

7/22/2021 Board of Directors Meeting

Written Public Comment Submissions

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Chris Johnson, Bellevue Chamber of Commerce

The substance of this comment are enclosed in a letter, attached to the end of this report

Chair Keel, Vice Chair Constantine, Vice Chair Roberts, and Board Members - The Bellevue Chamber of Commerce thanks you for your service to the region and for the opportunity to provide comment, as the Board considers possible realignment scenarios. Please see the attached correspondence, which underscores the importance of Sound Transit service, especially Stride Bus Rapid Transit (BRT), as our regional economy begins to recover from the pandemic-induced recession.

Thanks, again for considering our views.

Chris Johnson | Director of Government Relations

Bellevue Chamber of Commerce

P: 425.213.1208 | F: 425.462.4660 | E: cjohnson@bellevuechamber.org

330 112th Ave. NE, Suite 100, Bellevue, WA 98004

Issaquah Mayor Mary Lou Pauly

The substance of this comment are enclosed in a letter, attached to the end of this report

Dear members of the Board,

Please see attached for Mayor Pauly's comments regarding your ST3 Realignment discussion today.

Thank you for your consideration,

Andrea Snyder | Deputy City Administrator
City of Issaquah | Direct: 425-837-3022

Joyce Hengesbach

The substance of this comment are enclosed in a letter, attached to the end of this report

Thank you for distributing the attached for today's meeting.

Joyce Hengesbach 206-932-9384
West Seattle SkyLink
www.westseattleskylink.org

Rachel Smith, President and CEO of the Seattle Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce

The substance of this comment are enclosed in a letter, attached to the end of this report

Chair Keel and Members of the Sound Transit Board of Directors,

Attached, please find a letter supporting Councilmember Balducci's approach to realignment and encouraging you to pursue a realignment strategy that delivers projects as close to on time as possible. ST3 investments are critical to keeping our region economically competitive, ensuring equitable access to jobs and education, making it easier for people to live in our region without a car, and addressing the increasingly threatening impacts of climate change.

Thank you,
Rachel

Rachel Smith
President and CEO
[Seattle Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce](#)

Abdi Yussuf, Puget Sound Sage and Graham Street Community Action Team

My name is Abdi Yussuf, I am with Puget Sound Sage and the coalition organizer for Graham Street Community Action Team, a coalition of seven multi-cultural and multi-faith community-based organizations serving the Graham Street neighborhood in the Rainier Valley.

We demand that Sound Transit stop its realignment plan that would cause significant delays to programs such as the Graham Street and North 130th.

We have been working together for years with the South Communities Organizing for Race and Regional Equity and Graham Street Community Action Team in supporting the Graham Street station's inclusion in Sound Transit 3.

In 2018, the Graham Street Community Action Team created a shared neighborhood vision for an equitable transit-oriented development around the future light rail station. Our long-term goal has always been to plan early, take land out of speculation, create community capacity for local development, and launch multiple projects that work together to create a vibrant and resilient transit-oriented neighborhood.

The Graham Street neighborhood is a community that has been historically ignored by Sound Transit. It would be disappointing to see Graham Street station significantly delayed because

our community partners have been waiting for the station for a long time. There are many community anchors that are waiting for the opportunities that come with the light rail.

As Sound Transit makes deeper investments in our regional transit system, we want the agency to affirm its commitment to equity and justice by directing these public investments to communities such as the Graham Street neighborhood.

Joe Kunzler

Thank you and I object strongly to the tardy posting.
The amendments on realignment & presentation should have been posted last night at 5 PM/1700 Hours local to allow media and citizens time to review the documentation.

I strongly object to this delay as I do the "delay" tone of the realignment conversation and will reference both in my oral comments today.

I hope those tweeting out today's comments such as Seattle Transit Blog, The Urbanist and The Seattle Times will please include mine out of fairness, equity and to help push for more Sound Transit transparency.

Thank you;
Joe A. Kunzler
gowlernoise@gmail.com

Good morning Joe,

Thank you for your feedback regarding potential amendments. Staff has been working with Boardmembers over the last several weeks to review amendment proposals and ensure their financial and legal viability in the larger ST3 framework. As you can imagine, this requires a great deal of coordination, as many amendments may affect one another in some way. All proposed amendments, in addition to a hybrid proposal have been posted to the Sound Transit website for the public to review.

<https://www.soundtransit.org/get-to-know-us/news-events/calendar/board-directors-meeting-2021-07-22>

Thank you for your patience while staff and the Board ensure that these proposals meet the high standards our region deserves.

Thank you,

Adam Montee
Program Manager – Board Administration
Pronouns: He/Him/His
Executive Department
Sound Transit
[Connect with us!](#)

16 July 2021

Dear Sound Transit Board & Board Staff;

Joe A. Kunzler here. I am very, very disappointed that the proposed amendments to this "realignment" discussion are not online as of 9:15 PM/2115 Hours 16 July 2021. Those amendments should have been online for transit advocates to discuss whether to support or not support or ask for friendly amendments to amendments.

I ask that those amendments please be online by noon Tuesday please. Thank you.

I also want to again thank Sound Transit Board & Board Staff for remaining in online meetings. I don't think it's too polemic to say that it is vital to the safety of Sound Transit personnel and supporters that Alex Tsimerman NOT be allowed back into the Ruth Fisher Boardroom for as long as humanly possible.

Thank you;

Joe A. Kunzler
gowlernoise@gmail.com



bellevuechamber.org

425-454-2464

staff@bellevuechamber.org



July 15, 2021

Sound Transit Board of Directors
401 S. Jackson St
Seattle WA 98104-2826

Re: Realignment Scenarios

Dear Chair Keel and Members of the Board,

As the Sound Transit Board takes up various realignment scenarios, the Bellevue Chamber thanks each of you for keeping overall system performance at the heart of your discussions. Just last month, we were pleased to sign a letter of public and private stakeholders, underscoring the importance of Stride Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) to communities along the I-405 and SR 522 corridors.

With 30,000 new jobs on the way to the greater Eastside in the next several years, we cannot overstate the impact this explosive growth will have on our transportation system. The Legislature has already directed WSDOT to evaluate project funding and phasing alternatives that will prevent elements of the I-405 corridor program from slipping, despite the loss of both gas tax and toll revenues during the pandemic.

We appreciate that transit systems have suffered tremendous losses in both passengers and revenue over the past year and a half and as construction costs rise acknowledge the enormity of the task in front of you, as you seek to serve all communities within the Sound Transit service area. Therefore, we offer the following observations and recommendations.

When evaluating realignment scenarios, consider the impact that delaying components of a particular line of business or project will have upon overall system growth and ridership. Major employers draw from across the region and Stride BRT will serve north-south trip markets from Lynnwood to Burien, and east-west trip markets from Shoreline to Bothell, each of which will boost system ridership immediately upon initiation of service in 2024. Bellevue Transit Center is poised to serve as the hub for both the north and south Stride lines, and delayed implementation will result in a lack of connectivity for regional travelers.

Similarly, delaying certain system investments will have an impact upon other transit service providers, such as King County Metro. Delaying the implementation of Stride BRT to 2027, for example, will likely impact the redeployment of service hours that might have been freed up for needed investments in alternate corridors, including those which will feed Eastlink light rail, as well existing and proposed Metro RapidRide service on local arterials. The rapidly urbanizing Eastside and its changing land use patterns require increased span and frequency of service in underserved corridors, and this will be delayed if Stride BRT implementation is pushed back.

We strongly recommend that Sound Transit consider additional revised economic forecast scenarios, that takes into account a likely uptick in revenue collections in the third and fourth quarters of 2021 and out years of the current financial plan while also getting clarity on federal grant revenue that may be beyond the current assumptions of \$3.7 billion. While the financial pressures upon Sound Transit present challenges, the financial landscape has changed significantly. The program affordability gap narrowed from \$11.5 billion down to \$7.9 billion, a change of \$3.6 billion, while there is also a federal transportation investment package under development. According to our understanding, the American Rescue Plan alone has already generated an additional \$527 million and we've not yet seen adoption of an infrastructure federal package or a final Surface Transportation Reauthorization. Lastly, while the cost of money is low, consider additional long-term debt options.

Finally, we respectfully request the Board consider the cost implications of pushing projects further out into the future, especially those which are on the verge of implementation. Simply delaying all projects may increase construction costs in the long run. Moreover, when it comes to Stride BRT, the increased bus base costs aside, we know the cost of implementation has actually decreased by a factor of 7% for S1 and S2 on I-405, and 17% for S3 on SR 522, between 2019 and 2020. Perhaps more important, we know that the cost per mile associated with Stride BRT compares favorably with other lines of business.

We know there are compelling cases for all elements of the Sound Transit III plan as adopted by the voters to connect our region. However, we urge the Board to think carefully about the implications for system development, the region's integration and overall ridership growth and access to exciting new jobs in East King County when making realignment decisions. The East King County business community is eager to work with you to secure the necessary resources, locally and in the nation's capital, to keep system implementation on track.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Joe Fain".

Joe Fain, President & CEO

Bellevue Chamber



CITY OF
ISSAQUAH
WASHINGTON

Mayor's Office

130 E. Sunset Way | P.O. Box 1307
Issaquah, WA 98027
425-837-3020
issaquahwa.gov

July 22, 2021

Sound Transit Board
401 S. Jackson Street
Seattle, WA 98104

SENT VIA EMAIL

Re: ST3 Realignment Plan

Dear Chair Keel and members of the Sound Transit Board,

I am writing regarding the ST3 Realignment plan for discussion at your July 22 board meeting. First and foremost, I'd like to thank the Board for your commitment to building all of the projects in the ST3 plan. We agree every project is essential for the region's mobility. Thank you also for the communication on the challenges of implementing ST3 and for the public engagement process you have conducted to date.

Like Sound Transit, Issaquah's infrastructure plans have also been impacted by the pandemic and the recent significant increases in labor, material, and land costs. Despite this, we have heard from our community that investments in our infrastructure are overdue and cannot be postponed. To meet the needs of our community and get projects done sooner, we have had to alter the scopes of our projects to reduce costs, enter into new partnerships, and nimbly embrace different methods of financing.

We ask Sound Transit to do the same and explore alternatives to postponing the critical transit infrastructure projects that our region needs now. Today, I echo the urgency expressed by the Issaquah community and ask you to support King County Councilmember Claudia Balducci's plan to consider alternate financing options, project changes, and to explore new ways of partnering with local jurisdictions.

I have heard from the Eastside Transportation Association and others, the request to use resources otherwise reserved for the Kirkland-Issaquah Link to support the I-405 BRT project. As you are aware, the recent survey conducted by Sound Transit demonstrated the region's overwhelming support for the Kirkland-Issaquah Link. In fact, in addition to general regional community support, the Kirkland-Issaquah Link was ranked as the top priority on the Eastside among most people of color, people with disabilities, households that make less than \$50,000 a year, and people who are transit dependent. For these reasons, we do not support using resources otherwise set aside for this priority connection to be used to support the I-405 BRT project. I thank you again for your commitment to building all of the projects in the ST3 plan.

Issaquah remains excited and ready to collaborate on the planned light rail connection and regional mobility.

Thank you for your service and leadership in the region.

Sincerely,



Mary Lou Pauly, Mayor

To: Sound Transit Board members
From: West Seattle Sky Link Team
Date: July 22, 2021

Thank you once again for the opportunity to provide input to Sound Transit and the Board. We are eager to support you in building a much-needed transit network as soon as possible in a financially responsible way.

On Monday, KOMO radio aired interviews with West Seattle residents about their difficulties and frustrations moving in and out of the peninsula. Yesterday the radio station followed up with a report on SkyLink, saying the idea of an urban gondola is gaining momentum because it offers high-capacity transit much sooner than light rail.

Our experience talking to hundreds of West Seattle residents and businesses mirrors the distress and sense of urgency that was conveyed on the radio. People are concerned not only because of personal hardship, but because they also believe there is an environmental imperative. The heat wave and early fires in the Northwest, and extreme weather events worldwide, have emphasized the need to curb emissions, 45% of which in our state are caused by the transportation sector. SkyLink would provide a viable, public transit option this decade rather than next, taking cars off the road many years earlier.

Large employers in Seattle and the Eastside are grappling with how West Seattle employees can get to their workplaces in the least burdensome, most efficient and sustainable way. Employers with whom we've met are enthusiastic about how SkyLink could help that happen much sooner.

As you continue to look for cost and time savings, we urge you to consider an urban gondola for the West Seattle connection to Link. Funding a technical study of the SkyLink proposal could be done for around \$200,000 in three months or less. This would facilitate a comparison of SkyLink and light rail alternatives to determine which one is most beneficial for West Seattle, the region, and our environment.



THE CHAMBER

July 22, 2021

The Honorable Kent Keel
Chair, Board of Directors
Sound Transit
401 S. Jackson Street
Seattle, WA 98104-2826

Re: Sound Transit Realignment

Dear Chair Keel and Members of the Sound Transit Board of Directors:

On behalf of the Seattle Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and the 2,500 employers we represent, I write to you to in support of Councilmember Balducci's approach to realignment and to encourage you to pursue a realignment strategy that delivers projects as close to on time as possible.

The Chamber has long been an advocate for Sound Transit and Sound Move, ST2, and ST3 investments for the reasons you know well: keeping our region economically competitive, ensuring equitable access to jobs and education, making it easier for people to live in our region without a car, and addressing increasingly threatening impacts of climate change. Delaying ST3 investments undermines our efforts on these fronts.

As Sound Transit's recent revenue forecast shows, a revenue shortfall is no longer the issue. With the affordability gap now attributable only to cost increases, it is critical that we maintain the trust of voters and work to address cost issues. We strongly urge you to support the creation of a group of experts to advise Sound Transit of ways to stay on schedule, and that they have access to and are given an opportunity to weigh in on everything the agency has in the toolkit – from value engineering and alternative project delivery methods, to revisiting state law on protective acquisitions and bonding capacity. It is an insufficient response to simply say that costs went up, therefore projects will see, in some cases, decades of delay. While we absolutely agree the agency has a responsibility to put forward an affordable program to the Board, we also have an expectation that the agency will “work the problems” in a more meaningful way.

Stakeholder engagement at the programmatic and project level needs to be meaningful and consistent. It must address project-level assumptions and decisions, options for new revenue, as well as detail both internal and external processes that affect project delivery, cost, and schedule. Stakeholders involved in this process must include representatives from historically underserved and unserved neighborhoods, community groups, and the business community.

We strongly support Councilmember Balducci and Executive Constantine's work to bring forward ideas, alternatives, and process changes. We greatly appreciate the Board's decision to delay a realignment vote – something we requested in our last communication – until August 5. It is mission critical that we maintain all options to keep projects on time or ahead of schedule. We look forward to the continued realignment discussion at the July 22 Board meeting and will offer additional comments before the August 5 vote.

Sincerely,

Rachel Smith
President & CEO