

Sound Transit Update

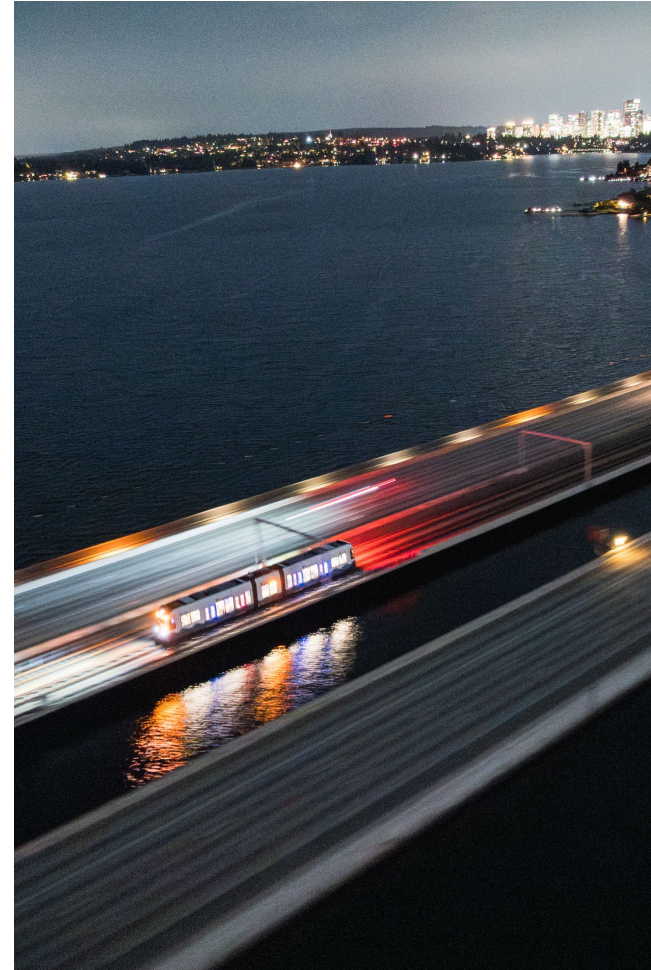
Bellevue City Council

March 17, 2026



What we'll cover today

- *Sound Transit's Crosslake Connection*
- *Enterprise Initiative*





Voter-approved system

Link light rail 1 2 3 4 T

- Five lines
- 116 miles
- 83 stations

Sounder trains N S

- Two lines
- 91 miles
- 14 stations

Stride bus rapid transit S1 S2 S3

- Three lines
- 45 miles on I-405 and SR 522
- Serving 12 cities and connecting to light rail in Shoreline, Lynnwood, Bellevue, and Tukwila

connect

Two new stations. Two lines. One system.

Opening March 28, 2026



2 Line Connections: East King County

2 Line

- When fully open, the new 2 Line will run from Lynnwood–Downtown Redmond, serving 26 stations over 34 miles of track
- Opening in **three phases**
 - ✓ South Bellevue–Redmond Technology (2024).
 - ✓ Downtown Redmond Extension (2025).
 - Crosslake Connection: Mercer Island Station, Judkins Park Station, connection to 1 Line (2026)
- 12 stations: Seattle (1), Mercer Island (1), Bellevue (6), and Redmond (4)

Crosslake Connection

- Testing currently underway
- Passenger service date: **March 28**



Opening Day

- **March 28th** ceremonial ribbon cutting followed by first train
- Sound Transit Ambassadors welcoming new riders at each new station and on-board trains
- Public, community-centric experience at each new station and various stations around the system

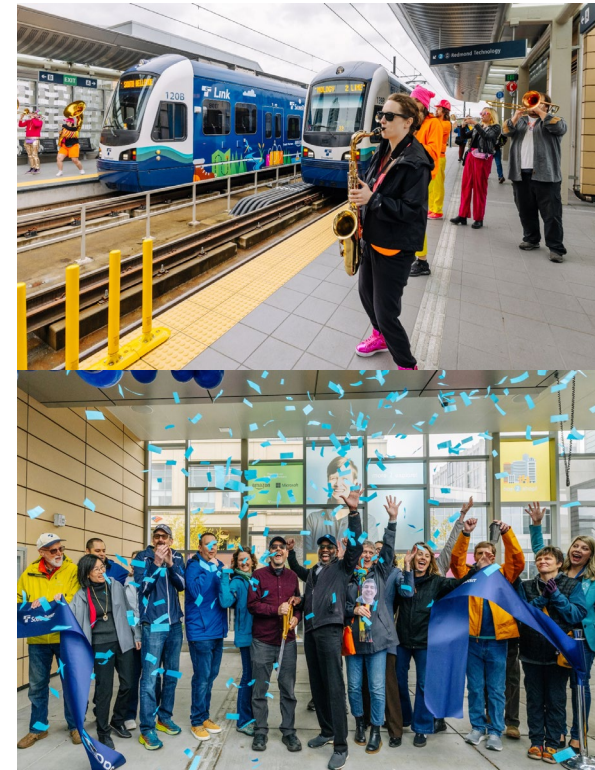


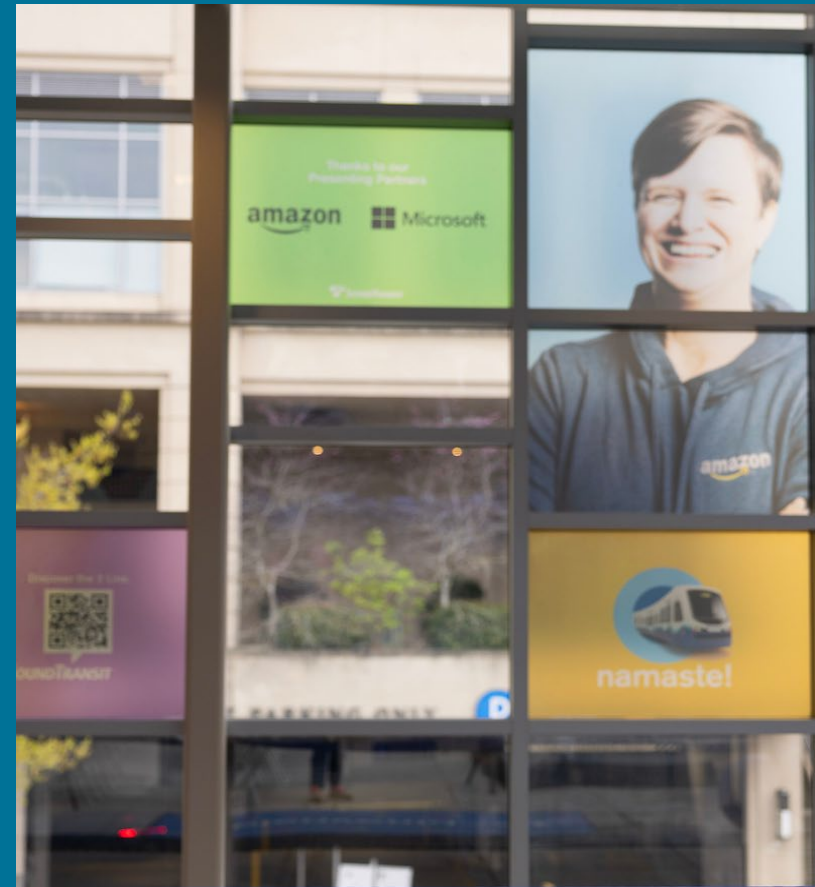
Station activations

March 28th Events:

- ***Judkins Parks Station***
- ***Mercer Island Station***
- ***Chinatown/International District Station***
- ***South Bellevue Station***
- ***Bellevue Downtown Station***
- ***Spring District Station***
- ***BelRed Station***
- ***Redmond Technology Station***
- ***Marymoor Village Station***

Plus many more community centric activities!





Enterprise Initiative

Enterprise Initiative overview

What is the Enterprise Initiative?

- Sound Transit's effort to ensure we can deliver the greatest benefits of ST3 within available financial capacity
- A comprehensive effort touching planning, capital, operations, maintenance, and finance to ensure we are meeting both current and future regional mobility needs

Why are we undertaking the Enterprise Initiative?

- If we don't act, the ST3 program will be unaffordable
- We have the tools to successfully manage these challenges, and we will be able to create an affordable plan and operate a dependable, resilient, and safe system

Leading indicators

Need for an enterprise approach

- Cost growth on West Seattle Link and Board direction to investigate cost savings opportunities in late 2024
- Rapid system expansion and challenges with delivering resilient, dependable service
- Poorer revenue projections and national and global economic uncertainty
- Post-Covid mobility environment and ensuring that ST3 investment meet regional transportation needs



Quantifying our affordability challenges

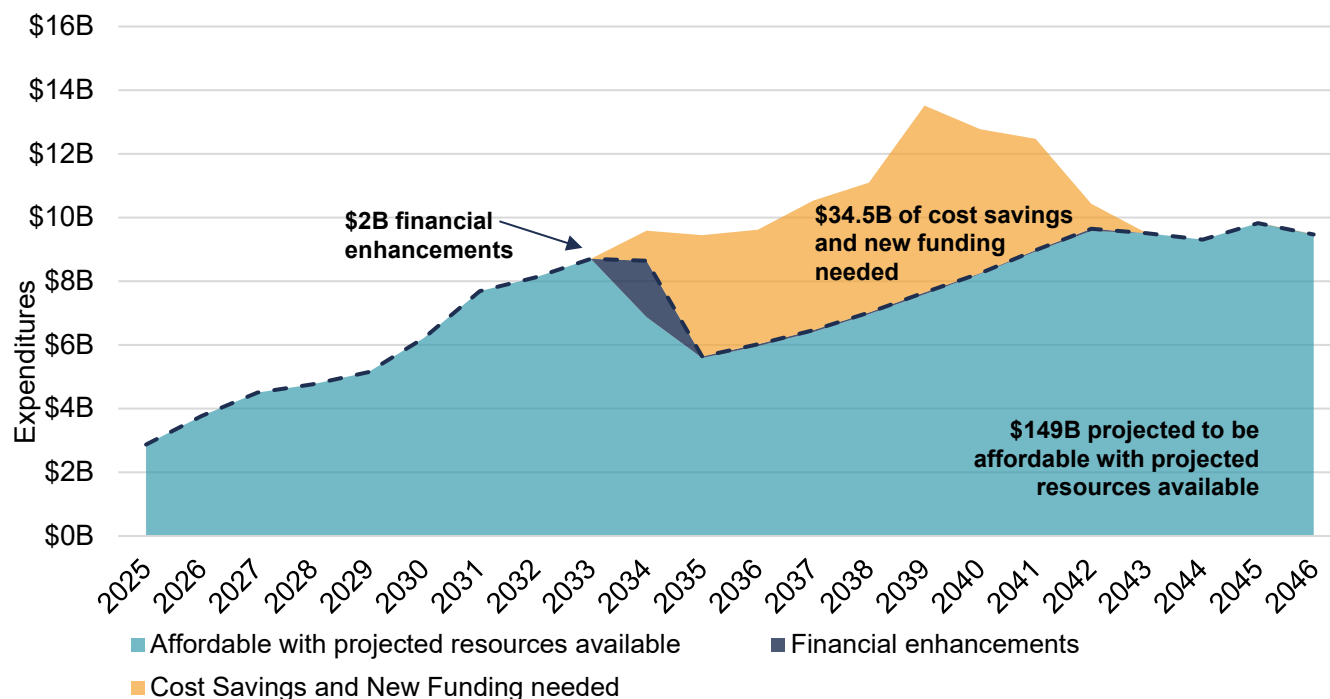
The following summarizes unmitigated cost pressures across the major elements of our Long-Range Financial Plan

- **\$34.5B in cost savings and new funding required to fully fund ST3 program**
- Cost growth on the capital program is approximately \$14B-\$20B more in 2025 dollars, or \$22B-\$30B more in year-of-expenditure dollars
- Cost pressures related to improved service delivery could require approximately \$5B more in year-of-expenditure dollars
- Updated revenue projections and financing improvements included since August have increased agency financial capacity by \$4B

\$149B in total year-of-expenditures dollars is projected to be affordable, including \$51B in pre-baselined capital projects.

Program affordability over time

- Program affordability challenges occur in part based on our ability to issue debt
- Capital project cost growth, coupled with the timing of those anticipated expenditures, limit our ability to issue debt to finance program delivery
- Solving for this adds a temporal dimension to the problem at hand



2026 *lookahead*

Scenario development process

- Responding to Board direction to develop and present plausible, affordable scenarios for an updated ST3 System Plan
- Creating scenarios that are built from different work stream elements
- Recognizing that certain opportunities will require additional analysis and/or be outside of the Board's direct authority

Scenario development

Rules & expectations

- **Ensure meaningful differences:** Scenarios should reveal real trade-offs and illustrate policy considerations for Board members
- **Focus on what matters:** Prioritize and vary components that truly move the needle
- **Keep it simple:** Complex scenarios collapse under their own weight; clarity is critical
- **Build on existing work:** Leverage cost-savings opportunities as the foundation; supplement with additional technical work
- **Expect a blended outcome:** The eventual ST3 System Plan update put forward to the Board is likely to combine elements from multiple scenarios

Scenario development process

Late 2025

January

February

March

Define scope and approach

- Establish building blocks by workstream
- Define scenario rules and expectations



Develop building blocks

- Understand what discrete building blocks can achieve
- Define evaluation criteria based on Board-defined principles



Develop initial scenarios

- Engage the Board on building blocks and policy considerations
- Assemble draft scenarios reflecting Board input



Board retreat to review scenarios

- Present plausible, affordable scenarios for Board review
- Identify and discuss policy trade-offs

Enterprise Initiative workstreams

Policy & planning

- Policy changes (by Sound Transit or others) that save capital and operating costs, speed project delivery, or expand financial capacity
- Updated service assumptions based on modified capital program and ridership projections

Transit operations

- Potential new resiliency investments (e.g., modern signal system, existing tunnel upgrades)
- Revised operating & maintenance and light rail vehicle costs based on updated service assumptions

Capital delivery

- Cost savings opportunities
- Adjusted phasing and sequencing of project investments
- Updated cost allocations for shared/systemwide assets
- Potential deferral of some projects

Finance

- Updated financial planning assumptions (e.g., federal grant strategy)
- Policy changes and exercising existing available revenue authority
- Potential third-party funding opportunities

Emerging policy questions

Systemwide

- Balanced plan must be affordable at the system and subarea level: scenarios will solve for systemwide affordability initially
- Modal priorities and relationships: Link vs. Sounder vs. STX vs. parking investments
- Project readiness trade-offs
- Cost sharing for and relative contributions toward systemwide assets
- Potential changes in financial and other policies and practices to enable more dynamic management of ST3 delivery

Subarea

- Different subareas have different tax bases, influencing subarea affordability relative to planned investments
- Capturing investment priorities within different subareas
- Reflecting and incorporating subarea priorities while maintaining compatibility with systemwide performance and ST3 objectives
- Assessing subarea trade-offs from specific scenarios

Questions?

Thank you.



 [soundtransit.org](https://www.soundtransit.org)

 [facebook.com/soundtransit](https://www.facebook.com/soundtransit)



Sound Transit Update

Lacey Jane Wolfe
City Manager's Office

March 17, 2026



Direction

Direct staff to prepare a letter to Sound Transit Board members based on *Bellevue Guiding Principles for the Enterprise Initiative* (Attachment A).



Agenda

1. Enterprise Initiative
2. South Kirkland to Issaquah Link
3. Draft Guiding Principles



Enterprise Initiative



Enterprise Initiative

- By June, Sound Transit Board will determine which projects will be:
 - Delayed
 - Reduced in scope
- For Bellevue, the only capital project impacted will be the South Kirkland to Issaquah Link project.

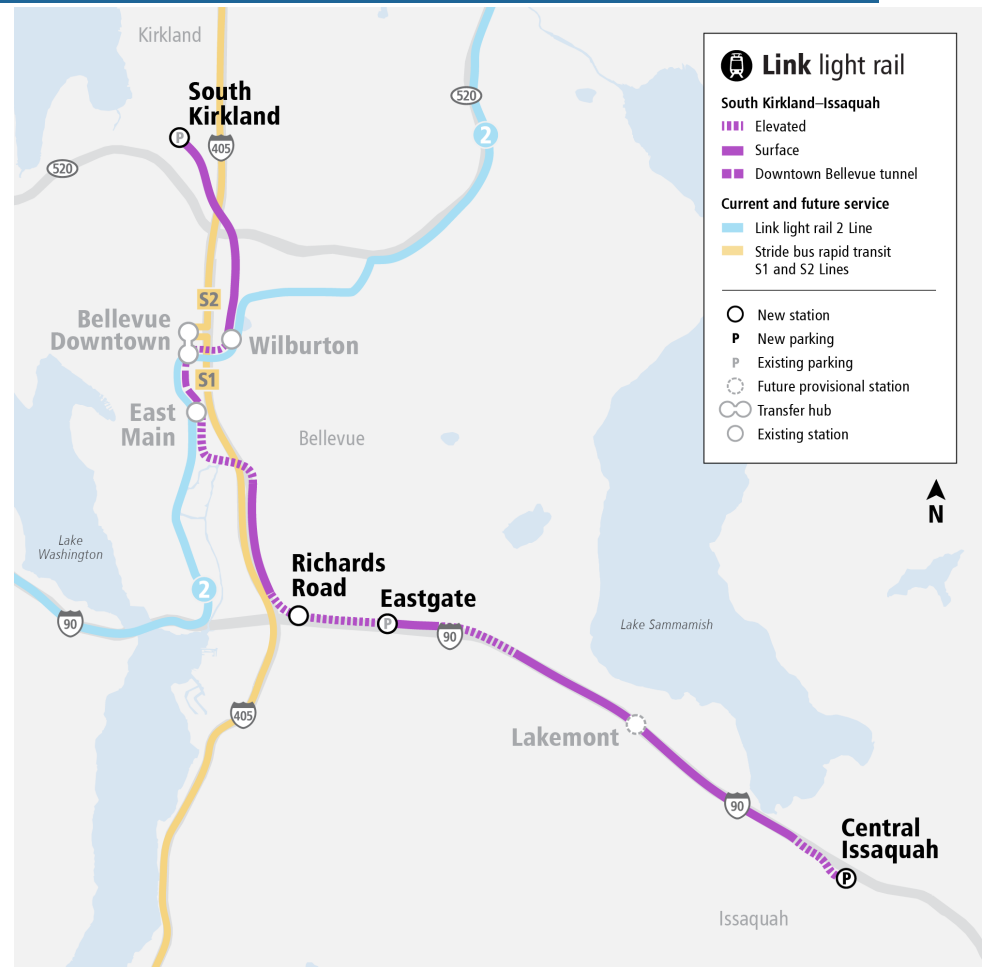


South Kirkland to Issaquah Link



South Kirkland to Issaquah Link

- Two new stations in Bellevue
- Provisional Lakemont station (unfunded)
- Parking at Kirkland and Issaquah Stations only
- 2041-2044



Draft Guiding Principles

For Sound Transit's Enterprise Initiative



South Kirkland to Issaquah Link

- Top priority: subarea equity



South Kirkland to Issaquah Link

- Light rail versus bus rapid transit (BRT)
- Project timeline
- Stations



South Kirkland to Issaquah Link

- Access to transit
- Regional bus service



Direction

Direct staff to prepare a letter to Sound Transit Board members based on *Bellevue Guiding Principles for the Enterprise Initiative* (Attachment A).

