

Engagement Summary Report

May 2026



Table of contents

Executive summary	3
About the Enterprise Initiative	3
Purpose of this report	3
Overview of engagement approach	3
Survey snapshot	4
Common feedback themes	4
Next steps	4
Public engagement overview	5
In-person engagement	5
Community events	5
Town halls	6
Community-based organizations	8
Online engagement	8
Digital outreach	8
Survey	9
Community feedback	9
Regionwide themes and shared community priorities	10
Ranking guiding principles	10
Ranking funding actions to close the \$34.5B gap	11
Ranking investment priority areas	11
Strong support for local and subarea-specific projects	12
Subarea engagement and local priorities	14
Snohomish County	14
East King County	15
North King County	17
Cross-subarea focus: Graham Street and Boeing Access Road stations	19
South King County	20
Pierce County	21
Themes in open-ended results that speak to ranking questions	23
Conclusion	23
Appendix A	24
Enterprise Initiative online survey	24
About the survey	24
Analysis methodology	24
Analyzing responses to closed-ended prompts	25
Analyzing responses to open-ended questions	25
Survey acknowledgements and notes on interpretation	25
Full text of online survey	27
Appendix B	32
Enterprise Initiative online survey findings	32
Survey engagement by subarea	32
Respondent demographics	33
Survey findings: Closed-ended questions	33
Survey findings: Open-ended questions	38
Zooming in on response themes by question	38
How open-ended responses speak to closed-ended results	49

Executive summary

About the Enterprise Initiative

The Enterprise Initiative is Sound Transit’s comprehensive agencywide effort to address long-term affordability challenges while continuing to deliver the voter-approved Sound Transit 3 program. Like many transit agencies nationwide, Sound Transit is experiencing rapidly escalating capital, operating, and maintenance costs driven by inflation, labor shortages, and supply chain disruptions, alongside updated revenue forecasts. Without taking steps to address the gap, Sound Transit projects a long-term affordability challenge in the 2030s that would limit the agency’s ability to fully deliver the ST3 program within existing financial constraints.

Launched in 2025, the Enterprise Initiative takes a broader and more holistic approach than past affordability efforts by considering all elements of the agency’s work together — including planning and policy, capital delivery, operations, and finance. Through multiple workstreams, this initiative is evaluating cost-saving opportunities, identifying potential efficiencies, and exploring ways to strengthen financial capacity, with the goal of delivering the greatest possible transit benefits to the region while maintaining fiscal integrity and public trust.

Purpose of this report

As a core component of the Enterprise Initiative, public engagement is intended to ensure that community priorities and values directly inform Sound Transit Board decision making on ST3 System Plan updates and an affordable path forward. This report summarizes the agency’s engagement methods and activities and the public feedback gathered through them. This feedback supplements technical and financial analyses and is intended to support decision making for durable, equitable, and affordable Enterprise Initiative outcomes.

Overview of engagement approach

Sound Transit implemented a comprehensive, multifaceted public engagement approach to gather regionwide input to inform the Enterprise Initiative. Engagement included an online survey available in seven languages; staff and Board member participation in more than 20 community events and five town halls hosted by the Transportation Choices Coalition across all subareas; targeted and organic social media content; emails to Sound Transit subscribers; and partnerships with local organizations, elected officials, and employers.

Staff shared materials and provided or offered briefings to community-based organizations, jurisdictions, agency partners, tribal governments, and elected officials at the local, state, federal and Tribal level. To ensure these activities were accessible and inclusive, staff provided translated information, participated in events outside business hours at ADA-compliant locations near transit, and offered both digital and paper options for the public to learn about the Enterprise Initiative. Collectively, this approach focused on ensuring communities and individuals could share their priorities with the Sound Transit Board as its members consider long-term affordability strategies and future system decisions.

Survey snapshot

Open March 30–May 1, our Enterprise Initiative survey was designed to maximize opportunities for participation across the region and help staff and Board members learn about public priorities.

Sound Transit received **more than 17,700 responses** and more than 27,000 open comments — one of the largest survey responses in agency history.

Common feedback themes

Across in-person events, emails, public comments, and survey feedback, staff heard broad and strong support for Sound Transit’s mission across the region. These key themes emerged across subareas and engagement tactics:

- **Advance regional connectivity.**
- **Secure new state or federal funding.**
- **Avoid delaying or canceling light rail projects.**
- **Prioritize light rail expansion and make service more reliable.**

Throughout the region, communities also voiced **support for their local projects and priorities**, e.g., East King communities for South Kirkland–Issaquah Link; North King communities for West Seattle and Ballard; communities in South King and North King for Graham Street and Boeing Access Road stations; and Snohomish and Pierce for bringing light rail to Everett Station and Tacoma Dome.

Staff also heard **support for Sound Transit delivering the full ST3 program and using every tool available** to do so. The majority preferred phasing, deferrals, or delays over canceling projects. In addition, many members of the public requested **meaningful, timely engagement and easy access to information** — particularly project timelines, alignment, and station-design information; “plain-speak” communications and materials; and explanation of the factors contributing to the agency’s projected \$34.5B gap.

Next steps

Engagement related to the Enterprise Initiative is ongoing and does not end with the publication of this report. Public feedback is critical to informing the Board’s ongoing Enterprise Initiative discussions and is also relevant for our community partners, interest holders, and the general

public. In addition to this full report, Sound Transit staff will share feedback from Enterprise Initiative engagement activities:

- On the agency's blog, The Platform, providing an overview of engagement activities and this full report.
- Via Sound Transit's social media channels, directing the general public to review the insights and feedback received.
- Through email updates to capital project subscribers and to those who shared feedback via EnterpriseInitiative@soundtransit.org, summarizing feedback and key themes.

Sound Transit will continue seeking public and community partner feedback as projects and strategies advance, using input to inform the agency's planning, delivery, and financial strategies.

Public engagement overview

Sound Transit's Enterprise Initiative engagement strategy combined **in-person outreach**, **digital communications**, and **community partnerships** to ensure broad geographic reach and accessibility. The approach emphasized meeting people where they already gather and through trusted community networks. Additionally, Sound Transit provided regionwide opportunities to participate through a short online survey available in seven languages and invited feedback and questions via email.

Across all engagement opportunities, staff focused on clearly explaining the Enterprise Initiative, the factors driving long-term affordability challenges, and how public input would inform Board decision making.

In-person engagement

Community events

Sound Transit staff participated in more than 20 community events across all five subareas. These events included transportation fairs, Earth Day festivals, station open houses, high school civics classes, chamber of commerce meetings, medical center briefings, and outreach with employers seeking to reduce single-occupancy vehicle trips and support employee commute options.

At these events, staff shared information about the Enterprise Initiative, answered questions, and encouraged survey participation. Engagement at community events helped reach audiences who may not typically attend formal public meetings, and staff intentionally prioritized places and spaces that reflected a wide range of community contexts.

For in-person engagement events, Sound Transit staff used a range of clear, accessible materials, including flyers, posters, and event signage. Materials explained the Enterprise

Initiative at a high level and encouraged survey participation in languages reflecting the diverse communities served.

Printed materials and signage prominently featured QR codes linking directly to the Enterprise Initiative survey, allowing attendees to access the survey on their mobile devices during or after events. This approach reduced barriers to participation and helped connect in-person engagement with digital feedback opportunities.



Town halls

Staff attended and provided Enterprise Initiative–related content at eight town hall events across the Sound Transit district hosted by community organizations, partners, Board members, and the Transportation Choices Coalition. These events were designed to create accessible forums for sharing information and hearing directly from the public.

The Transportation Choices Coalition town halls featured presentations and panel discussions that included Sound Transit Board members. Three other community and Board member-led town halls occurred, focused on regional issues like the future of infill stations, the West Seattle Link Extension, and the Ballard Link Extension. Staff participated in every event, providing foundational information about the long-term affordability challenges facing the agency and the collective work underway to deliver the voter-approved ST3 plan within available resources.

The town halls supported information sharing, allowed for open discussion of trade-offs and priorities, and created meaningful opportunities for community members to engage directly with both decision-makers and staff.

Approximately 1,400 people attended the eight town hall events, demonstrating high public interest in the Enterprise Initiative and the future of regional transit.

Town halls took place:

March 30 at Bellevue City Hall, hosted by Transportation Choices Coalition in partnership with Move Redmond (East King subarea).

April 1 at Youngstown Cultural Arts Center, hosted by Boardmember Teresa Mosqueda (North King subarea).

April 14 at Everett Station, hosted by Transportation Choices Coalition in partnership with Snotrac (Snohomish subarea).

April 27 at UW Tacoma, hosted by Transportation Choices Coalition in partnership with Tacoma on the Go (Pierce subarea).

May 5 at Seattle City Hall, with Transportation Choices Coalition serving as host and moderator (North King subarea).

May 11 at the National Nordic Museum, with Boardmember Dan Strauss serving as host and moderator (North King subarea).

May 12 at the Southend Transit Justice Townhall, hosted by the Filipino Community Center (North King subarea).

May 13 at Highline College, with Transportation Choices Coalition serving as host and moderator (South King subarea).

At town halls in March and April, staff promoted the Enterprise Initiative survey as an avenue for attendees to share their priorities. At events held closer to and after the survey closing date of May 1, staff also provided attendees with the EnterpriseInitiative@soundtransit.org email address to submit additional comments. This report includes feedback received through both channels.

Community-based organizations

Sound Transit amplified its outreach by partnering with community-based organizations, advocacy groups, employers, and local institutions to broaden awareness of the Enterprise Initiative and encourage survey participation. These partnerships expanded engagement with communities across geographies, languages, and lived experiences, including audiences who may not typically participate in agency and/or public sector-led processes.

Staff participated in community-hosted meetings and briefings when invited, providing tailored overviews of the Enterprise Initiative and answering questions specific to local and organizational priorities.

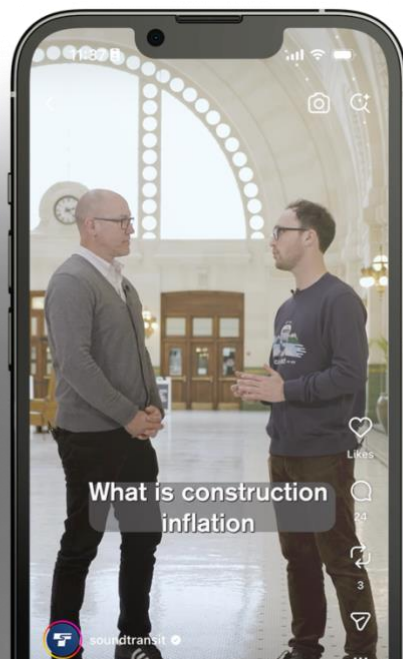
Online engagement

Digital outreach

To complement in-person outreach activities, Sound Transit leveraged organic and paid digital channels to broaden Enterprise Initiative awareness and encourage survey participation.

Throughout the Enterprise Initiative, the agency has maintained comprehensive information on the agency's website at soundtransit.org/affordability. Staff also promoted the survey and website content through Sound Transit's email distribution lists, reaching more than 64,000 people across the region. These lists include riders, residents, stakeholders, and community members who have opted to receive updates about Sound Transit's current service and future projects, ensuring broad geographic and demographic reach.

Staff provided additional Enterprise Initiative context and storytelling via the agency's blog, The Platform, and shared survey information through Sound Transit's social media channels.



These communication touchpoints included [succinct explainer videos featuring subject matter experts](#) diving deeper into Enterprise Initiative workstreams (a series still in progress), and plain-language definitions of terms related to ST3 System Plan updates like “What’s subarea equity?”

Sound Transit also leveraged a targeted paid social media campaign from April 22–30 to drive traffic to the Enterprise Initiative survey. This campaign reached 293,000 Meta accounts (Instagram and Facebook) and generated 767,000 impressions, resulting in 9,649 total click-throughs.

Survey

The Enterprise Initiative survey helped gather input on transit priorities and long-term affordability considerations from Sound Transit district residents. It was designed to take less than 5 minutes, included limited jargon and transit-industry specific terminology, and was widely available and accessible. The survey was available in English, Spanish, Tagalog, Vietnamese, Korean, Traditional Chinese, and Simplified Chinese.

The survey was organized into three parts:

- Three closed-ended questions that asked respondents to rank items by importance or favorability.
- Three open-ended questions that invited respondents to:
 - Name specific projects the agency should prioritize. *(12,551 substantive responses)*
 - Share one thing they'd like the Sound Transit Board to know as its members begin to prioritize and make decisions. *(14,141 substantive responses)*
 - Identify any topics related to the agency's financial challenges on which they'd like to receive more information. *(5,406 substantive responses)*
- Demographics questions.

Community feedback

The engagement activities outlined above generated a broad and diverse set of input from community members. The following section presents the key findings and themes that emerged through comprehensive analysis of survey responses, emails, and public comments shared with the Board, and the range of issues and priorities raised throughout the engagement process.

Consistent themes emerged across the three-county region and all five subareas, highlighting shared priorities and concerns. To synthesize findings, staff focused on the most relevant themes for each question and cross-checked results. The analysis combined human review and advanced tools to support the scale of responses. Results are best understood as a descriptive summary of input received with the strongest confidence in the most consistently expressed, cross-cutting themes.

A detailed description of survey methodology is included in Appendix A, and survey findings in Appendix B.

Regionwide themes and shared community priorities

Across the region, community members expressed a set of common themes that reflect shared priorities and expectations. These cross-cutting findings highlight areas of alignment across subareas and provide insight into how communities collectively view the agency’s role and responsibilities.

Ranking guiding principles

Advancing regional connectivity is consistently a top priority across all subareas.

Survey prompt: “Sound Transit’s Board of Directors is using the following principles to guide decision-making to solve for these future financial challenges. Please rank each of the following from most important to least important.”

Ranked response to this question (Figure 1) reinforces that respondents prioritize advancing regional connectivity and the rider experience as the core principles the Board should consider when it makes decisions.

Sound Transit Board guiding principles

Average ranking overall

Share of respondents assigning each rank to each principle (ordered by mean importance) | n = 17,653

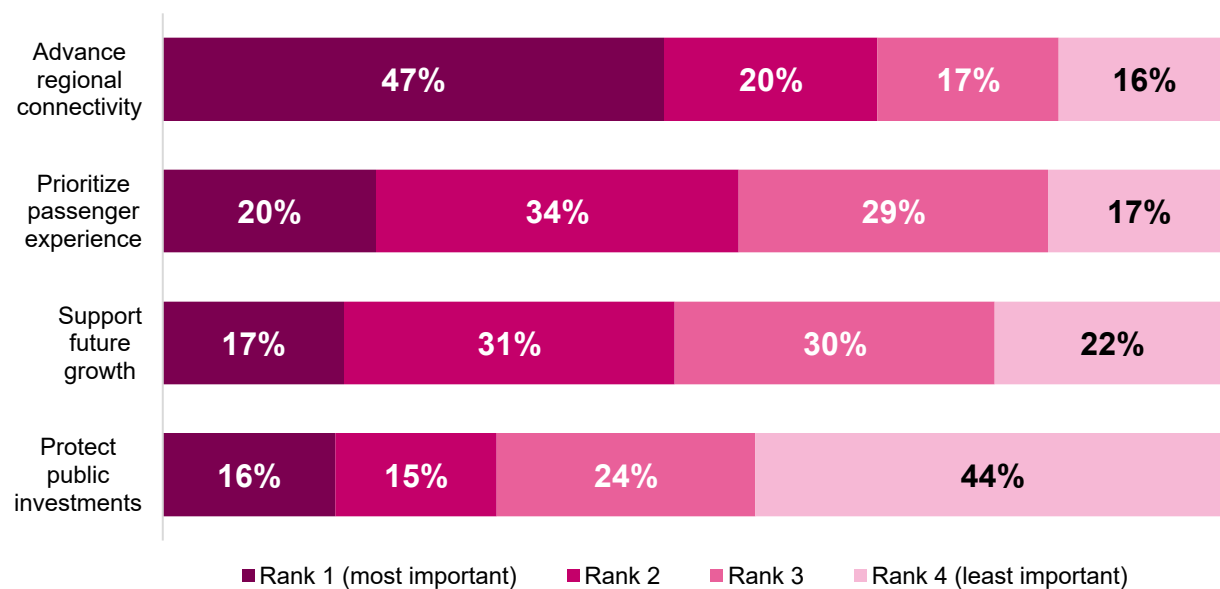


Figure 1. Sound Transit Board Enterprise Initiative guiding principles – ranking results, overall

Ranking funding actions to close the \$34.5B gap

Survey prompt: “Delivering on the objectives of ST3 requires closing a \$34.5 billion funding gap. Please rank each of the below actions from most favorable to least favorable.”

Ranked response (Figure 2) shows finding new state or federal funding as respondents’ clear preference. This was the consistent top priority across all subareas, while delaying or canceling projects ranked lowest across all subareas.

Funding actions

Average ranking overall

Share of respondents assigning each rank to each funding action (ordered by mean favorability) | n = 17,665

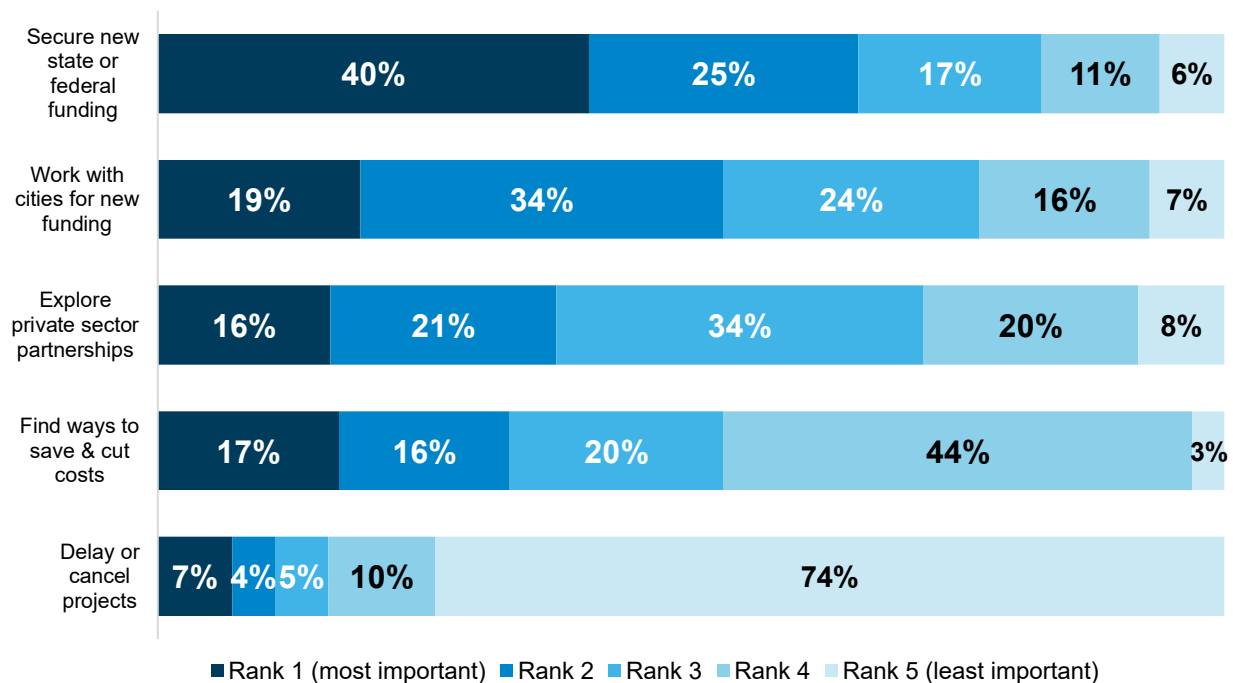


Figure 2. Funding actions ranking results, overall

Ranking investment priority areas

Survey prompt: “Even as Sound Transit is working to address future financial challenges, we are also thinking about how best to invest in our system. Please rank each of the below areas from most important to least important.”

Respondents ranked four potential investment priority areas from most to least important. Across all subareas expanding Link light rail is a consistent priority. Investments in service and reliability also rank highly among respondents. These findings mirror the values in the first closed-ended question about residents’ priorities. Consistently ranking among the lowest two investment priorities were Sounder service and parking investments (Figure 3).

Investment priorities

Average ranking overall

Share of respondents assigning each rank to each investment area (ordered by mean importance) | n = 17,575

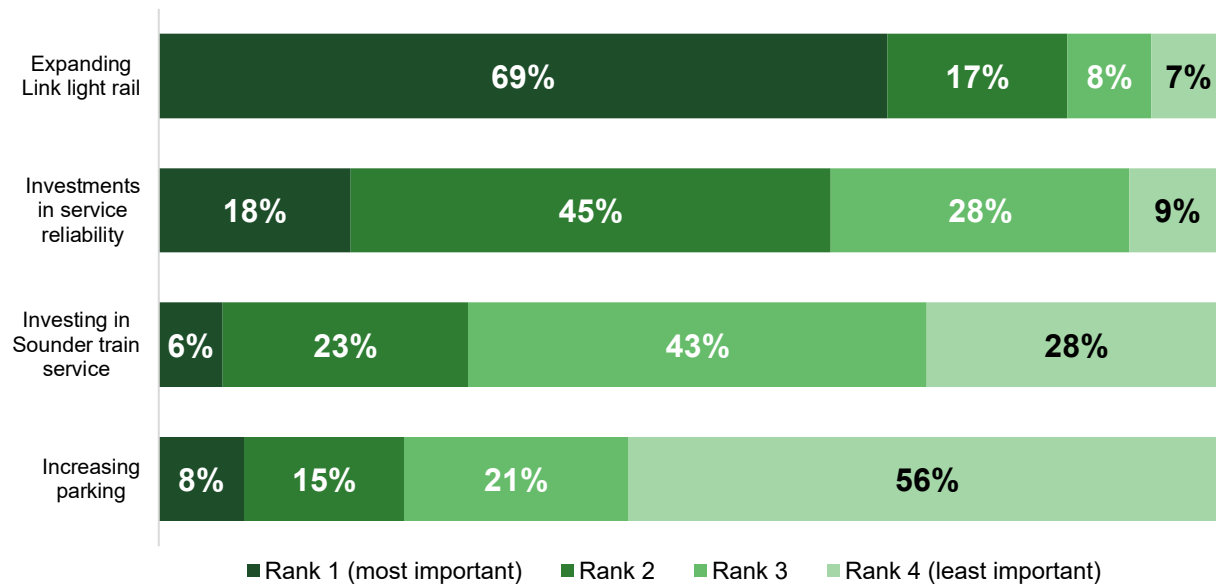


Figure 3. Investment priority areas ranking results, overall

Strong support for local and subarea-specific projects

In addition to shared regional priorities, communities expressed clear support for projects within their own subareas. Open-ended feedback frequently referenced corridor- and project-specific priorities, including support in East King County for the South Kirkland–Issaquah Link Extension; in North King County for West Seattle and Ballard; in South King and North King for Graham Street and Boeing Access Road stations; and in Snohomish and Pierce Counties to bring light rail to Everett Station and Tacoma Dome. These responses highlight the importance of local context in how respondents interpret systemwide investment priorities.

Most-mentioned priority projects

Source: Open-ended priority-project responses. ZIP boundaries: US Census 2010 ZCTAs via tigris.

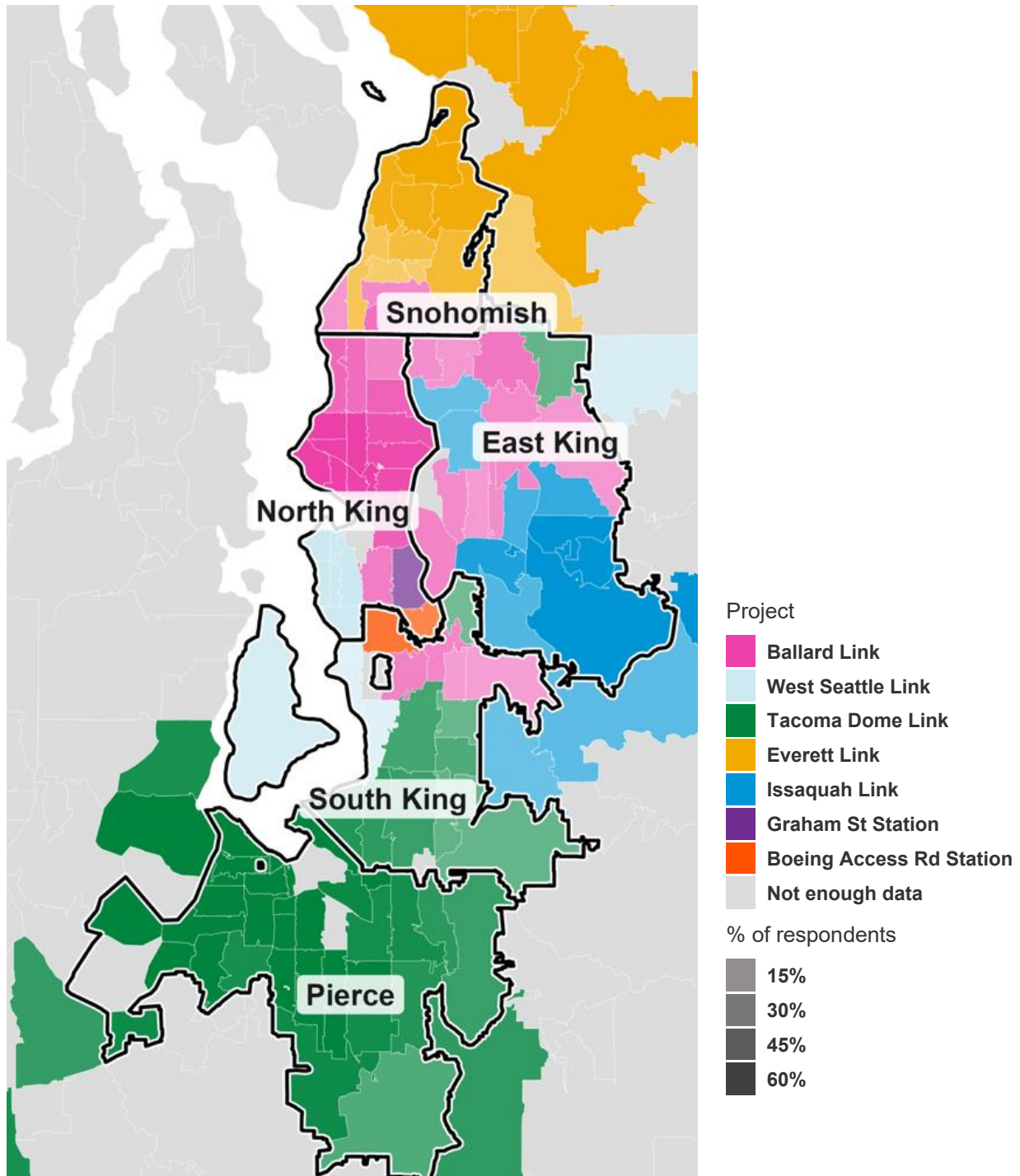


Figure 4. Most-mentioned project priority, by ZIP code

Subarea engagement and local priorities

In addition to the shared regionwide themes outlined above, respondents expressed distinct priorities shaped by local context. The following sections summarize our outreach and findings by subarea.

Snohomish County

1,547	Survey responses
1	Community events, fairs, festivals, and other tabling <i>Everett High School presentation</i>
11	Briefings with community members and elected officials
6	Emails received with subarea project feedback

In total, Sound Transit offered 54 community touchpoints or conversations in Snohomish County. In addition to supporting a town hall at Everett Station hosted by the Transportation Choices Coalition, Snotrac, and Snohomish County Board members, Sound Transit staff conducted direct engagement through city and county staff coordination and individual briefings with elected officials in Mountlake Terrace, Everett, Mill Creek, Edmonds, Mukilteo, and Snohomish County government. Staff also presented Enterprise Initiative content at community forums and interagency meetings, including Snohomish County Tomorrow, the Latino Educational Training Institute, Everett High School, and the Seashore Transportation Forum. Additional outreach included individual stakeholder meetings with business and access organizations such as the Everett Chamber, Economic Alliance Snohomish County, and the Snohomish County Committee for Improved Transportation.

Community feedback from the Snohomish subarea focused on completing the light rail spine, identifying policies the Board could advance to accelerate project delivery and reduce costs, and ensuring community priorities were reflected in station development.

In discussion, staff heard overwhelming support for protecting the Everett Link Extension timeline, requesting light rail be prioritized and built as soon as possible without further delays. Feedback underscored a desire for reliable agency communication, specifically regarding property impacts.

Staff heard questions regarding taxpayer accountability, asking what will happen to already collected Regional Transit Authority taxes if promised projects fail to materialize. Residents emphasized that they've paid taxes for years, and that Sound Transit delivering on commitments is an issue of equity and trust. They also noted that Everett Link's project costs haven't escalated at the same rate as those in other subareas.

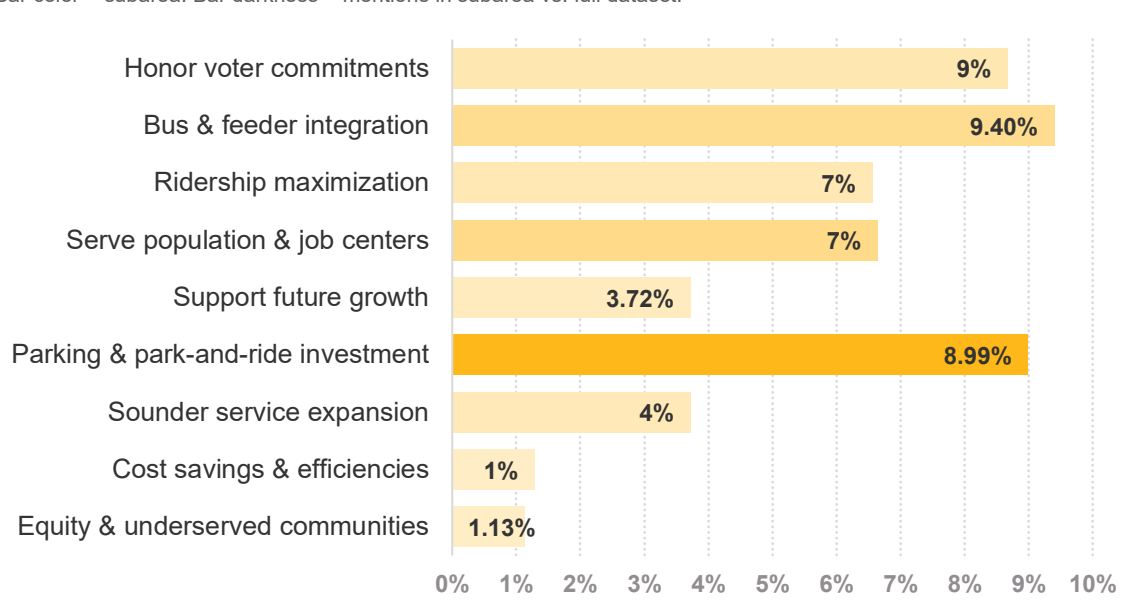
Some community feedback suggested prioritizing the connection directly to North Everett along I-5, if a choice must be made between that and the SW Everett Industrial Center loop.

Survey insights

Snohomish survey respondents followed the general trend of regionwide themes but also expressed higher prioritization for parking and park-and-ride lots compared to residents in other subareas.

Snohomish priorities

Bar color = subarea. Bar darkness = mentions in subarea vs. full dataset.



East King County

2,379	Survey responses
11	Community events, fairs, festivals, and tabling <i>1,658 interactions at transportation fairs, Earth Day events, and cultural events</i>
75	Briefings with community members and elected officials
4	Emails received with subarea project feedback

In addition to supporting a town hall at Bellevue City Hall hosted by Transportation Choices Coalition, Move Redmond, and East King County Board members, Sound Transit staff engaged in city council briefings and individual briefings with elected officials and staff in Issaquah, Kirkland, Bellevue, Redmond, Renton, Bothell, Kenmore, Lake Forest Park, Mercer Island, and Woodinville.

Staff presented Enterprise Initiative content in community forums and interagency meetings including the Eastrail Regional Advisory Council, WSDOT's 405/167 Executive Advisory Group, and the Eastside Transportation Partnership. The agency also conducted individual stakeholder meetings and outreach with access and business organizations like Move Redmond, Eastrail Partners, the Bellevue Chamber, and the Bellevue Downtown Association. In the community, engagement staff interacted with the public at employer transportation events, high schools, senior centers, and cultural organizations.

Community feedback focused heavily on the future 4 Line from South Kirkland to Issaquah, maintaining current subarea equity policies, completing funded high-capacity transit studies, and constructing critical parking and access projects.

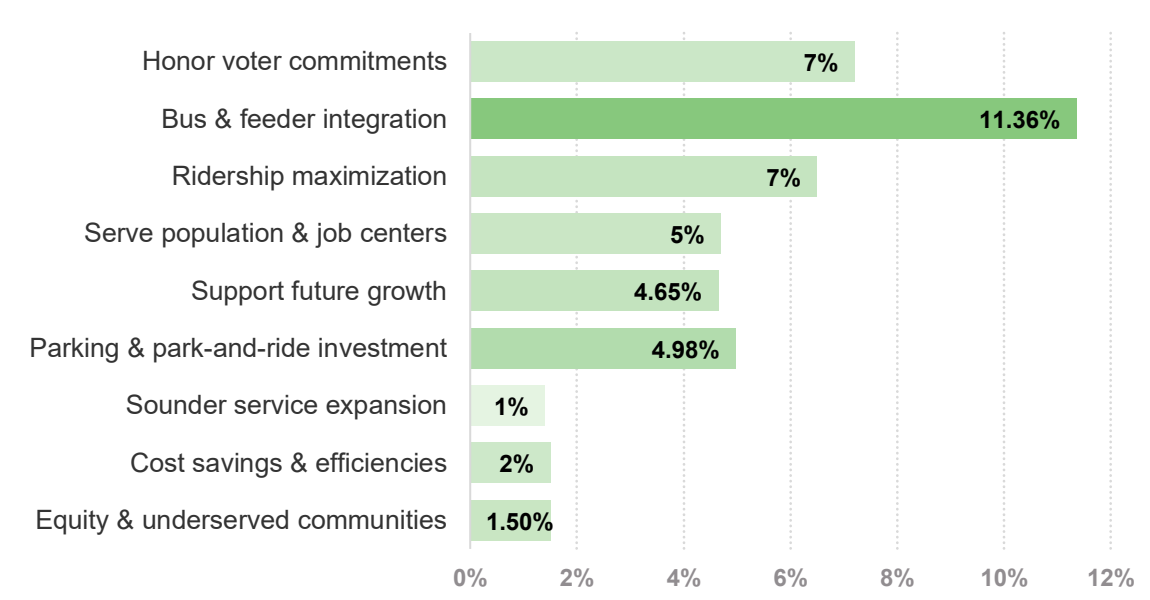
Across 86 community touchpoints, residents expressed strong support for more light rail in East King County, advocating against deferring or cutting the South Kirkland–Issaquah Link project and noting its importance for Eastside growth and transit access.

Survey insights

East King survey respondents followed the general trend of regionwide themes, but also expressed higher prioritization for bus and feeder integration compared to residents in other subareas.

East King priorities

Bar color = subarea. Bar darkness = mentions in subarea vs. full dataset.



North King County

8,711	Survey responses
8	Community events, fairs, festivals, and tabling <i>432 interactions with events with employers, business groups, and community organizations</i>
41	Briefings with community members and elected officials
17	Emails received with subarea project feedback

Across 87 touch points in this subarea — and echoed in written and verbal Board comments — residents expressed frustration regarding budget constraints, project delays, and changes to ST3 voter commitments. While many appreciate the utility of active services, residents and organizations broadly view proposals to cut or delay projects as unacceptable, arguing that taxpayers are paying for a system they may never see completed.

Rather than accepting cuts, the public and coalitions like the Downtown Transportation Alliance, Commute Seattle, the University of Washington, and Seattle Department of Transportation are urgently pressing the Board to aggressively lobby Olympia, seek alternative funding solutions, and clearly explain how capital program savings will be navigated within the agency's larger financial management.

There is also skepticism about the current public engagement process, paired with demands for Sound Transit to act as better stewards of public funds. Overall, stakeholders across the subarea emphasized the importance of transparency, ongoing engagement, and timely project advancement.

Feedback regarding the Ballard Link Extension was particularly intense. Engaging with organizations like Puget Sound Sage, Historic South Downtown, SCIDpda, the FutureTracks coalition, the Ballard Alliance, and Seattle Center stakeholders, Sound Transit heard opposition to the proposed second downtown tunnel. Several constituents advocated for interlining the Ballard extension into the existing transit tunnel. Critics argue split stations in the Chinatown-International District disproportionately harm underserved communities, are prohibitively expensive, and worsen the rider experience with inconvenient transfers.

Ballard stakeholders oppose any station reductions or alternatives that don't fully deliver the Ballard Link Extension to Market Street. Property owners also expressed deep stress over how shifting alternatives, particularly in South Lake Union, and the broader System Plan update will affect the Environmental Impact Statement process, property acquisition, and leasing timelines.

Sentiments surrounding the West Seattle Link Extension highlight a mix of shifting priorities and ongoing anxieties. Small businesses and property owners — engaged directly and through groups like the West Seattle Chamber, the West Seattle Junction Association, and the SODO Business Improvement Area — responded favorably to a cost-saving alignment presented in

March. In April, Boardmember Mosqueda hosted a community forum where community expressed significant support for the West Seattle Link Extension. While a vocal contingent argued the project is too expensive for its projected ridership — suggesting it should be delayed to prioritize the system's spine or replaced entirely with bus rapid transit — there has also been a positive shift among local stakeholders.

This alignment successfully reduced effects on businesses and community assets, leading to increased local support for the extension. Nevertheless, even among these supportive groups, there is lingering frustration with the ongoing delays, uncertainty, and the project's complex construction logistics.

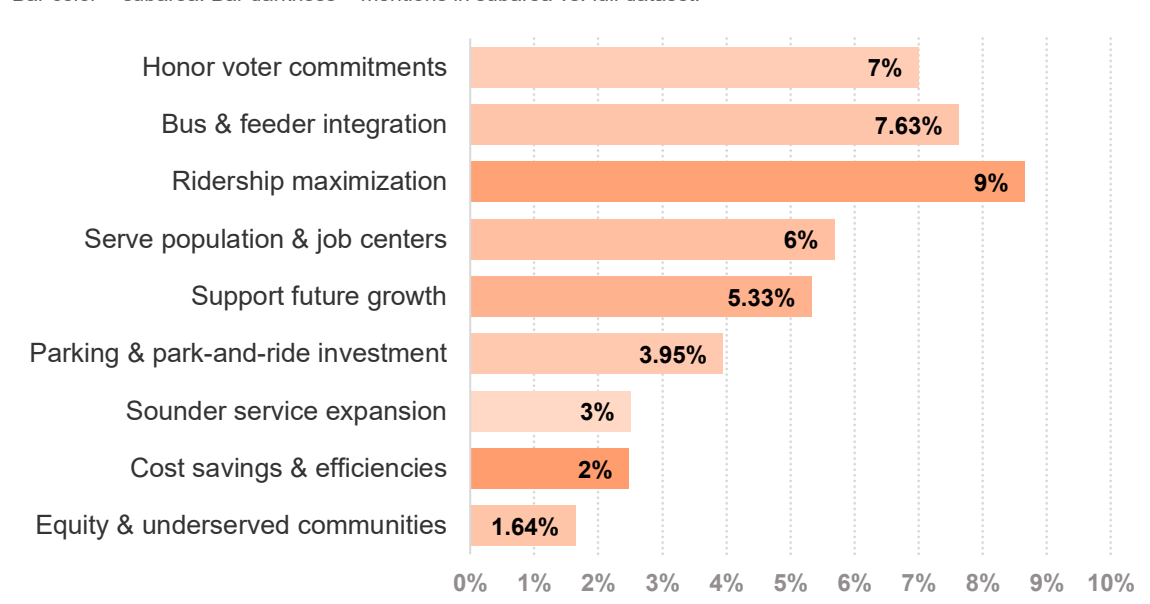
Across all projects, the community wants definitive answers on how rising costs are calculated and a commitment to delivering promised transit expansions as swiftly as possible.

Survey insights

North King respondents expressed higher prioritization for rider maximization compared to respondents in other subareas. North King respondents also prioritized Sounder service expansion less.

North King priorities

Bar color = subarea. Bar darkness = mentions in subarea vs. full dataset.



Cross-subarea focus: Graham Street and Boeing Access Road stations

While administrative boundaries separate the North and South King County subareas, communities near the voter-approved Graham Street and Boeing Access Road stations share transit needs, as well as a history of racial injustice and lack of public investment.

In contrast to the debates over the larger North King projects like Ballard and West Seattle, the proposed Graham Street Infill Station receives unified, protective support. Because it serves a highly diverse community and has faced previous delays, advocates argue that keeping Graham Street on its current timeline is critical to filling the longest gap between stations in the Rainier Valley.

Likewise, feedback from South King communities like Tukwila, South Seattle, and unincorporated King County expressed frustration over the 30-year delay of the Boeing Access Road Station. As a project originally approved under Sound Move, its continued deferral was cited as a source of government mistrust.

On May 12, community advocates organized a joint town hall meeting at the Filipino Community Center, which drew about 120 residents as well as two Sound Transit Board members, Girmay Zahilay and Thomas McLeod. Attendees shared how light rail access affects their daily travel, employment, and economic stability.

On May 13, Transportation Choices Coalition hosted a town hall at Highline Community College which was attended by Boardmembers McLeod, Zahilay, and Steffanie Fain, as well as agency staff. Sentiment at this town hall echoed the strong support for both infill stations and the economic justice implications of bringing reliable transit to historically underserved communities.

Community members continue to weigh in passionately, stressing the profound equity implications of delaying the project.

South King County

844	Survey responses
3	Community events, fairs, festivals, and tabling <i>Transit Equity Light Rail Forum, Allentown Advocates meeting</i>
14	Briefings with community members and elected officials
1	Emails received with subarea project feedback

In South King County, community feedback centered on the urgent need to deliver the Boeing Access Road Infill Station, improve Sounder S Line service, and complete the Link spine to Tacoma via South Federal Way. Across more than 35 community touchpoints, a consistent theme emerged: the delivery of these projects is viewed not merely as a transit necessity, but as a matter of equity and historical redress.

Stakeholders emphasized that Boeing Access Road Station would close the longest gap between stations on the 1 Line and serve one of the most racially diverse corridors in the region. During Board meetings and public forums, advocates argued that the infill project is crucial for correcting decades-old underinvestment and supporting workforce mobility and housing growth in the Southend.

The sentiment regarding the Graham Street and Boeing Access Road stations was underscored by a sharp focus on racial equity. Leaders from Puget Sound Sage and local elected officials challenged the agency to align its equity values with its funding decisions.

Feedback from the Southend Transit Equity Light Rail Forum highlighted community members' collective memory of the area bearing the brunt of cost-saving measures, such as the 2000s-era bus cuts along MLK Way that were never fully mitigated. Attendees voiced "engagement fatigue," noting that after 30 years of advocacy, the community often feels like an afterthought in the planning process.

In addition to Sound Transit staff and Board members supporting the South King County town hall hosted by the Transportation Choices Coalition, the agency conducted briefings with the South County Area Transportation Board, local chambers of commerce, and specific city governments. These sessions revealed a deep public interest in exploring systemwide cost-saving measures rather than localized station deferrals.

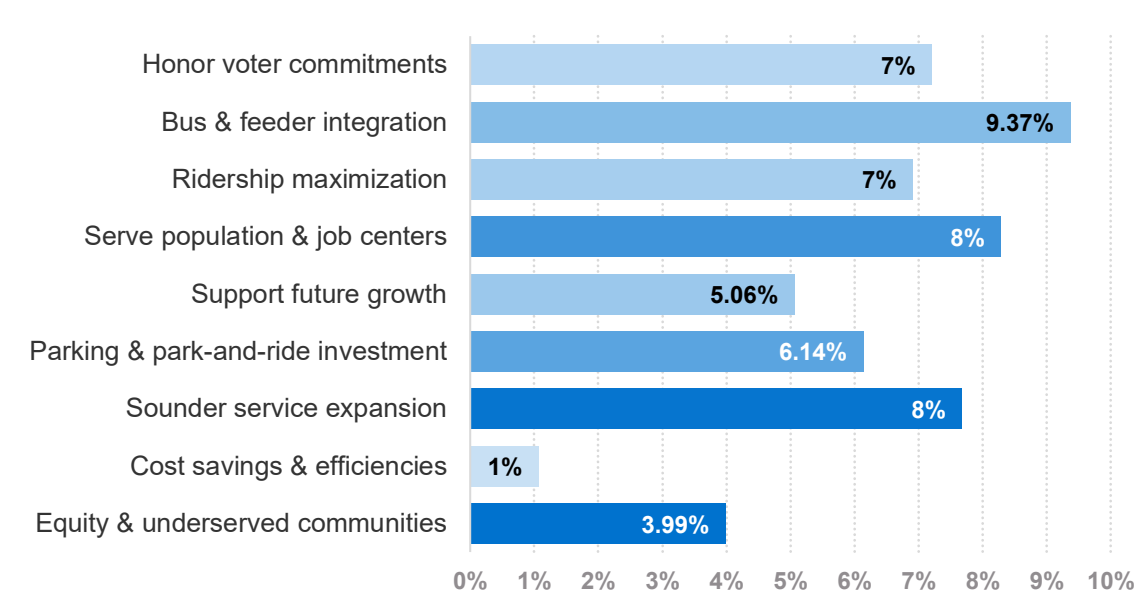
While there is strong support for the 1 Line extension from Federal Way to the Tacoma Dome and Sounder South capacity expansion, the future of the infill stations looks to be the primary metric by which they will hold elected officials and the agency accountable.

Survey insights

South King respondents expressed similar weighting on their preferences generally but were more in favor of serving population and job centers, Sounder service expansion, and focusing on equity and underserved communities.

South King priorities

Bar color = subarea. Bar darkness = mentions in subarea vs. full dataset.



Pierce County

2,957	Survey responses
3	Community events, fairs, festivals, and tabling <i>Tacoma Dome Link station planning open houses, Touch-a-Truck</i>
11	Briefings with community members and elected officials
4	Emails received with subarea project feedback

In total, Sound Transit conducted more than 38 community touchpoints and conversations across the subarea. This engagement included a community meeting at the University of Washington Tacoma hosted by the Transportation Choices Coalition and Sound Transit Board members, as well as direct briefings with elected officials and staff in Milton, Fife, Tacoma, and Sumner.

Staff presented Enterprise Initiative content in several community forums and interagency meetings, including the Regional Access Mobility Partnership, the TDLE Interagency Group, Tacoma on the Go, and the Cascade Club of Tacoma. The agency also sent email notices to every city elected official in the Pierce County subarea.

Feedback from the Pierce County town hall and other forums indicated a significant interest in reaching the Tacoma Dome, with many participants stating that completing the 1 Line is a priority. Attendees inquired about the timeline for Link reaching the Tacoma Dome and the availability of jobs for those interested in working on the extension. There was clear opposition

to proposals that would truncate the spine at Fife, as stakeholders emphasized that finishing the line to Tacoma is a primary expectation.

The T Line extension to Tacoma Community College received support from college leadership and the Board of Trustees, as well as the Tacoma Rainiers. Advocates characterized the extension as an equity issue, noting that it would serve approximately 12,000 students who face various transportation barriers. This feedback stressed that the project is necessary for student access and should not be deferred.

Some residents also raised questions regarding the possibility of motor vehicle excise tax refunds if Sound Transit projects are not completed as planned.

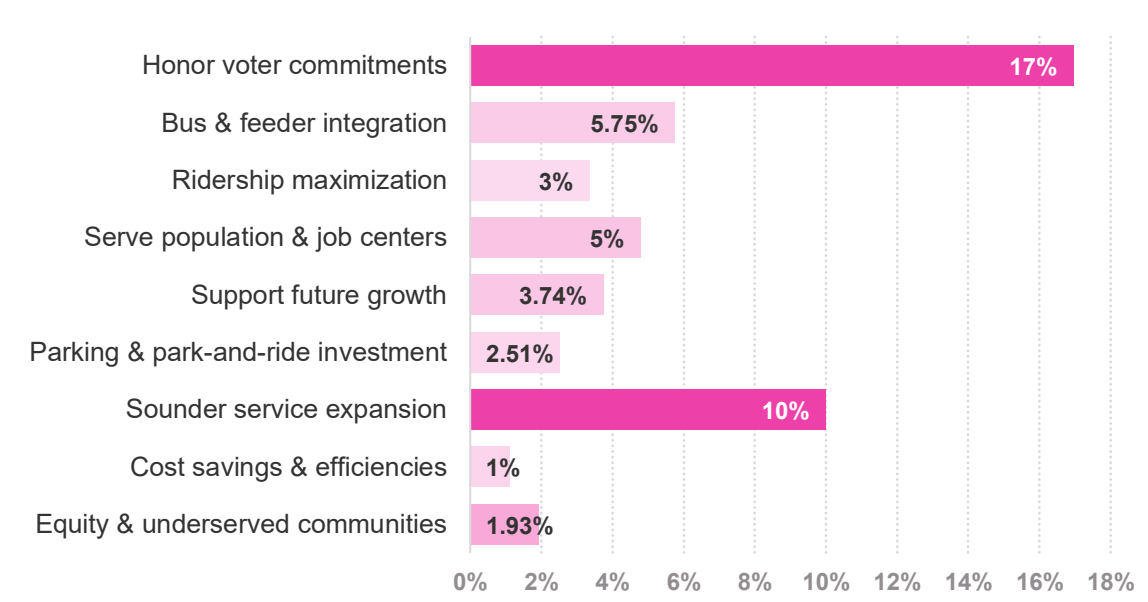
Additionally, some community members provided specific suggestions for cost management, such as a proposal to eliminate the Portland Avenue East station from the Tacoma Dome Link Extension project to reduce expenses. Others urged Sound Transit to preserve Freighthouse Square for community use.

Survey insights

Pierce County survey respondent trends broke away from the general themes in their high prioritization of Sounder Expansion projects and desire for Sound Transit to honor voter commitments. Pierce County respondents ranked ridership maximization and park-and-ride investments lower.

Pierce priorities

Bar color = subarea. Bar darkness = mentions in subarea vs. full dataset.



Themes in open-ended results that speak to ranking questions

The open-ended responses provide insight into why respondents ranked closed-ended items as they do and provide nuance on topics where division exists.

On the Board's Enterprise Initiative guiding principles: Open-ended results reinforce what rises to the top of the principles ranking. Voter trust, delivering on approved commitments, and rider reliability emerge as respondents' core expectations. Ridership-based prioritization, equity, and stewardship appear frequently in the open ends as well.

On funding actions: The respondent base is polarized. "No more taxes" and "tax the rich" appear with roughly equal frequency, placing fiscally opposed respondents side by side. The open-ended responses warn that any new revenue ask will land on a divided public and should be paired with credible cost discipline. They also surface other funding options that were not provided as closed-ended answers for ranking, such as fare enforcement, employer contributions, and 75-year bond authority.

On investment priorities: Respondents largely interpret "investment priority" as "complete the projects voters were promised in my subarea." The Ballard, Tacoma Dome, Everett, and Issaquah extensions are most frequently named. The single most consistently rejected outcome, across every subarea, is cancelation.

On information needs: These responses function as a credibility precondition for everything else. The top three demands, in order: an honest explanation of how the \$34.5B gap arose; a transparent line-item budget; and an independent audit. Respondents are explicit that transparency and demonstrable cost discipline must come before they will support any new revenue ask.

Conclusion

This engagement effort provided a meaningful opportunity to hear directly from communities across the region, resulting in a rich body of input that reflects both shared priorities and local perspectives. While input varied by subarea, respondents consistently emphasized the importance of advancing connectivity, maintaining commitments, and demonstrating transparency and fiscal discipline. The findings outlined in this report offer clear insight into the values, expectations, and concerns participants bring to decisions about the system's future. These themes provide a strong foundation for understanding community priorities as the Board considers next steps.

For additional context, including a detailed description of survey methodology and findings, please refer to appendices.

Appendix A

Enterprise Initiative online survey

About the survey

Sound Transit's Enterprise Initiative survey was live March 30–May 1.

Staff promoted the survey through public meetings, the agency's website, a press release, social media advertisements, and emails to subscribers. It was administered online and available in English, Spanish, Vietnamese, Tagalog, Korean, Simplified Chinese, and Traditional Chinese. The survey received 17,764 valid responses across all channels. The volume of responses to this survey signals a notable level of public interest in the topic.

The survey instrument was organized in three parts (*full survey at the end of Appendix A*).

First, three closed-ended questions asked respondents to rank items by importance or favorability:

- The Sound Transit Board's four guiding principles for Enterprise Initiative decision making, from most to least important.
- Five potential actions to close the \$34.5B funding gap, from most to least favorable.
- Four potential investment priority areas, from most to least important.

Second, three open-ended questions invited respondents to:

- Name specific projects the agency should prioritize (12,551 substantive responses).
- Share one thing they'd like the Sound Transit Board to know as its members begin to prioritize and make decisions (14,141 substantive responses).
- Identify any topics related to the agency's financial challenges on which they'd like to receive more information (5,406 substantive responses).

Third, a short demographic block captured gender, race and ethnicity, household size, household income, and ridership frequency.

All questions were optional, and respondents could complete any combination of the closed-ended, open-ended, and demographic sections.

Analysis methodology

Sound Transit staff analyzed the data to develop key insights and themes. Similar to other processes with different types of inputs (i.e., open- and closed-ended responses), staff first read

the responses, analyzed the information separately, and then brought together various pieces of data/input to identify themes and key insights.

Analyzing responses to closed-ended prompts

Asking respondents to rank options by importance or favorability allowed staff to examine both overall responses and responses by subarea, and to look for cross-cutting patterns as well as subarea-specific differences. Results are visualized below as rank-order bar charts and heat maps showing average ratings by subarea to identify which principles matter most to communities in each part of the region.

Analyzing responses to open-ended questions

- Staff combined human review and software tools to analyze the feedback received from open-ended questions.
- In practice, many respondents did not answer open-ended questions directly; they used the fields to express broader opinions, project preferences, or concerns. Therefore, rather than report every theme that surfaced in every question, we focused on themes that best answered the intent of each question, then cross-checked across all three questions to ensure that every frequently occurring topic was captured at least once.
- First, staff read a large sample (~20%) of responses to familiarize themselves with the content and validate an initial set of themes generated by an AI tool. Then staff applied those codes across all 32,000+ responses using AI. Finally, staff manually coded a random sample and compared their results to the AI's output to verify the reliability of the automated coding.

The reliability check showed strong agreement between human researchers and software tools. While automated coding is imperfect, staff are confident that the findings and insights in this report reflect the feedback received, and that the dominant cross-cutting themes that emerged would not change under any reasonable method.

The areas of greatest certainty are the large, clearly stated themes: project preferences, geographic patterns, and broad values such as honoring the voter mandate. This is because the language used is generally consistent, and an automated tool can easily pick up patterns and word frequency.

This is not the case for more nuanced ideas and responses and/or where the language varies, e.g., cost-saving ideas or feedback focused on equity. These responses often express emotions or sentiment, or unique technologies/ideas, in varied or indirect language.

Survey acknowledgements and notes on interpretation

Survey analytics is a rigorous process. There are known limitations in the ability to code and analyze qualitative data and in the practice of coding to identify themes and insights; it requires both human staff and software time as well as computer analysis. Sound Transit employees

approached the data task with this in mind, bringing together a team of seven staff members to contribute to this process.

Things to keep in mind when reviewing findings:

- **Non-representative sample:** Respondents self-selected rather than being randomly selected, so results reflect engaged stakeholders, not the broader voting public.
- **Limited answer choices:** Forced rankings across fixed lists capture relative preference only, not intensity, and not options that weren't offered. A low rank means lower priority among given options, not opposition.
- **Descriptive analysis only:** Findings characterize what respondents said; they don't test hypotheses or establish causation.
- **Interpretive thematic coding:** Open-ended themes reflect analyst judgment, and frequency reflects what people chose to write about. Strongly held views tend to be overrepresented relative to moderate ones. Sentiment was not separately coded, so a high count on a theme does not indicate positive sentiment on its own.
- **Subarea comparisons are illustrative:** Cross-subarea differences are useful for understanding varied perspectives among engaged respondents but should not be generalized to the full district.

Full text of online survey

FIELD: 2026 Enterprise Initiative survey

Start of Block: Main

Like many agencies nationwide, Sound Transit is working to reduce the impact of historic inflation, tariffs, labor shortages, supply chain disruptions, and other factors on its ability to plan, build, and deliver transit to the region. The agency currently estimates that it will need to close a \$34.5 billion funding gap to deliver what's outlined in the voter-approved Sound Transit 3 program. ST3 includes light rail extensions to West Seattle, Ballard, Tacoma, and Everett, new service between South Kirkland and Issaquah, and much more. Sound Transit's Board of Directors and Sound Transit staff are taking steps to solve this long-term financial challenge, and a comprehensive agencywide effort is underway.

The following survey is designed to capture your feedback and should take approximately 5 minutes to complete.

Page Break

Sound Transit's Board of Directors is using the following principles to guide decision-making to solve for these future financial challenges. Please rank each of the following from most important to least important.

_____ Advance regional connectivity by serving population and job centers and completing the regional spine from Everett to Tacoma. (1)

_____ Support future growth by maintaining and growing ridership, aligning investments with current land use and future growth, and building broad future support. (2)

_____ Prioritize the passenger experience by creating systemwide connections, improving safety, and focusing on increasing ridership. (3)

_____ Protect public investments by being careful stewards of public resources, seeking cost savings and efficiencies, maintaining strong oversight and accountability, and understanding trade-offs. (4)

Page Break

Delivering on the objectives of ST3 requires closing a \$34.5 billion funding gap. Please rank each of the below actions from most favorable to least favorable.

_____ Sound Transit should find more ways to save money and cut costs. (1)

_____ Sound Transit should delay or cancel projects. (2)

_____ Sound Transit should secure new funding from the state or federal government. (3)

_____ Sound Transit should work with cities and communities to find new sources of funding for current expansion plans. (4)

_____ Sound Transit should explore partnerships with the private sector to help fund expansion plans. (5)

Page Break

Even as Sound Transit is working to address future financial challenges, we are also thinking about how best to invest in our system. Please rank each of the below areas from most important to least important.

_____ Expanding Link light rail (1)

_____ Investing in Sounder train service (2)

_____ Increasing parking (3)

_____ Investments in service reliability (4)

Page Break

Are there any specific projects Sound Transit should prioritize as the agency works to address future financial challenges?

Page Break

What is the one thing you would like the Sound Transit Board to know as they start to prioritize and make decisions?

Page Break

Are there any areas or topics related to Sound Transit's future financial challenges where you'd like to receive more information and/or learn more?

End of Block: Main

Start of Block: Demographic questions

The final questions of this survey are demographic questions to help us understand the diversity of our respondent base and ensure our findings reflect a broad range of perspectives. Your responses are voluntary and confidential.

Have you ever ridden Sound Transit? This includes Link light rail (1 Line, 2 Line, T Line) Sounder trains (N Line, S Line), and ST Express buses.

- No (1)
 - Yes (2)
 - Prefer not to respond (3)
-

Page Break

Display this question:

Have you ever ridden Sound Transit? This includes Link light rail (1 Line, 2 Line, T Line) Sounder... = Yes

How often have you ridden Sound Transit in the past three months?

- 4 or more days per week (1)
 - 2-3 days per week (2)
 - About 1 day per week (3)
 - 2-3 days per month (4)
 - About 1 day per month (5)
 - Less than 1 day per month (6)
 - Prefer not to respond (7)
-

Page Break

What is your home ZIP code?

Page Break

How do you identify? [check all that apply]

- Man (1)
- Woman (2)
- Non-binary / gender non-conforming (3)

- Transgender (6)
- Identity not listed here (4)
- Prefer not to respond (5)

Page Break

Do you consider yourself to be... [Please select all that apply]

- Hispanic or Latino (1)
- White or Caucasian (2)
- Black or African American (3)
- Asian (4)
- Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander (5)
- Middle Eastern or North African (6)
- American Indian or Alaska Native (7)
- Something else (8)
- Prefer not to respond (9)

Page Break

Including yourself, how many people currently live in your household?

- 1 (1)
- 2 (2)
- 3 (3)
- 4 (4)
- 5 (5)
- 6 (6)
- 7 (7)
- 8 (8)
- 9 (9)
- 10+ (10)
- Prefer not to respond (11)

Page Break

Which of the following best describes your gross annual household income in 2025?

- Less than \$20,000 (1)
- \$20,000 – \$24,999 (2)
- \$25,000 – \$29,999 (3)
- \$30,000 – \$39,999 (4)
- \$40,000 – \$49,999 (5)
- \$50,000 – \$59,999 (6)
- \$60,000 – \$69,999 (7)
- \$70,000 – \$79,999 (8)
- \$80,000 – \$89,999 (9)
- \$90,000 – \$99,999 (10)
- \$100,000 – \$109,999 (11)
- \$110,000 – \$124,999 (12)
- \$125,000 – \$149,999 (13)
- \$150,000 or more (14)
- Prefer not to respond (15)

End of Block: Demographic questions

Appendix B

Enterprise Initiative online survey findings

The following section provides additional depth and context into the feedback received through the Enterprise Initiative survey.

Survey engagement by subarea

The chart below shows the distribution of responses by subarea alongside each subarea's share of the Sound Transit district population.

Survey response share vs. subarea population share

Sound Transit District subarea population estimates | "Other" includes out-of-district, refused, and Washington other — no population benchmark available.

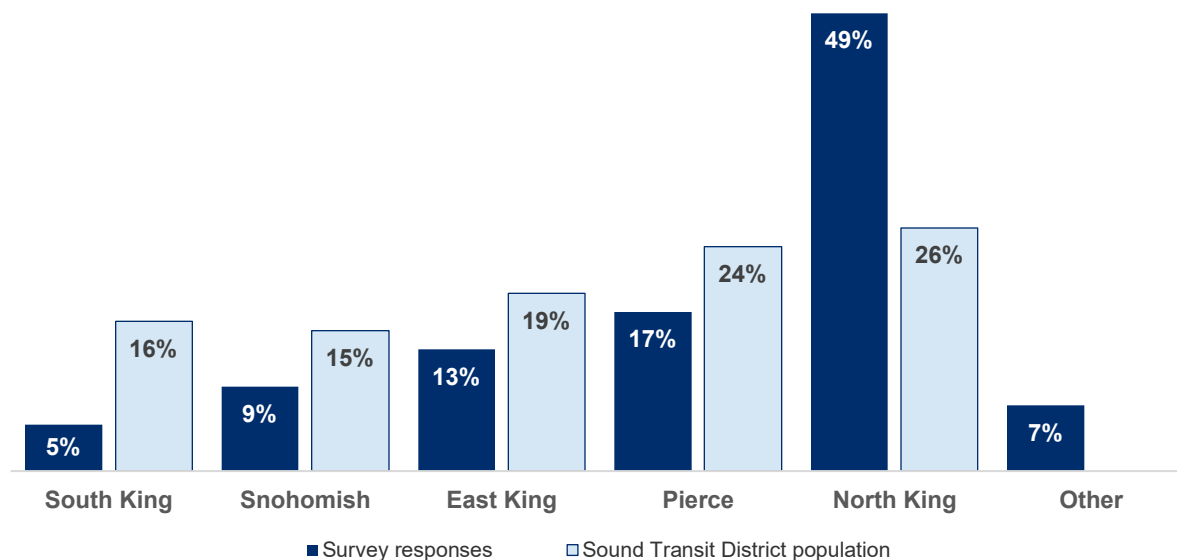


Figure B1. Survey response share vs. subarea population share

The proportion of respondents from North King County accounted for nearly half of all responses (49%) despite making up only about 26% of the district population. South King, East King, Snohomish, and Pierce all had a lower proportion of responses relative to their population shares.

Because the survey was open to anyone with the link, and because of other limitations to data collection, **results should be read as the views of those who chose to respond, rather than as a representative sample of the district.** Comparisons across subareas are nonetheless useful for understanding different perspectives among engaged respondents.

Respondent demographics

The respondent pool skewed male, white, high-income, and small household.

- About half of respondents (48%) identified as men and 36% as women; 11% preferred not to say.
- Two-thirds (66%) identified as White, with smaller shares Asian (7%), Hispanic or Latino (2.5%), and Black (1.4%); 14% preferred not to say.
- Roughly four in 10 respondents (40%) reported household income of \$150,000 or more, while 6% reported under \$50,000; 20% preferred not to disclose.
- Most respondents said they live in one- (18%) or two-person (42%) households.

Ridership frequency was spread across the spectrum. Roughly 41% of respondents said they ride Sound Transit at least once per week (12.7% ride four or more days, 16% two to three days, 13% about one day), and a further 30% ride monthly. About 19% said they ride less than once a month, and 10% preferred not to say.

Demographic results should be read with the caveat that the survey is self-selected and over-represents engaged, higher-income North King residents.

Survey findings: Closed-ended questions

Ranking guiding principles

Advancing regional connectivity is consistently a top priority across all subareas.

Survey prompt: “Sound Transit’s Board of Directors is using the following principles to guide decision-making to solve for these future financial challenges. Please rank each of the following from most important to least important.”

Ranked response to this question (Figure B2) reinforces that respondents prioritize advancing regional connectivity and the rider experience as the core principles the Board should consider when it makes decisions.

Sound Transit Board guiding principles

Average ranking overall

Share of respondents assigning each rank to each principle (ordered by mean importance) | n = 17,653

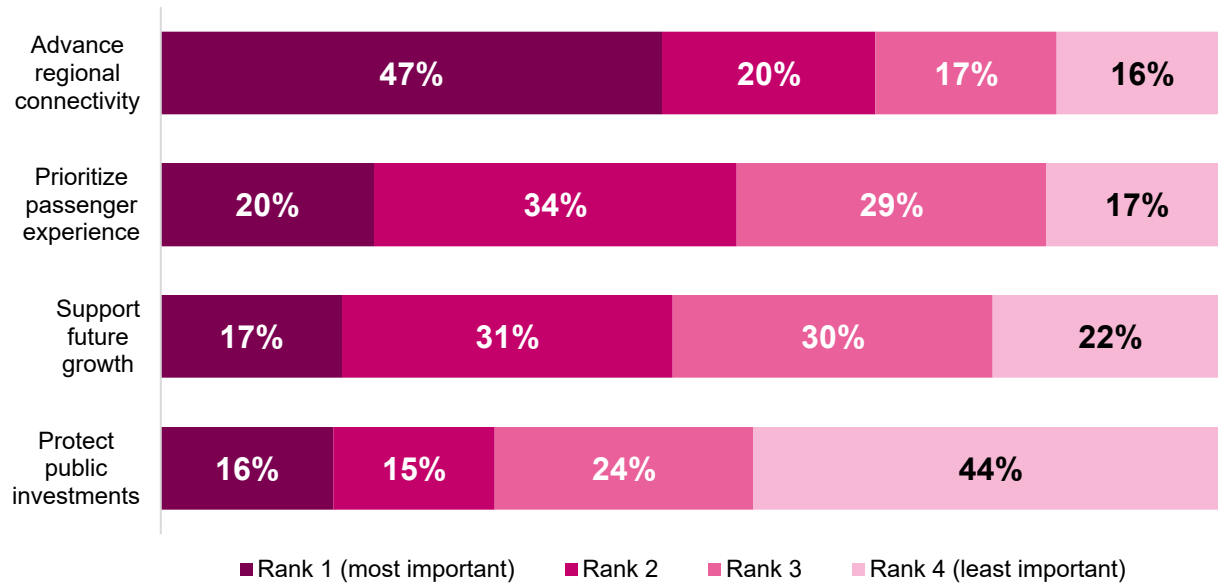


Figure B2. Sound Transit Board Enterprise Initiative guiding principles – ranking results, overall

Figure B3 below provides additional detail regarding how respondents from each subarea ranked the priorities in comparison to other subareas.

Sound Transit Board guiding principles

Average ranking by subarea

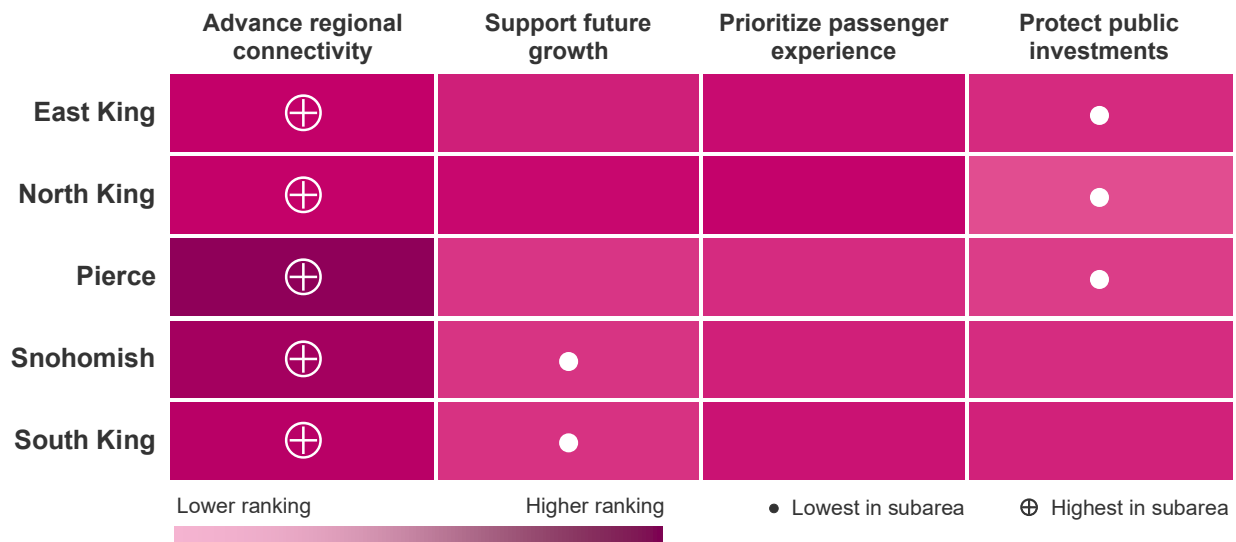


Figure B3. Sound Transit Board Enterprise Initiative guiding principles – ranking results, by subarea

Ranking funding actions to close the \$34.5B gap

Survey prompt: “Delivering on the objectives of ST3 requires closing a \$34.5 billion funding gap. Please rank each of the below actions from most favorable to least favorable.”

Ranked response (Figure B4) shows finding new state or federal funding as respondents’ clear preference. This was the consistent top priority across all subareas, while delaying or canceling projects ranked lowest across all subareas.

Funding actions

Average ranking overall

Share of respondents assigning each rank to each funding action (ordered by mean favorability) | n = 17,665

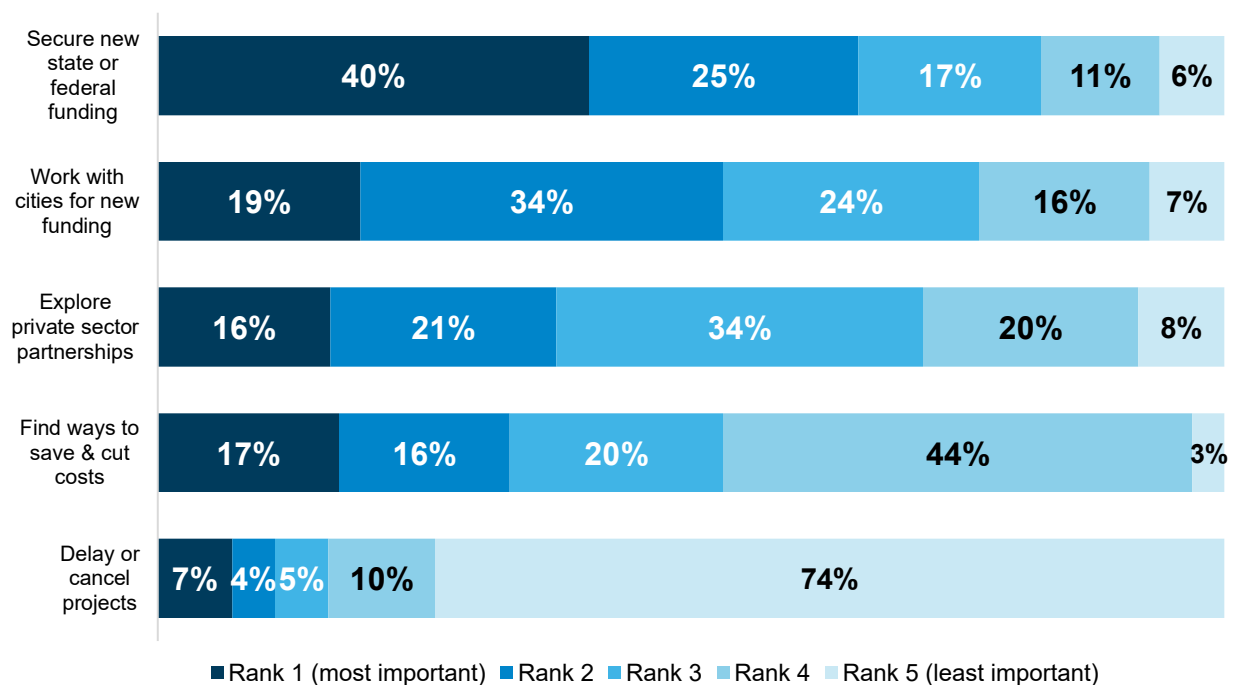


Figure B4. Funding actions ranking results, overall

Figure B5 below provides additional detail regarding how respondents from each subarea ranked the priorities in comparison to other subareas.

Investment priorities

Average ranking overall

Share of respondents assigning each rank to each investment area (ordered by mean importance) | n = 17,575

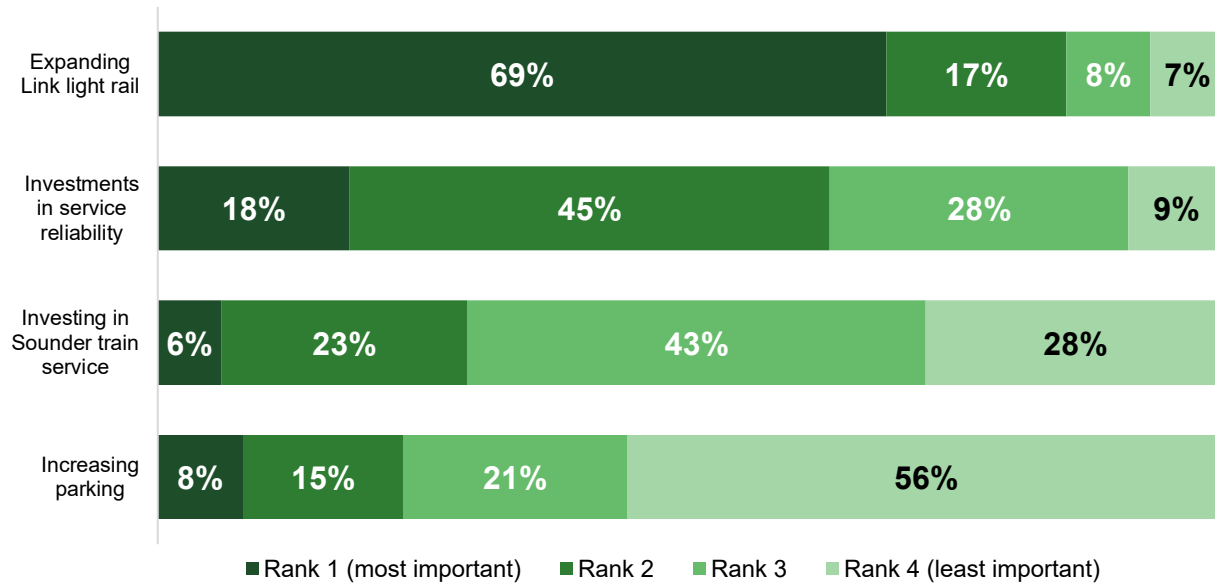


Figure B6. Investment priority areas ranking results, overall

Figure B7 below provides additional detail regarding how respondents from each subarea ranked the priorities in comparison to other subareas.

Investment priorities

Average ranking by subarea

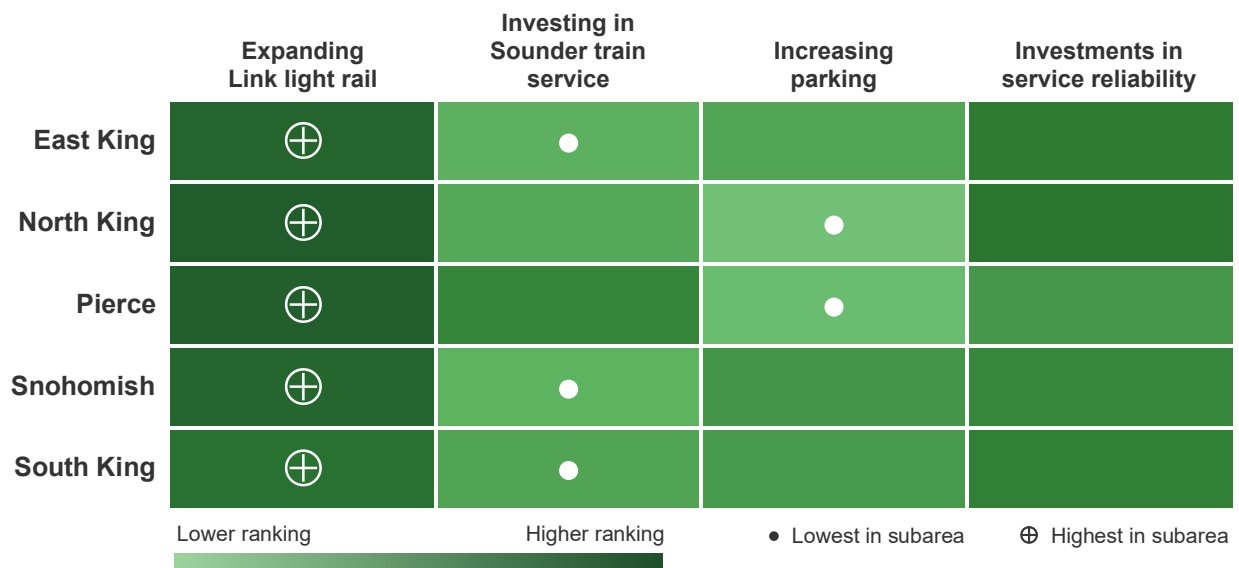


Figure B7. Investment priority areas ranking results, by subarea

Survey findings: Open-ended questions

Across the districtwide pool of survey respondent data, clear themes and patterns emerged that were consistent across all three open-ended questions. It's important to note that the overwhelming theme in each subarea was respondents' desire for projects in their subarea to advance, coupled with a desire for clear information about those projects throughout the process.

Subarea	Headline takeaways
Pierce	Extending the Link 1 Line to the Tacoma Dome is the most salient message in this subarea. Pierce frames it as a paid-for promise and a subarea fairness obligation.
North King	Build Ballard, build West Seattle, build now. North King also carries the strongest "use ridership as the decision rule" voice in the dataset.
East King	Don't cancel Issaquah after a decade of Regional Transit Authority taxation and be transparent before asking for more.
Snohomish	Finish the Everett Link Extension but also make existing service cleaner and more reliable.
South King	Aligned with Pierce on the Tacoma Dome extension. Other specific asks include connecting Renton and prioritizing equity in decision making.

Subarea themes and project priorities

In practice, many respondents did not answer open-ended questions directly; they used the fields to express broader opinions, project preferences, or concerns.

Zooming in on response themes by question

The section below focuses on each open-ended question individually and shows visualizations of the frequency of certain themes as they appeared in the qualitative responses, illustrated by quotes drawn directly from open-ended survey responses. Themes are listed in descending order of prevalence.

Survey open-ended question: "Are there any specific projects that Sound Transit should prioritize as the agency works to address future financial challenges?"

Figure B8 shows the frequency of certain themes as they appeared overall, across all subareas.

Projects Sound Transit should prioritize

Overall mentions

Dataset-wide mention rate across all subareas (baseline reference).

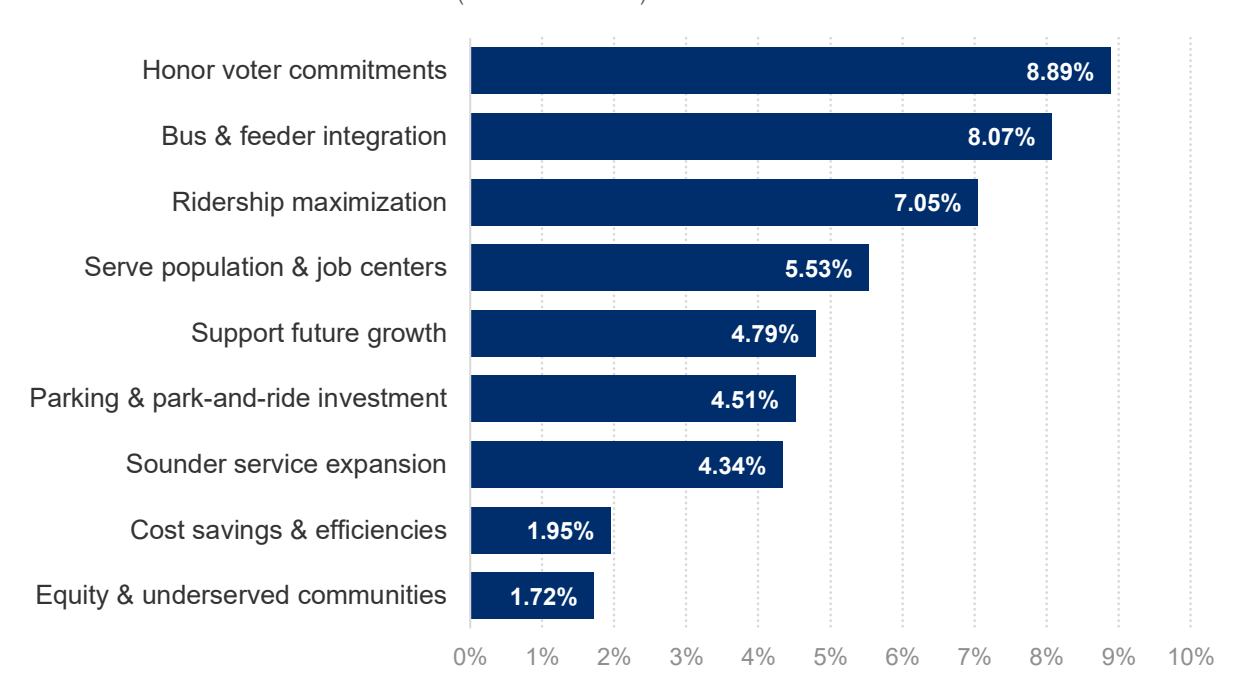


Figure B8. Projects Sound Transit should prioritize, overall mentions

Response theme: Stated project priorities are split cleanly along subarea lines.

Respondents in each subarea generally support “their” projects, e.g., North King respondents advocate for Ballard and West Seattle, East King for the Issaquah–Kirkland line, respondents along the border of South King and North King for Graham Street and Boeing Access Road stations, and Snohomish and Pierce for light rail service to Everett and Tacoma, respectively.

“Ballard Link is a critical project for regional connectivity... Sound Transit should continue looking for ways to deliver Ballard Link more efficiently, including automated light metro technology and alternate alignments and construction methodologies.”

– North King

“Completing the original planned spine, Everett to Tacoma, should be a priority before additional expansions are considered.”

– Snohomish

“There are a lot of us on the West side who want to use light rail to downtown. Don't leave us out!!”

– North King

“Further connection on the Eastside! We've been paying for light rail to come out to Issaquah and the option of just cancelling the project is offensive and unjust!”

– East King

“Tacoma needs to be connected to Seattle. We have been paying exorbitant RTA taxes since day 1 of this project!”

– Pierce

Response theme: Ridership as a criterion for prioritization. Explicit calls to prioritize transit investments based on ridership potential or population density were frequent, especially from respondents in North King County. Responses emphasized serving high-use corridors, urban centers, or maximizing return-on-investment per rider.

“Ballard expansion is predicted to have the highest ridership. DO NOT cut the most impactful one of service.”

– North King

“Ballard, by STs own reports, would serve nearly three times the number of new riders of any Sound Transit project in the agency's history and would do so at one of the lowest costs per rider gained of any expansion. I'd also add that all these 10-year growth plans have promised light rail as a way to mitigate traffic impacts. We all know that Ballard has absorbed WAY more population growth in Seattle than those growth plans ever suggested. So let's get to it!”

– North King

“Ridership and cost per rider metrics need to be the highest priority with limited funding”

– North King

“ST should look at demographics and develop the lines that will serve the most amount of people.”

– North King

Response theme: Protect transit-dependent riders, and balance investment across subareas. This theme combines comments on demographic equity (low-income, disabled, senior, immigrant, and/or car-free riders) with geographic equity across subareas; the geographic strand is much stronger in Pierce.

*“Snohomish County residents have been paying for decades — don’t forget about us.”
– Washington, other*

*“Prioritize access and services to communities that in the past (and present) were overlooked due to social, racial, economic injustice.”
– North King*

*“Light rail to Tacoma - the south sound is critically underserved by comparison.”
– Pierce*

*“Southend communities have waited nearly 30 years for promised light rail access. Now, Graham Street and Boeing Access Road stations are at risk of being delayed — again. This is about equity, access, keeping promises.”
– North King*

Response theme: Make existing service safer, cleaner, and more reliable. Drug use, people experiencing homelessness, broken escalators, and 1 Line interruptions came up often.

*“...there needs to be a focus on the feeling of safety in order to attract new riders. Open drug use and unstable people make the system less attractive to use...”
– South King*

*“Safety. Ensure there are well trained security to prevent and deter crime. Safety of current transit lines and stations should be top priority above all other considerations.”
– Snohomish*

*“None of it is important if people don’t feel safe using it.”
– Pierce*

*“SAFETY is absolutely the most important thing. It is ridiculous to try to entice people to use the service when it puts them in danger.”
– Other*

Response theme: Implement fare gates and fare enforcement. Fare gates and fare enforcement were volunteered as a potential solution, framed as both a revenue opportunity and a safety lever.

"Access to sound transit should be controlled, fare gates would improve safety, revenue, and protect infrastructure."

– South King

"Payment gates. Sound transit is the only metro where it is so easy to ride for free. Payment gates will help increase security by only allowing people who pay to ride the light rail. It will also obviously increase the income and reduce the number of transit fare supervisors, which I never see when I ride."

– East King

"Install fare gates at stations where they would actually be effective in increasing fare revenue and system safety."

– North King

"Put in turnstiles or gates to make sure passengers pay. It is way too easy to ride without paying. Capture that passenger fare to gain income as you must know many people do not pay."

– Snohomish

"...controlled fare stations/gates would go a long way to improving the safety of the light rail system."

– South King

Response theme: Bus and feeder integration as connective tissue. Respondents advocated for bus connections, walkability, and parking adequacy.

"More parking and bus service to link rail and Sounder."

– North King

"Invest in bus line infrastructure to make it easier to get from home to link light rail and sounder trains."

– Snohomish

"...more bike access around stations to ride up to trains and for loading bikes on board."

– Washington, other

Survey open-ended question: *"What is the one thing you would like the Sound Transit Board to know as they start to prioritize and make decisions?"*

The chart below (Figure B9) shows the frequency of certain themes as they appeared overall, across all subareas.

Priorities for Board consideration

Overall mentions

Dataset-wide mention rate across all subareas (baseline reference).

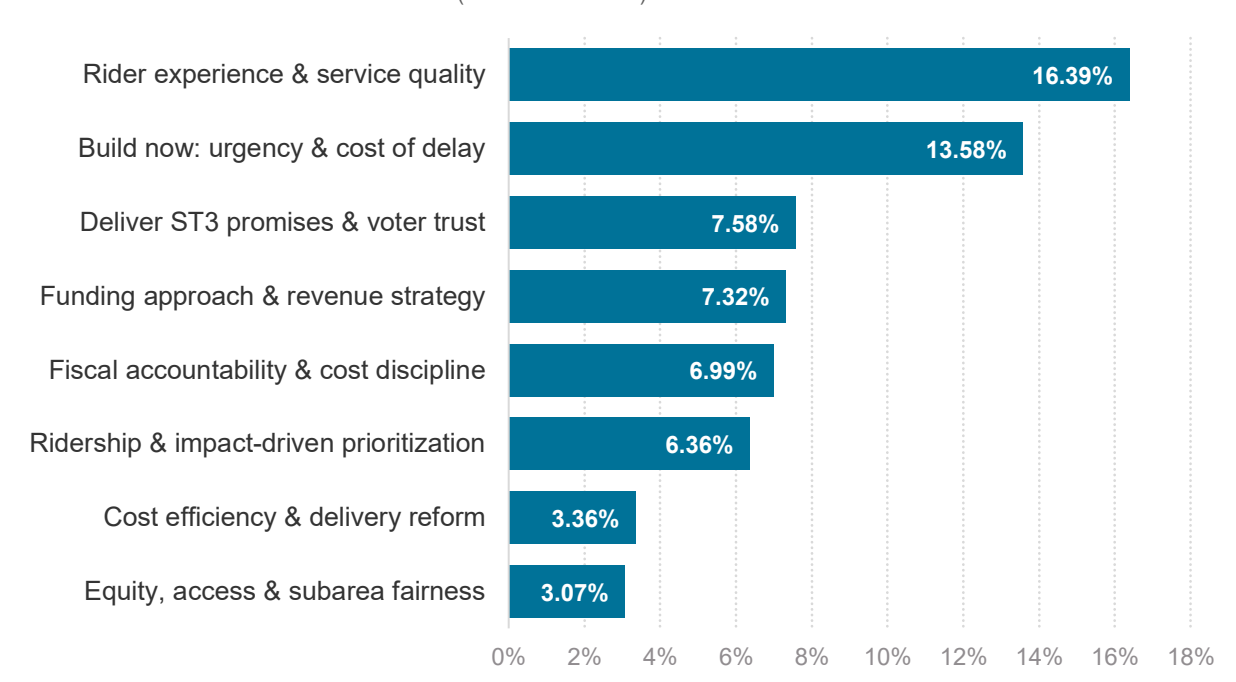


Figure B9. Priorities for Board consideration, overall mentions

Response theme: Honor the ST3 vote and avoid cancellation. Respondents framed delivery as a trust and democratic-mandate issue. Even those skeptical of specific light rail projects preferred phasing or deferral to outright cancellation, and most argued that delay itself is the most expensive option given inflation and land-cost escalation.

*“We voted for Ballard light rail. The voters could not be more clear about this.
Extend light rail to Ballard.”*

– North King

“Subarea equity was a critical factor in my yes vote. I’ve been paying ST taxes for years but haven’t received service in my area yet, and I expect that promise to be honored.”

– East King

“Deliver on what you promised and we voted for. If light rail is not run all the way into Tacoma then what was the point of all of Pierce County paying so much?”

– Pierce

*“The ballard connection is the most important connection you will make.
If you don’t so it, you will lost the trust of most transit riders.”*

– North King

*“It is important to deliver the ST3 projects, even if delayed longer.
You will lose voter trust if you actually cancel projects.”*

– North King

*“ST3 should be the top priority!! We need to stick to what was planned.
People in those areas NEED connections...”*

– North King

“Finish the projects that people have been promised, and have been paying on for years”

– North King

“Keep promises to tax payers as much as possible. This goes directly to the trust extended.”

– Pierce

Response theme: Cost savings before scope cuts. Smaller and standardized stations, less art, cut-and-cover design, train automation, in-house engineering, among other solutions, were suggested in every subarea as ways to close the gap without cutting promised lines.

“For Ballard — what cost reduction strategies are being evaluated, such as cut-and-cover over deep bore, standardized station design, and early land acquisition before further price escalation?”

– East King

“Scale down station design and save money.”

– North King

“Focus on reducing red tape and delays for construction of new expansions (i.e. build quicker).”

– other/out of state

Response theme: Act with urgency; every year of delay drives cost. Calls to break ground, expand service, and “stop studying, start building” appeared across every subarea but were strongest in North King.

“Costs will continue to grow. In 2050 we don’t want to look back and say we should have done so much more in 2026.”

– North King

“We’re a decade after ST3 was approved and we still have no shovels in ground. Expedite the process now- stop processing everything to death and acting surprised that it’s more expensive.”

– North King

“Lightrail is enormously popular, and it’s changing Seattle for the better. It’s also not going to get cheaper. Delaying and delaying or canceling projects we’ve already voted to spend money on ultimately just hurts current and future Seattle residents. Stick with the plan, start hustling.”

– North King

“Stop the constant studies and move to getting services active”

– Snohomish

“Please focus on expediting projects. The longer we take the more they’ll cost.”

– North King

“Expand coverage as quickly as possible to all area including those that are not currently covered.”

– Snohomish

“Stop with the studies and get moving. Costs for property, material, and labor are only going to go up. We have spent too much time and money already without the level of results we expect as tax payers.”

– North King

Response theme: Support future growth. Comments urged expanding light rail to fast-growing communities, so the system stays relevant and useful as the region develops.

“Issaquah light rail! We need service to where communities are growing to make the service truly connected and usable.”

– East King

“The Everett Link Extension is desperately needed. Growth in this corridor is unprecedented.”

– North King

Survey open-ended question: “Are there any areas or topics related to Sound Transit’s future financial challenges where you would like to receive additional information or learn more?”

Figure B10 below shows the frequency of certain themes as they appeared across all subareas.

Topics requested for further information

Overall mentions

Percent of substantive respondents mentioning each theme (all subareas combined).

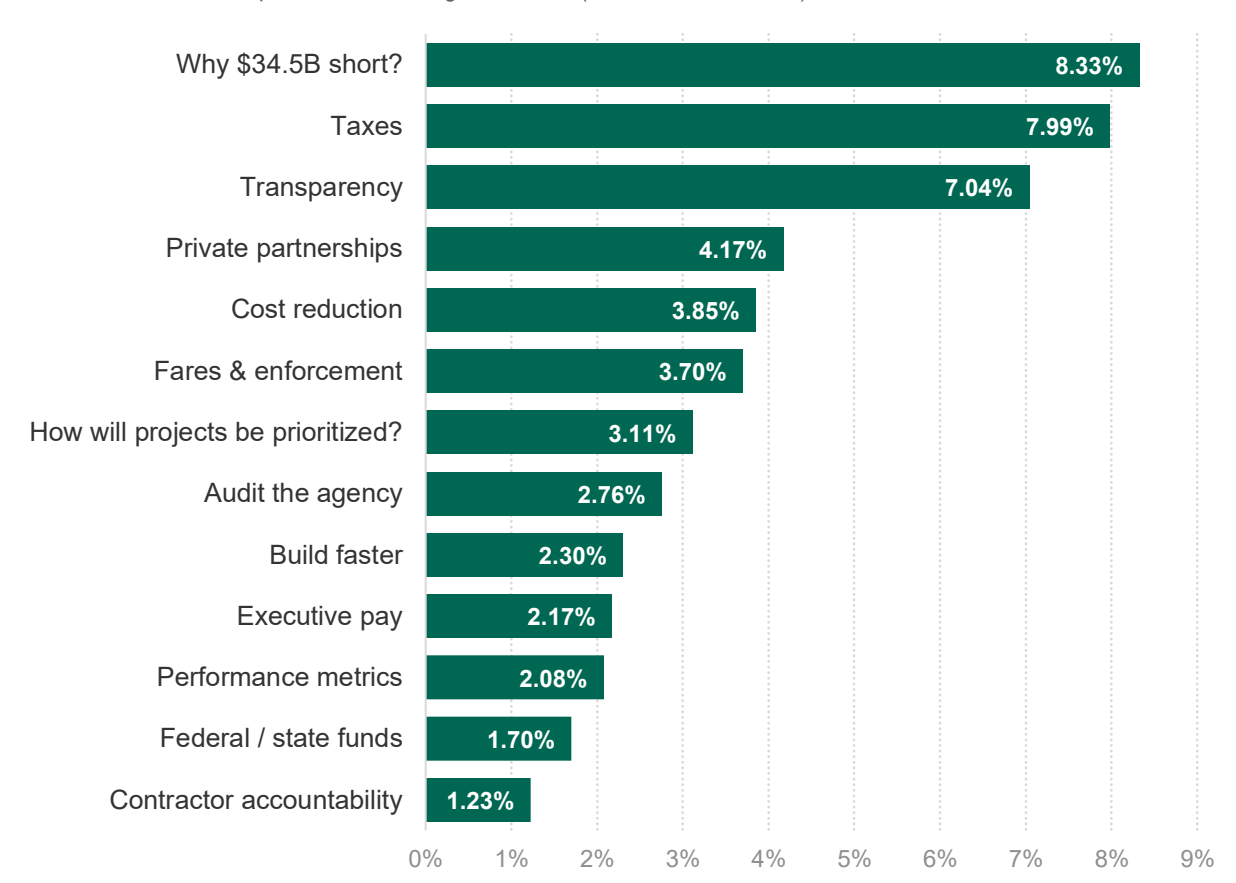


Figure B10. Topics requested for further information, overall mentions

Response theme: Explaining the \$34.5B shortfall is the largest direct information need.

The public is not satisfied with high-level explanations like “inflation” or “tariffs” and want a project-by-project account of where original estimates went wrong and what is being done differently.

“Solid information about whether the budget shortfall is due to mistakes or mismanagement vs. unforeseen conditions like unexpectedly strong inflation would help with confidence in the agency.”

– North King

“Where does 35 billion just disappear?”

– Pierce

“I’d be interested to know why the actual cost of the system is so far off what we were told it would cost in ST3”

– North King

“Information on how the billion-dollar deficit was caused (e.g., inflation, unforeseen construction issues, pandemic-related delays, etc.)”

– East King

Response theme: Calls for transparency. Respondents framed financial transparency, such as line-item budget breakdowns, interactive dashboards, and budget vs. actuals tracking, as a precondition for supporting any new revenue. Respondents also said they want to know about executive and contractor payments. Other transparency requests included performance data, ridership counts, cost per rider, farebox recovery, and return on investment per station.

“I’d like an interactive budget website where I can see how the money is currently distributed.”

– North King

“Full transparency before any future asks. I want to see salaries, sourcing, contracts, overhead.”

– Pierce

“I’d like to see detailed statements of what is being spent where. Namely, executive compensation, consultant expenditures, and all of these being itemized.”

– North King

“Maximum transparency on what things are more costly and why they are more costly.”

– Pierce

“Upper-level employee pay structure.”

– South King

“Are we overpaying private contractors? is bureaucracy causing these budget issues?”

– Pierce

Response theme: What’s happening with my project? Respondents said they want updated schedule, alignment, and station-design information and want to know early if any line is at risk. If projects will be cut or deferred, respondents want to know the criteria and what analyses are informing those choices.

“I’d be especially interested in learning more about the long-term expansion plans, particularly how different projects are being prioritized, phased, or potentially modified in light of current financial constraints.”

– North King

“How are decisions on what to prioritize being made? Who makes the final call?”

– Pierce

Response theme: “How will you close the gap?” and “Where can additional money come from so we don’t have to cut scope?” Each lever in the gap-closing toolkit is a separate information need: Tax-based funding, public-private partnerships, fare collection, cost reduction and value engineering, federal/state funding, and bonding and debt strategy. Tax-based funding is the most polarized theme; “no more taxes” and “tax the rich” appeared at roughly comparable volumes.

“What is Sound Transit actually had fare gates like all other major transit lines. How would that change the financial outlook?”

– North King

“Tax proposals and private partnerships that could creatively bridge the gap.”

– Pierce

“I am interested to learn more about progressive revenue to help fund Sound Transit projects.”

– North King

“I would love to see Sound Transit sharing more creative solutions for cost savings and increasing funding that would hopefully solve the funding gap issues without harming current and future usability of the system.”

– North King

“A better understanding of how the agency is pursuing additional govt funding, local IGAs, and partnerships with the private sector.”

– Washington, other

Response theme: “Who is checking your work?” Respondents mentioned independent audits and accountability.

“Sound Transit as a whole needs a full independent audit and the results of this audit need to be available to the public.”

– South King

“...hold the offending parties more accountable when there are errors and mistakes made in projects”

– East King

“Who is holding these companies responsible when you are 6 years behind schedule?”

– North King

“Hold people and contractors accountable. No excuses for cost overruns and delayed construction schedules.”

– Washington, other

Response theme: “How will you decide what gets cut?” Prioritization framework was distinct from project advocacy: Respondents said they want to know the criteria and timeline by which the Board will choose what to delay, cancel, or scale back.

“I’d like to hear more about the tradeoffs ST makes when planning routes, balancing delivery of existing service with new construction, etc.”

– East King

“...Trade-off transparency, especially when considering deferring or eliminating voter-approved projects like Ballard. I want clear explanations of: Why Ballard is being considered for cuts, how equity, ridership, and taxpayer contribution were weighed, what commitments Sound Transit believes it is no longer obligated to honor, and why.”

– North King

How open-ended responses speak to closed-ended results

Write-in responses to the survey’s three open-ended questions provide insight into *why* respondents ranked closed-ended items as they did, and they provide nuance on topics where division is present.

On the Board’s Enterprise Initiative guiding principles: Open-ended results reinforced what rose to the top of the principles ranking. Voter trust, delivering on approved commitments, and rider reliability emerged as respondents’ core expectations. Ridership-based prioritization, equity, and stewardship appeared frequently in the open-ended question responses as well.

On funding actions: The respondent base was polarized. “No more taxes” and “tax the rich” appeared with roughly equal frequency, placing fiscally opposed respondents side by side.

Open-ended responses warned that any new revenue ask will land on a divided public and should be paired with credible cost discipline. They also surface other funding options that were not provided as closed-ended answers for ranking, such as fare enforcement, employer contributions, and 75-year bond authority.

On investment priorities: Respondents largely interpreted "investment priority" as "complete the projects voters were promised in my subarea." The Ballard, Tacoma Dome, Everett, and Issaquah extensions are most frequently named. The single most consistently rejected outcome, across every subarea, was cancellation.

On information needs: These responses function as a credibility precondition for everything else. The top three demands, in order: An honest explanation of how the \$34.5B gap arose; a transparent line-item budget; and an independent audit. Respondents were explicit that transparency and demonstrable cost discipline must come before they will support any new revenue ask.

Post-publication note: Sound Transit staff added Appendix B to this report on May 27, 2026.

