

March 8, 2023

MEMORANDUM

To: City Council
From: Calvin Chow, Analyst
Subject: Council Bill 120522: Downtown Seattle Transit Tunnel Transfer and Conveyance Agreement

On March 14, 2023, the City Council will discuss and possibly vote on [Council Bill \(CB\) 120522](#), which authorizes the Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) Director to sign a multi-party agreement with King County and Sound Transit approving the transfer of the Downtown Seattle Transit Tunnel (DSTT) from King County to Sound Transit. This legislation will be referred directly to Full Council for consideration.

While the City of Seattle is not directly involved in the property transfer of the DSTT from King County to Sound Transit, the City of Seattle is party to two agreements impacted by the transfer. These include: (1) the 1985 Master Cooperation Agreement authorizing King County to use DSTT right-of-way for transit purposes; and (2) the 2002 Joint Operating Agreement authorizing joint bus and light-rail operations in the DSTT.

The proposed legislation would authorize the execution of a new DSTT Transfer and Conveyance Agreement. In addition to transferring the ownership of the DSTT from King County to Sound Transit, the agreement would terminate the 1985 Master Cooperation Agreement and the 2002 Joint Operating Agreement. The agreement calls for Sound Transit's ownership of the DSTT to be acknowledged in the City of Seattle and Sound Transit's Transit Way Agreement following the administrative provisions of the Transit Way Agreement. These actions will affirm that King County has no outstanding obligations regarding the DSTT with the City of Seattle.

The DSTT was constructed by King County in 1990 to provide dedicated transit access through Downtown Seattle. The DSTT began service as a bus corridor but was converted to joint bus and light-rail operations in 2009 with the start of Sound Transit light-rail service. In 2019, bus operations in the DSTT ended and the facility is now used exclusively for light-rail operations.

In 2019, King County sold the Convention Place Station property (the site of the new Washington State Convention Center), eliminating the northern access point connecting the DSTT to city streets. With this loss of access, buses can no longer operate in the DSTT. The termination of bus operations and dedicated use of the DSTT for light-rail supports Sound Transit's system expansion plans, including the 2024 Lynwood Link and East Link extensions.

King County and Sound Transit have both passed legislation authorizing approval of the DSTT Transfer and Conveyance Agreement. Central Staff have identified no concerns with this legislation. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or concerns.

cc: Esther Handy, Director
Aly Pennucci, Deputy Director
Brian Goodnight, Lead Analyst