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Sound Transit OKs commuter rail work in Tacoma, Tukwila

By [JOURNAL STAFF](#)

Sound Transit Board members yesterday moved two long-standing commuter rail projects forward.

They voted to award the D-to-M Streets project in Tacoma to MidMountain Contractors. The Kirkland company had submitted the apparent low bid, but Sound Transit initially rejected it because MidMountain hadn't included all the required paperwork. The agency was going to hire the second lowest bidder, PCL Construction Services. MidMountain appealed, and Sound Transit reversed its decision.

The board also amended the "lifetime budget" for the permanent commuter rail station in Tukwila from \$16.4 million to \$49.1 million. The agency now expects to go out for construction bids early next year on the project, which should be done in early 2013.



Rendering courtesy of Sound Transit [\[enlarge\]](#)

Sound Transit plans to seek bids early next year for this commuter rail station in Tukwila.

MidMountain's bid on the D-to-M Streets project is just over \$40.8 million, or 38 percent less than the engineer's estimate of \$66.4 million. PB designed the project, and Harris & Associates will manage construction.

D-to-M was part of the transit package regional voters approved in 1996. Engineers had estimated the project would cost \$76 million. Four years ago, upon learning that the overall project cost had ballooned to \$161.6 million, board members halted design to see whether other entities would help with funding. Money from the state and federal governments has been secured, and BNSF is contributing about \$250,000.

MidMountain will build 1.2 miles of new track between the Tacoma Dome Station at East D Street to South M Street, where a new seven-mile rail line to Lakewood starts. Between D and M streets, crews will build three new bridges, including a large one over Pacific Avenue; do major reconstruction of several streets; relocate storm drains and sewers; and install new water mains, traffic signals, lighting and landscaping.

Construction is to start this fall and be done in mid-2012.

In Tukwila, KPFF Consulting Engineers is designing the rail station between Longacres Way and the proposed Strander Boulevard extension. It will have two 700-foot long platforms, a pedestrian sky bridge with elevators, bus transit area, and parking for 390 cars and 68 bicycles.

Like the D-to-M project, it was part of the initial transit package that voters OK'd 14 years ago. Design was put on hold, however, when Tukwila wanted to explore building a transit-oriented development, and Renton was looking into extending Strander so it would connect to West Valley Highway. A temporary rail stop was opened.

No transit-oriented development is planned, but negotiations are under way to move the Strander project forward. Besides finding funding, project proponents must figure out how to separate the grades of the road and rail line.

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