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## Federal Transit Administration awards Sound Transit, City of Tacoma \$2 million for planning work related to Tacoma Link expansion

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*Grant would help city plan for smart growth around future stations, make station access easier for all*

The Federal Transit Administration today announced a \$2 million grant to Sound Transit in partnership with the City of Tacoma for transit-oriented development planning along the future Tacoma Link expansion route. The grant will help the city foster smart, affordable development along the expanded light rail line.

“Transit-oriented development is critical to the success of new projects and to the economy of the local communities they serve,” said FTA Acting Administrator Therese McMillan. “These grants will help communities like Tacoma develop a transportation system that encourages people to use transit to reach jobs, education, medical care, housing and other vital services that they need.”

The grant is part of a new \$19.5 million FTA Pilot Program for Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) Planning. Tacoma is one of 21 planning projects across the country to receive the federal funding announced Monday.

“This grant helps ensure that the Link truly lives up to its name – connecting people all across Tacoma,” said U.S. Rep. Derek Kilmer (WA-06). “This investment will go a long toward respecting the character of our unique neighborhoods and making sure the process of expansion is one that includes all citizens. With it we can make sure that the positive changes the Link brings translate to progress for everyone.”

The grant will help fund the City of Tacoma’s “Links to Opportunity” program to improve social and economic opportunities in the neighborhoods that an expanded Tacoma Link would serve. The program will also look at ways to improve pedestrian and bike access to the six stations along the route.

“The Tacoma Link expansion will improve transportation options for the Hilltop’s residents, commuters, and pedestrians,” said Sound Transit Vice Chair and Tacoma Mayor Marilyn Strickland. “This matched grant can help improve mobility and enhance the neighborhood.”

The 1.6-mile Tacoma Link light rail line currently serves six stations between the Theater District and Tacoma Dome Station. The Sound Transit Board of Directors has identified a preferred alignment to expand Tacoma Link to run an additional 2.4 miles from the Theater District to the Stadium and Hilltop neighborhoods with six new stations and one relocated station.

Earlier this year the Obama administration allocated almost \$75 million for the Tacoma Link expansion as part of the FTA “Small Starts” program. The funding was included in the administration’s 2016 budget that is still under consideration by Congress.

About \$18 million in additional grants have been secured for the project along with \$50 million in Sound Transit funding. Sound Transit and the City of Tacoma are still working to secure the balance of the funds. Preliminary engineering on the project is wrapping up this fall and will be followed by final design. The Sound Transit Board will formally select the project to be built this fall.

For more information on the Tacoma Link project see: [www.soundtransit.org/TacomaLinkExpansion](http://www.soundtransit.org/TacomaLinkExpansion)

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