link Extension (WSLE)

- Transmit legislation to adopt the WSLE project
- Support final design and early permitting
- Prepare for project construction, including impacts to public and private properties and right-of-way
- Develop station access projects and begin station area planning

South Graham Street and Boeing Access Road

- Support selection of preferred station options

Ballard Link Extension (BLE)

- Review the Ballard Draft EIS and support selection of preferred alternative for study in the FEIS
- Update the Joint-Agency Racial Equity Toolkit
- Complete the South Downtown Hub planning process and identify next steps for implementation
- Support preliminary engineering for BLE system
- Develop select street concept plans and begin station access project planning

Questions from TAB Members:

Art: Do you feel like staffing will increase over the amounts that are already allocated? Will future versions of STM funding be sent towards ST3 funding, rather than metro funding?

Sara: Part of the budget set aside for staffing is funded through STM dollars. Sara intends to keep TAB updated on ST3 City Team's use of STM funds. They value transparency and accountability, so they want to establish a relationship with TAB. They are aware of their responsibility as stewards of STM dollars.

Ashwin: Executive Order 2025-02 from the mayor's office reflected what was passed in the budget in November 2024. Is there going to be more funding for additional staffing?

Sara: The executive order was not a directive to ask for additional resources, but to show how those resources will be used, which includes staffing.

Ashwin: What are the legal implications of Executive Order 2025-02?

Sara: Unable to answer this question as it is out of her scope.

Ashwin: Regarding the streamlining of permitting processes as outlined in the executive order. What are the pain points from the city's perspective? Any estimates for time savers?

Sara: Working on calculating better numbers once legislation is ready. There are many different pain points. They have been working to identify these pain points, and determine how to speed up the permitting process while recognizing the original intent and protection of the current permitting process. For example, one area they've been exploring is tree regulations. How do we bring light rail as fast as possible, but still protect trees? These are the questions they are working to find solutions for.

Ashwin: Requests follow ups on numbers, and what specific legislation will her team be putting through.

Priya: Regarding environmental impact statements (EIS). What is the alternative EIS? What does this mean in this context?

Sara: The West Seattle and Ballard light rail expansions were originally planned under one environmental review process, published in January 2022. However, additional studies were called for, and the environmental review process was bifurcated so West Seattle and Ballard could move forward separately. The West Seattle EIS was completed last year (2024). Due to the many changes to the Ballard light rail expansion project, a second EIS was required and will be published in Q2 of 2025.

Dana: There was part of the process that requires approval from the Federal Transit Administration. Do you anticipate difficulties with that step considering the changes that are happening to the federal government at this moment. How do they plan to tackle delays if things are held up at the federal level.

Sara: Sound Transit has been working with FTA so they will be the best ones to ask regarding approval from FTA. However, there is still a lot of work that the City can be doing, even if the project gets stuck at the federal level. The City can keep working and be prepared once the planning is approved by FTA.

Shirley: Is there anything you would like to communicate to the public that TAB can spread the word on?

Sara: These projects will need to be supported through legislation that will require public input and support. TAB can help share how important it is to support this future legislations..

COVID Recovery Bus Lanes - Aurora and Rainier Ave S

Background: Christine Alar, SDOT Senior Transportation Planner, is here to brief TAB on transit lane improvements to three different corridors. These improvements were initiated in 2021 and intended to improve transit for essential workers during the COVID-19 pandemic and for post-COVID recovery. The three corridors are 15th Ave W, Aurora, and Rainier Ave S.

15th Ave W & Elliot Ave W

- Rapid Ride D Line operates along this corridor
- Parking restricted on Bus Only Lanes during peak hours
- In 2022, signs were changed to allow for Bus Only Lanes in both directions during peak hours

Aurora Ave N

- Rapid Ride E Line operates along this corridor
- Implementing improvements to this corridor has been challenging
- Aurora Ave/SR 99 is owned by WSDOT
 - They have to approve all improvement that SDOT wants to make
 - There has been some resistance to approving this project before the full Aurora corridor project is planned
- SDOT has planned a northbound 24hr red Bus Only lane from Prospect to Lynn
 - Approved by WSDOT December 2024
 - Planned installation in 2025. Painting requires good weather and specific temperatures for paint to set properly

Rainier Ave S

- Phase 1 was installed 2022
 - Northbound Bus Only lane added between S Alaska St and S Walden St
 - Southbound between oregon and edmunds
- Phase 2 is planned for 2024/25
 - The northbound bus lane on Rainier Ave S will be extended from S Walden St to S Grand St. This project includes:
 - New red painted bus lane
 - Two new pedestrian signals at S Grand St and S College St
 - New ADA compliant curb ramps
 - New marked crosswalks
 - New streetlights
 - Sidewalk repairs

Questions from TAB members:

Zach: Has SDOT always waited for warmer months to install new bus lanes? Are these delays necessary?

Christine: Only the red Bus Only lanes require warmer weather, due to the particular paint used. White Bus Only lanes can be applied in colder weather, but both require dry weather.

Zach: Would SDOT implement a bus lane before the red paint is applied? Or does implementation have to wait until the paint can be applied

Christine: SDOT typically bundles these projects together to prevent road crews from being sent out more than once

Ashwin: What data do you have on the efficacy of bus lane enforcement efforts?

Christine: The efficacy varies based on time of day. Data is limited.

Ashwin: Regarding the 2022 changes to 15th Ave W & Elliot Ave W. Do you have data on how bus lane changes have impacted bus times? How many personal cars continue to violate the bus lane?

Christine: We don't have data for that. There have been no major issues since the changes were made.

Sandro: How does Phase 2 of Rainier Ave S project tie into future Rapid Line expansions that the county is planning? Additionally, are there plans for overall lighting improvement on the whole Rainier Ave S corridor?

Answer: Lighting is the focus of this project. There is some additional lighting planned for individual projects at pedestrian crossings. But no corridor wide lighting adjustments.

Ashwin: Will any STM funds be used for the Phase 2 of Rainier Ave S project?

Christine: No new levy funding will be used on this project

Board Business

Presentation follow ups:

- TAB would like follow ups from the ST3 city team

- Art proposes that there should be a subcommittee to keep track of this project due to the use of STM funding.
- Ashwin agrees that this subcommittee should be ready during the budget process in the fall
- What is the timeline for the next STM?
 - There is currently no timeline
 - Carolyn predicts that it will be on the November 2026 ballot
 - She will keep TAB updated so that we can be a part of that process as much as possible.

Action Items

- TAB votes on which member will serve on the next Levy Oversight Committee (LOC)
 - Zach nominates himself for the position
- Ashwin motions to approve Zach as the TAB representative for LOC through the end of 2025. Katie seconds. The motion passes unanimously.

Major Items Updates and Announcements

- SDOT released their [levy deliverable plan](#) on January 31, 2025. This plan will be released every year in January.
- SDOT will be joining TAB in March to learn about how TAB wants to be involved in levy process moving forward
- In June, there is a plan to hold a meeting across the different modal boards for a STP presentation meeting
- Question from Art: How are STM annual reports going? Believe a lot of reports will be dropped in 2025 regarding Vision Zero and other projects - do we have dates for the final versions of the annual reports for One Seattle Plan, Vision Zero, STP Strategic Plan and the STM Annual report?
 - One Seattle Plan was recently transmitted to council, no further movement at this time
 - Vision Zero will come present to TAB in next month or two
 - TAB will learn more in March and June about the STP Strategic Plan
 - The STM annual report is going through a final review, and will be shared with TAB ASAP
- SDOT has a new director. Carolyn is working with her to find a TAB meeting that she can attend.
- Update: [The 12th & Jackson bus stop has reopened](#)
 - Question from Deborah: What is metro doing to address the security issues that continue at these stops?
 - Carolyn - Unsure, but will send the question to King County Metro for a response