



City of Seattle
Edward B. Murray, Mayor

Department of Transportation
Scott Kubly, Director

July 15, 2015

Sound Transit
Attention Kathy Leotta, ST3 Draft Priority Projects
Union Station
401 S. Jackson St.
Seattle, WA 98104

RE: ST3 Draft Priority Projects

Dear Ms. Leotta:

The City of Seattle is extremely supportive of future expansion of the regional transit system being developed in the ST3 system plan. We appreciate the opportunity to comment in detail on the Draft Priority Projects. This letter reflects coordinated comments from other city departments. You will find that these comments include specific corridor details and projects inquiries that will inform us about the impacts or trade-offs that these projects may have to the overall system plan and how they integrate with Seattle's transportation and land use plans.

First and foremost, the City of Seattle supports light rail connecting Ballard to Downtown to West Seattle. We believe that a new downtown tunnel is a key element of this corridor, and necessary for the future core capacity of the Puget Sound region. It is our assumption that this tunnel will be in the areas under 4th, 5th, or 6th Avenue, consistent with alternatives in the South King County High Capacity Transit Corridor Study. We do not support the at-grade alignment through downtown because of impacts to the downtown traffic and mobility and the inability to serve South Lake Union. The next four paragraphs provide further insight to develop and evaluate this priority project.

In the Ballard to Downtown segment of this corridor, we request Sound Transit analyze an alignment that includes a below grade station with pedestrian connections to the existing Westlake Station platforms, a station serving South Lake Union in the area of Westlake Ave N and Denny Way, a station at State Route 99 and Harrison Street, serving Uptown and the Seattle Center, a station in close proximity to the Elliott Trail bridge (near the future Expedia site), a station in the vicinity of 15th Avenue and Newton (near Whole Foods), a station in the vicinity of 15th Avenue and Dravus Street, a station in the vicinity of 15th Avenue and Market Street, and a station at 15th Avenue and 65th Street. We would also like to see an alternative with a terminus at 15th Avenue and Market Street and how these alternatives could interline with a future Ballard to University District alignment, for cost and ridership comparison.

In the Elliott/15th Avenue corridor, we request Sound Transit analyze surface running and elevated alternatives with an evaluation that highlights the trade-offs of ridership, travel time, private property

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impacts, general traffic and freight mobility impacts and cost. In the surface alternative, include an analysis of left turn access points for large (WB-67) vehicles and how freight access to the Ballard/Interbay Industrial and Manufacturing Center would be maintained. Demonstrate how left turning movements and U-turn movements function at signalized intersections with light rail.

Seattle requests Sound Transit evaluate a multi-modal bridge structure that replaces the existing Ballard Bridge and includes light rail, general purpose lanes, and separated pedestrian and bicycle facilities. It is our goal to have no more than 4 general purpose lanes. Seattle also requests Sound Transit develop a bridge alternative or alternatives lower than the 70' height identified in the Ballard to Downtown High Capacity Transit Expansion Study. Key comparisons for this analysis are capital and operating costs, length of required bridge approaches and associated property and roadway network impacts, and the frequency of openings in the non-peak periods impacting transit and general purpose traffic travel time.

In the West Seattle segment of this corridor, we would like to see a phased approach with connections from Downtown to the West Seattle Junction funded in ST3 (since this segment appears to have the highest ridership) and extensions further south potentially funded in a future Sound Transit system plan. We request Sound Transit develop and evaluate surface, tunnel and elevated alignments, as well as, identify early implementation items that would benefit existing bus service prior to full light rail corridor implementation. Clearly identify any changes or impacts that modify operations of or overall mobility on the Spokane Street or West Seattle bridges. Evaluate early bridge implementation such as a bus ramp or transit lanes that can be converted to light rail in the future, a bus hub transfer facility in SODO, or other options to improve transit travel times and reliability for connections from West Seattle.

While the Ballard to Downtown corridor is a top priority, Seattle requests Sound Transit to further evaluate the Ballard to University District corridor assuming a tunnel configuration with pedestrian connections to the U District Station and considerations to extend the line to the east in the future.

Seattle requests Sound Transit provide a full evaluation of the Graham Street (Central Link) and 130th Street (Lynnwood Link) infill stations. Seattle's EIS for the Comprehensive Plan update includes two options with a new urban village around the 130th Station with zoning that would permit TOD and encourage higher ridership. For the Graham Street station, develop alternatives that compare the property impacts and costs of adjacent side platform and off-set side platform configurations. For the 130th Street station, work with Metro to identify new transit riders gained from an integrated bus feeder network. New bus riders gained from a revised bus feeder network were not included in the Lynnwood Link EIS, this underestimated station ridership potential.

Seattle requests Sound Transit to include Madison BRT in its list of draft priority projects, assuming a configuration with dedicated transit lanes and full featured BRT on the Madison corridor. Please coordinate this analysis with SDOT staff currently working on this project.

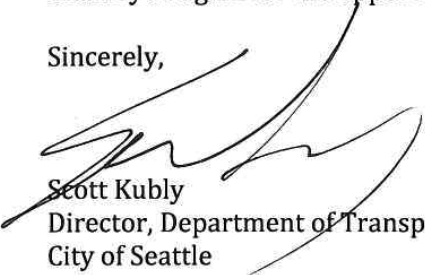
Seattle requests Sound Transit to identify how the proposed System Access Program and Transit Oriented Development Program can be applied to existing and future stations. Include incentives in these programs to leverage ST funds with local investments in light rail, BRT related projects, streetcar and other station access improvements.

The City of Seattle will continue to partner with Sound Transit on the implementation of the ST3 System Plan. Based upon supportive polling results suggesting a desire to implement regional transit sooner rather than later, Seattle request Sound Transit to develop, evaluate and recommend project development, permitting, construction, and funding methods and alternatives to accelerate the completion of ST3 funded projects.

We anticipate a successful partnership to expand the regional transit system, provide safe, efficient and sustainable transportation choices for or residents and regional riders. If you have any questions about these Draft Priority Projects, please don't hesitate to contact me or Michael James at michael.james2@seattle.gov or (206) 386-4012.

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,



Scott Kubly
Director, Department of Transportation
City of Seattle

CC: Andrew Glass Hastings
Barbara Gray
Jon Layzer
Paulo Nunes-Ueno
Bill Bryant
Hannah McIntosh
Diane Sugimura
Tom Hauger
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