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Seattle Center and Seattle Monorail Services Preparing Major Renovation of Historic Monorail Station

Modernizing a Historic Landmark to Improve Accessibility, Safety, and Passenger Experience

SEATTLE - Seattle Center in partnership with Seattle Monorail Services are preparing for a major renovation of the historic Seattle Center Monorail Station to improve accessibility, increase capacity, and overall passenger experience. Seattle Center secured grant funding and is managing the project, while Seattle Monorail Services is consulting on operational issues. Construction begins in September 2026 and continues through late 2027, with the Monorail remaining in service throughout the project.

At the heart of Seattle's premier arts, culture, and entertainment destination, Seattle Center welcomes nearly 12 million visitors annually, and the Monorail provides essential transit between downtown and the campus which is home to institutions such as the Museum of Pop Culture, Chihuly Garden and Glass, the Armory, and Climate Pledge Arena. Ridership reached more than 2.2 million in 2025 and is expected to continue climbing as new regional light rail extensions open and activity across the campus expands.

"As Seattle Center continues to welcome millions of people each year, this project ensures the Monorail station remains a safe, accessible, and welcoming entry point for our community," said Randy Engstrom, Acting Director, Seattle Center. "These improvements will help every visitor move through the campus comfortably, while preserving the history and character that make this place so meaningful. By modernizing a key piece of our infrastructure, we're strengthening the cultural life of the region and preparing the campus for the growing activity ahead."

The renovation will transform the station into a fully accessible facility consistent with ADA Title II standards. Improvements include a new accessible ramp connecting Thomas Street to the station entry, a resurfaced platform and reduced gap between platform and train floor, tactile wayfinding surfaces, enhanced lighting and signage, and modern sliding doors that create wider openings for boarding and exiting.

"As the long-time operators of the Monorail, our daily mission is providing a fast, welcoming, and reliable connection between downtown and Seattle Center," said Megan Ching, President, Seattle Monorail Services. "This project is about preparing that vital connection for its next chapter. By reconfiguring the station to move large event crowds more safely and efficiently, we are investing in the long-term vitality of the system while maintaining our commitment to keep the trains rolling for the millions of riders who depend on us each year."

To accommodate anticipated growth in ridership—including large spikes during concerts, sporting events, and festivals—the project reconfigures ticketing, queuing, and boarding to better move people through the station. Automatic passenger gates will replace older guardrails, improving safety while reducing dwell times after major events. These upgrades will help shorten lines and increase the efficiency of operations during the busiest times.

Measures to rehabilitate the station will reinforce aging infrastructure, restore steel frames and concrete slabs, replace corroded guardrails, abate lead paint, and extend the useful life of the facility. Extending the roof and skylights will improve weather protection for passengers and fully cover the landmarked train cars when parked.

The Monorail, originally built as a centerpiece of the 1962 Century 21 World's Fair, remains one of Seattle's most beloved landmarks. The trains are designated historic landmarks, and the station is eligible for National Historic Landmark status, guiding the design of improvements. The project also aligns with the broader re-envisioning of Memorial Stadium to the north, which will bring new civic, cultural, and entertainment activity to the campus and increase the importance of strong pedestrian connections between the stadium and the Monorail.

Throughout construction, the Monorail will continue to operate with at least one train running. Departures will remain approximately every 8–10 minutes, and both trains will be available whenever possible during high demand events. Late-night service will continue for Seattle Center and Climate Pledge Arena event schedules.

As General Contractor/Construction Manager, GLY Construction has provided preconstruction planning, constructability reviews, cost estimating, and is coordinating the construction effort. Design leadership for the project is provided by Signal Architecture + Research, with accessibility consultation from Studio Pacifica. Seattle Monorail Services continues to operate the system and advise on operational impacts during construction. The project is entirely funded by grants from the state and federal government.

Project updates, images, and additional materials will be shared through [Seattle Monorail Services](#) as construction progresses.

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EDITOR'S NOTE: Interviews and images are available upon request.

ABOUT SEATTLE CENTER

Seattle Center is a 74-acre civic, arts, and cultural gathering place in the heart of Seattle and is home to more than 30 partner organizations, including Climate Pledge Arena, KEXP, Museum of Pop Culture (MOPOP), Pacific Northwest Ballet, Seattle Opera, Pacific Science Center, SIFF, and many others.

Anchored by world-class attractions, historic venues, public art, and a dynamic calendar of free and affordable events centered around the iconic International Fountain, Seattle Center brings together arts, culture, sports, and community year-round.

As a department of the City of Seattle and anchor of the Uptown Arts and Cultural District, Seattle Center serves residents from across the Puget Sound region alongside visitors from around the world.

In partnership with Friends of Waterfront Park, Seattle Center provides operations, maintenance, and public safety services for Waterfront Park, while Friends leads park experience, programming, and stewardship along Seattle's downtown waterfront.

Seattle Center welcomes nearly 12 million visits annually, generating nearly \$3.3 billion in total economic activity, supporting 19,400 jobs, and producing more than \$37 million in local tax revenue for the City of Seattle.

With the support of its official partners—[Alaska Airlines](#), [The Climate Pledge](#), [Pepsi](#), [Symetra](#), [T-Mobile](#), and [WaFd Bank](#)—Seattle Center is the most-visited arts and cultural destination in the Pacific Northwest.

ABOUT THE SEATTLE CENTER MONORAIL

Built for the 1962 Seattle World's Fair, the Seattle Center Monorail is owned by the City of Seattle and overseen by Seattle Center. The historic system provides an important last-mile connection between downtown's Westlake Center and Seattle Center. Since 1994, it has been privately operated through a Concession Agreement with Seattle Monorail Services.