



ST3 Staffing Enhancements

September 3, 2025 | Finance, Native Communities, and Tribal Governments Committee

Sound Transit 3 in Seattle

In 2016, over 70% of Seattle voters said **YES** to ST3!

ST3 is the largest infrastructure investment program in Seattle's history. These projects, including the West Seattle and Ballard Link Extensions, bring tremendous opportunity to transform how people reach their homes, jobs, and destinations—and the potential for significant impacts as they are built through existing communities.

The ST3 City Team is an interdepartmental *One Seattle* effort that partners with Sound Transit to help deliver these investments to Seattle communities. Led by the Office of the Waterfront, Civic Projects, and Sound Transit, the ST3 City Team relies on leadership and expertise from across many City departments.



Summary

This legislation supports the expansion of the One Seattle ST3 City Team to meet the incoming surge of permitting and plan review work for Link Rail expansion.

- Moves budget from Finance General ST3 reserve (\$2.3M) for Q4 2025 operations
- Adds 50 FTE pocket authority across 6 departments
- Facilitates negotiations for partnership funding with Sound Transit (estimated \$2.3M in reimbursement and permit funding starting Q4 2025)
- Hiring 41.5 of the FTEs will be restricted until after the City has secured partnership/permit funding agreements with Sound Transit

City Roles to Support the ST3 Program

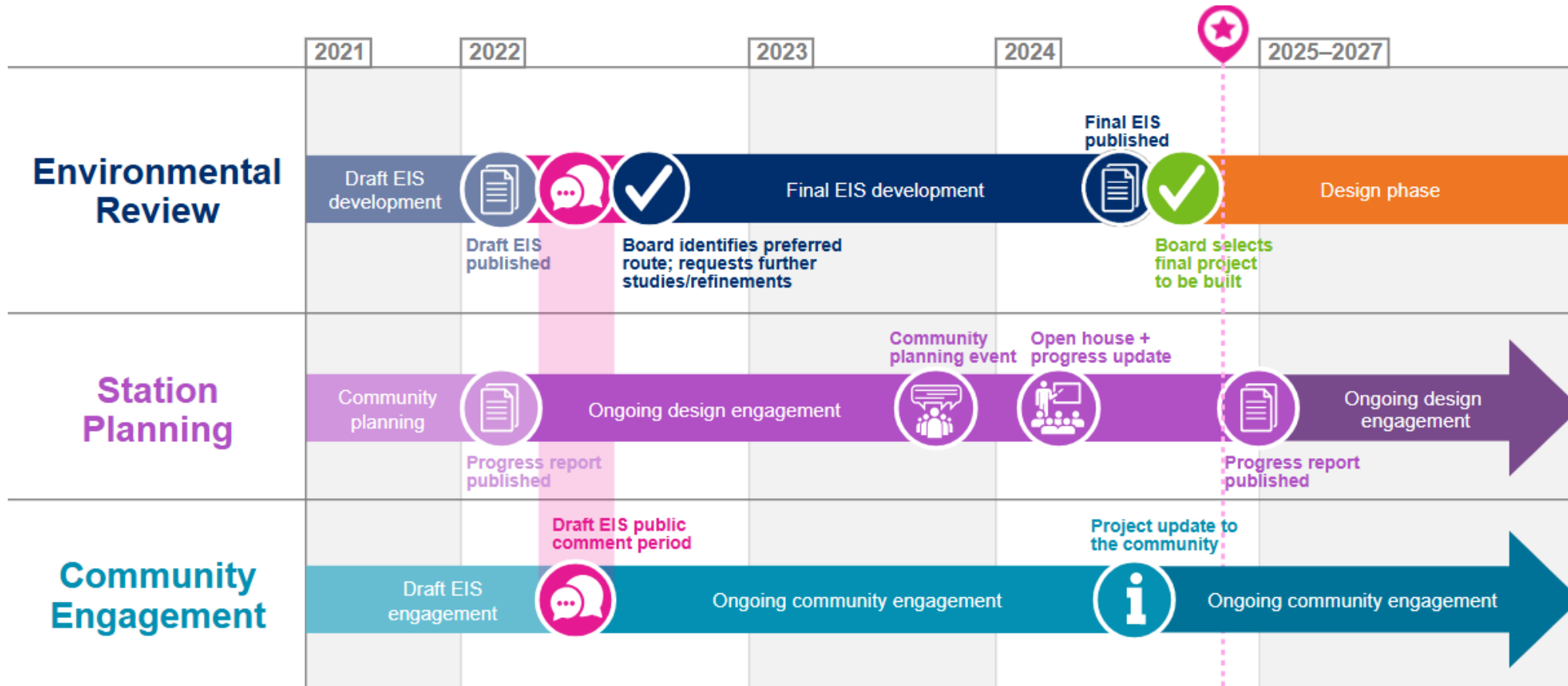
- **Governing** roles through Sound Transit Board membership (Board Members Mayor Bruce Harrell and CM Dan Strauss).
- **Regulatory** roles defined by statute and code, including project review and permitting.
- **Partnering** roles via our 2018 Partnering Agreement with a focus on leadership across departments, intensive staff coordination, and streamlined permitting.
- **Funding** roles defined by Board actions and funding agreements to contribute 3rd party funding to specific elements of the light rail system itself.
- **Delivery** roles to develop and deliver numerous plans and projects to support ST3, including station area planning and access projects.
- **Advocacy** roles to advance City and community priorities, including the Racial Equity Toolkit to avoid disparate impacts and create benefit to all.

ST3 Workgroups

- ST3 City Team includes **eight interdepartmental workgroups** that work with Sound Transit to advance project elements related to key disciplines
- The **project management team** serves as an umbrella and safety net for the workgroups—
 - Manages work that spans multiple workgroups,
 - Coordinates issue elevation and resolution across workgroups,
 - Handles issues that do not fall squarely under an existing workgroup's purview.



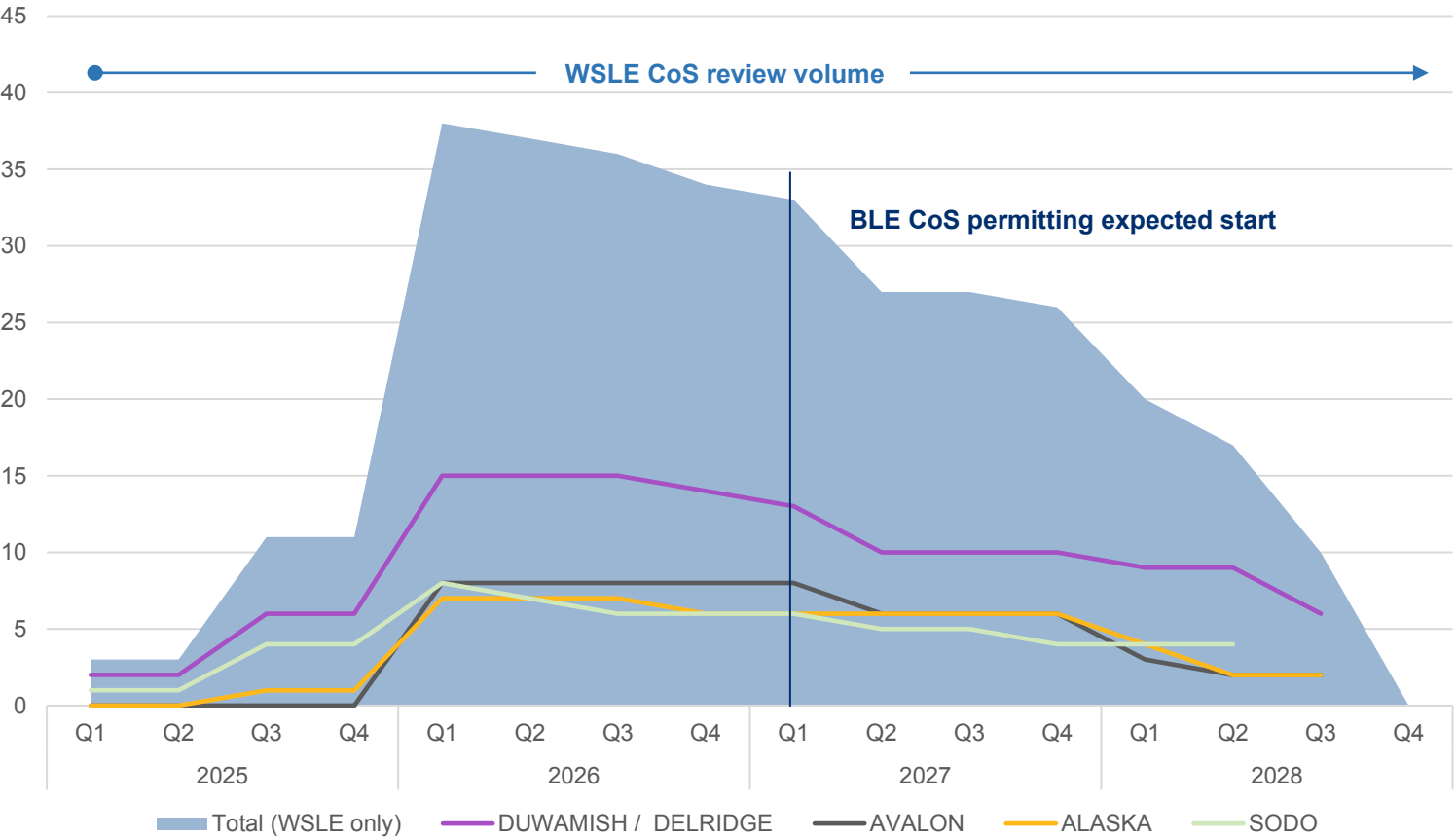
Draft WSLE Project Schedule*



*Unofficial schedule of major deliverables and milestones. Timelines are meant for planning purposes and all dates are subject to change.

Draft WSLE Project Schedule:

Design packages are set to accelerate rapidly!



Note that Ballard permit totals are not included in this chart because they are not yet known, due to the early state of design. They are estimated to begin in early 2027 and will likely be in higher volumes than WSLE and may run beyond 2030.

Sound Transit Reimbursement Targets

Recruitment for Sound Transit reimbursable positions is contingent on securing funding agreements.

- 41.5 FTE (83% of the positions) considered in this legislation anticipate funding reimbursement and/or permit revenue from ST.
- ST has historically reimbursed a portion of City ST3 Program team's work for plan review and permitting.
- The City ST3 team will negotiate expanded reimbursement agreements that scale up to the new increased level of service needed for ST3.



2025 Staff and Resource Plan: *Summary*

Q4 2025 Sources

Finance General (STBD Sales Tax)	\$ 2,296,000
Utilities Reimbursables	\$ 147,794
Sound Transit Permits & Partnership	\$ 2,284,154
Total Sources	\$ 4,727,947

Q4 2025 Uses

Staff (City Funded)	\$ 1,063,794
Staff (ST Permits & Partnership Funded)	\$ 2,284,154
Staffing Subtotal	\$ 3,347,947
Consultant & Contingency - City Funded	\$ 1,380,000
Total Uses	\$ 4,727,947

- **Budget amounts are sized for 3 months of expenses (Q4 2025)**
- Two categories of positions to meet projected program needs
 - Strategic city-funded roles (8.5 FTE)
 - Sound Transit match-funded roles (41.5 FTE)
- Consultant resources will meet short-term needs for program preparation

2025 Staff and Resource Plan: *By Department*

Department	Description	FTE
City Funded		
SDOT/OWCPST	Program level planning, engineering, policy and management	7.5
SPR	Strategic parks property analysis	1.0
Subtotal		8.5
Sound Transit Partnership/Permit Funded + City match		
SDOT/OWCPST	Permitting, plan review, capital coordination, street use, inspections	14.5
SDCI	Dedicated ST3 permit review management*	1.0
SCL	Electric relocation permitting, review, construction, field work	14.0
SPU	Water/sewer relocation permitting, review, construction, field work	11.0
DON	Historic preservation review	1.0
Subtotal		41.5
Grand Total		50.0

*Existing SDCI contingent budget authority will be used to hire permit review staff as permits are received.

- 8.5 FTE: Strategic city-funded roles for immediate hiring to support program ramp-up
- 41.5 FTE: Sound Transit match funded roles linked to partnership/permit funding
 - Hiring will occur *after* agreements for match funding are reached.
 - Authorizing position pocket *now* will facilitate faster negotiation.

Next Steps

- Continue Council consideration of the staffing plan legislation.
- Negotiate reimbursement agreements and deliverable targets with ST for expedited permit review.
- Recruit for positions in late 2025.

This hiring timeline coincides with the anticipated Q4 2025 receipt of project permit submittals. This timeline aims to prevent delays in plan review and permit processing.

Additional questions or comments?

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