

4/13/2023 System Expansion Committee
Meeting Written Public Comment
Submissions

Submissions

Bill Hirt 2
Betty Lau – verbal comment transcript 3
Vicki Scuri..... 4

Bill Hirt

Dear ST Board Members Mayor Harrel and Claudia Balducci

Your comments at the March 23rd Sound Transit Board meeting prompted this post. The meeting agenda included approving the following "Business Item"

Motion No. M2023-18: Confirming or modifying the preferred alternative light rail route and station locations for the Ballard Link Extension for additional environmental review, including preparation of a Final Environmental Impact Statement -- Materials Forthcoming"

The discussion concluded with board members Mayor Harrel and Claudia Balducci objecting to having to choose between the 4th Ave CID and Pioneer Square stations. That the CID station provided a "once in a lifetime opportunity to create a space for people to transfer from light rail to light rail, to Sounder and Amtrak". That more study was needed before the decision was made to give up that opportunity and proceed with the Pioneer Square station.

The result was a decision to replace M2023-18 with a motion calling the Pioneer Square Station the "Preferred Alternative" but requiring additional study of the 4th Ave CID station. While no written version of the motion was available, Balducci's version for an additional 2 months of study was unanimously approved.

This post opines any additional study should consider a 3rd alternative. Use the existing CID Station on DSTT to provide "a space" for people to transfer from light rail to light rail, to Sounder, and Amtrak". Terminate East Link and West Seattle Links there. Terminate Ballard Link at the existing Westlake station. Both stations could provide commuters with egress and access to light rail trains at a fraction of the time, cost, and disruption required for access at either end of a second tunnel. Those needing to go beyond CID or Westlake could do so on existing DSTT. The Sound Transit Board should use the two months to determine how many will need to do so.

First, the Board needs to recognize Sound Transit's goal should be to reduce congestion on routes into Seattle, not implement "voter approved" light rail extensions. That reducing congestion requires attracting more commuters to public transit. Estimate how many will use the light rail spine along I-5 and I-90 into Seattle.

Release the quarterly performance provided reports detailing how many of Sound Transit's predicted 41,000 to 49,000 were added by the three stations on Northgate Link route to Westlake. While Sound Transit continued to route 510 into Seattle, Northgate Link riders were added by King County Metro ending KCM41 and Sound Transit terminating ST511-513 at Northgate, not increasing public transit ridership into Seattle.

When Lynnwood Link begins operation, ST510 as well as most of the Snohomish Community Transit 400 bus routes into Seattle will terminate at Lynnwood station for light rail into the city. Again, terminating bus routes reduces transit capacity into Seattle and nothing to reduce I-5 congestion. Thus, riders to Westlake could be reduced by continue to route ST510 and some of the SCT400 buses to Northgate for those going to UW and Westlake but continuing into Seattle. I-5 riders to CID from Federal Way could be limited when Line 1 Link begins operation by continuing ST557 during peak commute into Seattle.

I-90 riders to existing CID station could be limited to those along East Link route to Redmond. Allow I-90 corridor bus riders to ride into Seattle rather than transfer to East Link on Mercer Island for the commute. Ballard riders to Westlake and West Seattle riders to CID will be limited by the number of commuters within walking distance of the limited number of light rail stations.

The best available information as to how many of those arriving at Westlake and CID will continue through DSTT is to assume commuters will arrive at the same station they depart. 2019 pre-pandemic boardings show most got on at Westlake and CID stations to depart. Sound Transit can use more recent departure data to anticipate how many future train riders continue through DSTT. It's unlikely to exceed the ~9000 rider per hour light rail capacity in each direction.

The bottom line is the Sound Transit Board has three choices. Continue with plans to spend 6-7 years and \$12 billion on a second tunnel with an undetermined station near Westlake and at Pioneer Square. Spend additional years and additional millions on a "once in a lifetime" opportunity to create a space for people to transfer from light rail to light rail, to Sounder and Amtrak". Or allow some bus routes to continue into Seattle to allow using the existing Westlake and CID stations for that opportunity with a minimum of time, cost, and disruption.

It should be an easy choice

Bill Hirt. wjihirt2014@gmail.com
Bellevue

Betty Lau – verbal comment transcript

Hi, I'm Betty Lau co-founder of Transit Equity for All,

Thank you very much for voting to include 4th Avenue Hub Station in further studies.

I'm here to remind everyone of equity issues surrounding the 4th Avenue Hub if it is skipped over for a transit station. You've all borne witness to the 100 or so supporters who have packed this room.

Sound Transit's Equity and Engagement principles are at stake. It calls for collaboration and working with community for solutions, not a top-down model.

If 4th Avenue Hub Station is skipped, it will bookend CID with construction impacts and none of the benefits, leaving the area's largest community of color south to Angle Lake and east to Newcastle, without easy access to transit.

Think of the more than 1200 seniors living in CID, many of whom are disabled. Think of the low wage essential workers outside Seattle. Where's the equity for all if the 4th Avenue Hub Station is skipped?

Please plan for how to get CID seniors to First Hill for hospitals and treatments, how essential workers can easily get to work there, and how we all can transit about the region easily and equitably.

Thank you.

Vicki Scuri



Who is CORE? We are concerned neighbors who live in LFP, sharing information about ST3 and its impacts on our community.

Contact: info@lfpcore.org www.lfpcore.org

April 13, 2023

Re: Meeting Comments Sent to Sound Transit Regarding the Sound Transit Drop-In Open House

To: Julie Timm, ST CEO: julie.timm@soundtransit.org;
Dow Constantine, ST Board Chair,
Kent Keel, former Board Chair, and
Sound Transit Board Members: emailtheboard@soundtransit.org;
City of Lake Forest Park: phill@cityoflfp.gov, jjohnson@cityoflfp.gov, and
citycouncil@ci.lake-forest-park.wa.us

Dear Julie Timm, ST CEO; Dow Constantine, ST Board Chair; Kent Keel, former Board Chair; Sound Transit Board Members; and the City of Lake Forest Park:

As a resident of Lake Forest Park (LFP), I am disappointed in the lack of transparency and effective communication between Sound Transit (ST) and my community. One hundred sixty-eight LFP residents signed a letter requesting Sound Transit to rethink the EB BRT lane in LFP, using Queue Jumps to achieve a similar transit time savings of 2.3 minutes over 1.2 miles through our City, greatly lessening the impacts to residents and the environment. We have yet to receive a response from Sound Transit.

The most recent newsletter released this week, does not begin to address community comments. It glosses over the impact of our residents' concerns and broad brushes with "happy talk." I am appalled by the lack of critical thinking or care that Sound Transit has extended to our community through throughout this process.

Recently, I learned that Sound Transit is planning to use a wider curb-to-curb footprint, 6'-9' wider, than what exists or is planned in either Kenmore or Bothell, with no explanation. I am including a letter by David Hepp, a landscape architect who lives in our community. Our concerns relate to the expansion of the road, and how this impacts the following:

- 1) removing more than 500 trees and even more shrubs along Bothell Way
- 2) clearing and blading a 16' wide 4,000' long swath, along Bothell Way from 38th Ave NE to 41st Ave NE
- 3) the most private property acquisitions, of any segment along ST3, will be in Lake Forest Park
- 4) cutting and replacing the hillside with a series of tall, monotonous concrete retaining walls nearly 4,000' in length, devoid of aesthetics, plantings, or noise mitigation, and extending up to a height of 16'.
- 5) increased noise, reflected from the tall retaining walls, and additional traffic volumes due to buses running every 10 minutes in both directions and an additional EB/N traffic lane for vehicles (the rubber on the road results in most highway noise and this is not addressed by ST)

While I support transit, I support good design, critical thinking, and an open and transparent process. This process reflects little of this. The "Westward Expansion" was designed and implemented without informing residents on the west side of Bothell Way. Sound Transit worked extensively with the City of Lake Forest Park and residents on the eastside of Bothell Way to create turnaround driveways, extending their driveways and creating a buffer between those homes and the road by adding a 6' wide sidewalk and a 4' wide planting strip. Conveniently, the west side residents were never contacted during this process. Our land, our trees, and our environment is expended to implement these design changes that benefit the wealthiest residents of Lake Forest Park most. In general, there is a great discrepancy between how the west side of Bothell Way and the east side of Bothell Way have been considered, both by the City and Sound Transit. This process is not equitable

from either a community perspective, or a broader perspective considering the impacts of ST3 on Lake Forest Park compared to Kenmore and Bothell, where fewer than half of all property impacts occur, primarily on commercial and retail properties, not residential properties.

Below is the letter written by David Hepp to our City. I would like a response from the Sound Transit Board that addresses my concerns and the concerns of my community.

Vicki Scuri, 15004 37th Ave NE, LFP

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Mr. Phillip Hill
City Administrator
City of Lake Forest Park

28 March 2023

Dear Mr. Hill:

Earlier this month I emailed you about my concerns regarding the street tree varieties specified in the 60% design drawings for the Stride 3 project. Thank you for your response.

More recently I have been studying the proposed pavement section for that part of the project in Lake Forest Park between 145th and the Town Center. I have discovered a profound discrepancy between the existing cross-sections at the ends of that section and what is proposed for the majority of the new improvements down the hill. I sent a brief email alert to LFPCORE and, I believe, Vicki Scuri forwarded that to you. I would like to expand on that initial memo because I believe it demonstrates a significant design oversight which drives the costs far higher than should be the case.

While I initially compared the proposed improvements to functionally similar sections in Kenmore, the issue can be illustrated by examples within Lake Forest Park.

The proposed pavement cross-sections at issue are illustrated on Sheets 084 and 086 of the 60% construction documents, which are available on the City website. **Figure 1** (from Sheet 084) shows the proposed paved section in areas with 6 through lanes (2 BATS and 4 general traffic). This is shown as a 76' curb-to-curb dimension. **Figure 2** (from Sheet 086) illustrates the proposed paved section in areas with 6 through lanes (2 BATS and 4 general traffic) plus a left-turn lane. This is shown as an 87' curb-to-curb dimension.

By contrast, existing road cross-sections near 145th Street and adjacent to Town Center are to be retained without changes to the current cross-section. **Figure 3** shows the street view in front of the Taco Bell just this side of 145th. The existing section near 145th appears to be 75' curb-to-curb. This accommodates 7 traffic lanes and a median divider.

Figure 4 illustrates the current (and future) cross-section as SR 522 approaches Ballinger Way. Here the functional width accommodates 7 traffic lanes with a median divider. The existing section adjacent to Starbucks measures 77' curb-to-curb.

In both cases, these widths (for current and future) were calculated by measuring both on the digital Sound Transit plans and with Google Earth.

So, here is the problem. In the existing, no work, areas 76' to 77' provides for 6 traffic lanes and a left turn pocket. For much of the alignment down the hill, including the areas showing the need for large retaining walls on the west side, the current design uses 76' to carry 6 traffic lanes and a more extraordinary 87' where a left

turn lanes is needed. This 'bloat' is due to a wider median and 2' shoulders between traffic lanes and the curb (Figure 5).

This is a big deal! The cost to taxpayers and the permanent environmental and visual burdens being placed on the City appear to be far greater than needed. This discrepancy needs an explanation, or better a correction, by Sound Transit.

Based on ST's record of disinterest in comments from community members, I am bringing this to the City's attention in the hopes that it can better pursue a productive response to what I see as a significant design oversight. In my view, it reflects a lack of critical thinking by the Sound Transit design team. The Sound Transit Board of Directors has a fiduciary responsibility to assure that taxpayer dollars are effectively and efficiently spent. And, buried in the details of the construction drawings, this is not an issue that Board would be aware of independently.

Sincerely,
 David Hepp
 Retired Landscape Architect
 4748 NE 178th St
 Lake Forest Park

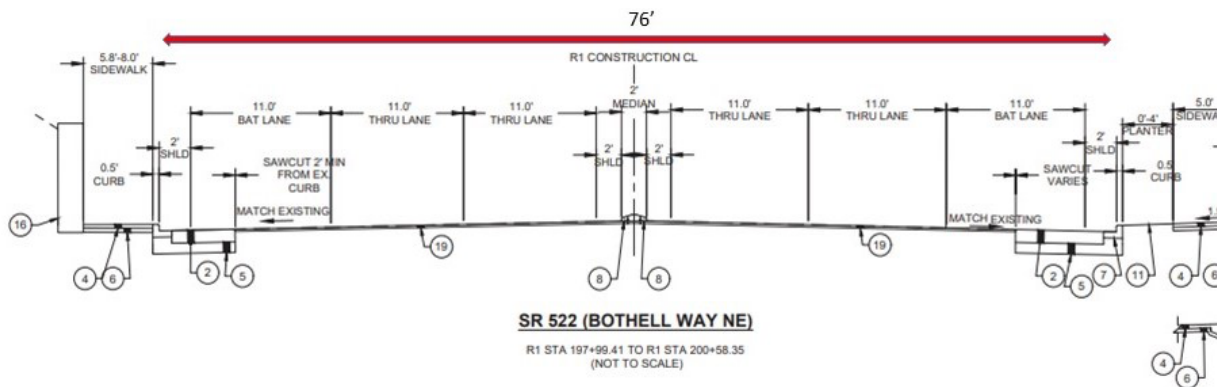


Figure 1 (Sheet 084) Proposed pavement cross-section for 6 traffic lanes

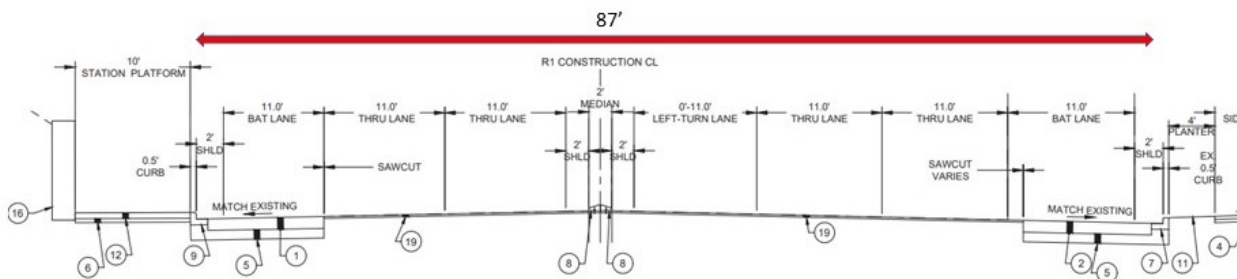


Figure 2 (Sheet 086) Proposed pavement cross-section for 6 traffic lanes and a left-turn lane

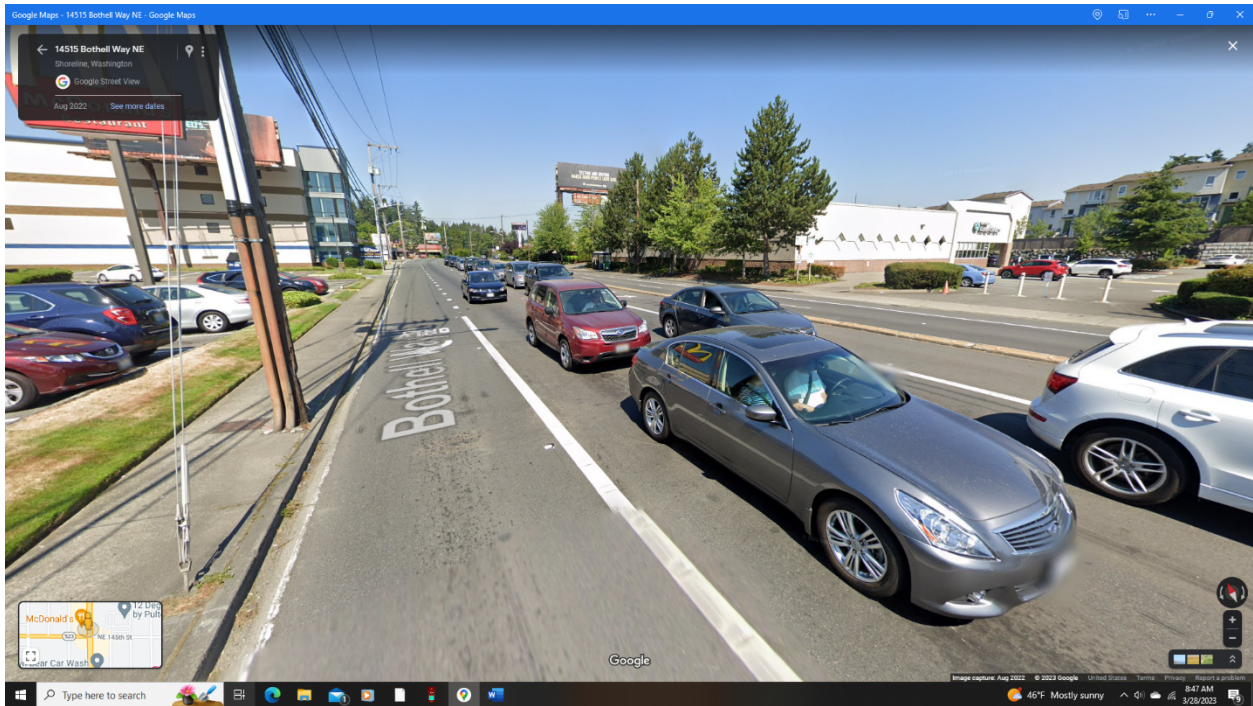


Figure 3 Existing section just north of 145th Street intersection.
75' curb-to-curb for 6 traffic lanes and a left-turn lane.



Figure 4 Existing section at Starbuck's approaching Ballinger Way.
77' curb-to-curb for 6 traffic lanes and a left-turn lane.

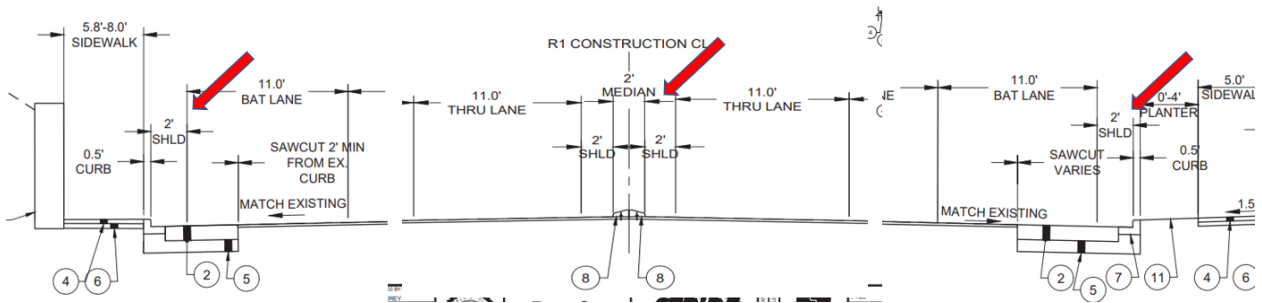


Figure 5 Locations of extra width at outer curbs and central median divider.