



March 22, 2023

Sound Transit Board of Directors
Union Station
401 S Jackson St.
Seattle, WA 98104

Dear Sound Transit Board Chair Constantine, System Expansion Committee Chair Balducci, and members of the Sound Transit Board of Directors,

The West Seattle and Ballard Link Extensions (WSBLE) project is one of the largest infrastructure investments in Seattle's history, bringing tremendous opportunity to further City and regional goals to expand equitable access to residential and job centers, support thriving neighborhoods and economic prosperity, and encourage sustainable and climate-friendly transportation choices. As a Cooperating Agency under NEPA and an Agency of Jurisdiction under SEPA, and in support of our 2018 Partnering Agreement with Sound Transit, the City of Seattle remains committed to support the planning, permitting, and delivery of WSBLE with the goal to advance a project that maximizes equitable benefits, minimizes impact, and best meets local community and regional interests.

As stated in Council Resolution [32055](#) and Sound Transit Board Motion [2022-57](#), the City of Seattle intends to join regional partners to develop a third-party funding strategy that advances critical project elements while remaining affordable under the ST3 realigned financial plan. The City of Seattle acknowledges that third-party funding is intended for cases when other parties have an interest in changing the project scope beyond a Sound Transit alternative that is affordable in the ST3 realigned financial plan. The City of Seattle anticipates a role as a partner to address these funding needs, as well as, to assess available opportunities to reduce costs to Sound Transit in other ways, including land acquisition, right-of-way access, permitting, and other areas that have been identified as cost drivers to the ST3 Program.

The draft modified preferred alternative for Ballard Link Extension and refinements to the modified preferred alternative for West Seattle Link Extension have an estimated \$280 million cost delta over the realigned ST3 financial plan. The City of Seattle acknowledges shared responsibility to address a portion of this cost delta and has worked together with Sound Transit and King County to identify up to \$400 million in potential funding. Over the next year, the City of Seattle will study a variety of revenue sources, including but not limited to, value capture mechanisms, tax abatement programs, and in-kind contributions. The City of Seattle will assess burdens and benefits of potential funding mechanisms to inform an equitable funding strategy. Based on this information, the City of Seattle will be positioned to make an appropriate funding commitment for third-party funding responsibilities and agreed payment schedule in advance of the Sound Transit Board action on a project to be built in 2024.



In addition to this contribution to the WSBLE project, the City of Seattle intends to direct a portion of these funds toward community benefits that seek to repair historic harm from the disproportionate impacts of previous large infrastructure projects on the Chinatown International District and Pioneer Square communities. The City of Seattle will work with community members, other regional and federal public agencies, private sector partners, and philanthropy to grow this investment into a meaningful community fund to implement projects that address community goals. We welcome the partnership with Sound Transit that identified interest from the community in activation of Union Station and adjacent plazas.

The City of Seattle also commits to undertake an analysis with Sound Transit to explore ways to minimize or mitigate technical, financial, schedule and risk implications associated with needed fiber utility relocations for the South Lake Union Mix-and-Match (DT-2 Denny/Terry) alternative from the further studies if the Sound Transit Board elects to study the South Lake Union Mix-and-Match (DT-2 Denny/Terry) alternative. The analysis will also look at opportunities for the City of Seattle to similarly reduce costs elsewhere in the WSBLE system. The City of Seattle anticipates returning with a status update within two months of Board action.

The City of Seattle looks forward to working collaboratively with Sound Transit on finalizing a third-party funding agreement. The City of Seattle understands that any potential future agreement would be subject to review and approval by the Sound Transit Board and only after completion of the environmental review process for the West Seattle and Ballard Link Extension projects.

Going forward, the City of Seattle has identified an initial list of issues that would need to be addressed by Sound Transit to inform future discussions about a third-party funding contribution:

- Development of updated WSBLE project costs estimates and the City of Seattle and Sound Transit agreement on final project scope, scope responsibility, and a third-party payment schedule of installments
- Planning for station access, transit integration, and equitable transit-oriented development for the three-station regional hub of North of CID, CID, and South of CID, that optimizes access and opportunity for the CID and Pioneer Square communities, including a station entrance north of Seattle Boulevard for the South of CID station if the Sound Transit Board selects the north of CID and south of CID stations in the modified preferred alternative
- Improvements to address First Hill rider access and mobility concerns such as investments to RapidRide G and First Hill Streetcar if the Sound Transit Board selects the north of CID and south of CID stations in the modified preferred alternative
- Documentation of appropriate mitigation measures for project impacts, including sufficient mitigation for current and future streetcar operations
- Documentation of complete mitigation of noise and vibration to sensitive users at Seattle Center
- Flexibility for the project design phase to explore engineering and design solutions that minimize visual and transportation impacts from the SIB segment elevated guideway along Elliott Way
- Continued collaboration regarding the inclusion in the Final EIS the following concepts of further studies so that they may be incorporated into the project later, depending on funding availability and future Board direction:
 - The DT-2 Denny (Terry) Mix-and-Match refinement
 - An entrance north of Denny Way for the DT-1 Denny (Westlake) station
 - The entrance north of Market Street for IBB-2B Ballard (15th Ave NW)
 - The SIB-1 (B) Smith Cove (Armory) station refinement



City of Seattle

Mayor Bruce Harrell

The City of Seattle remains committed to our 2018 joint Partnering Agreement and its shared goal of streamlining the WSBLE project permit process. To help achieve this goal, the City of Seattle must have a robust environmental review process in which the City of Seattle reviews and comments on the adequacy of the analysis of project impacts, compliance with City codes, rules, plans, and regulations, and documentation of sufficient mitigation measures. If the Sound Transit Board elects to study stations that were not analyzed in the Draft EIS—including the North of CID, South of CID, and Seattle Center (Republican West) stations—the City of Seattle commits to working with Sound Transit to complete necessary environmental review required under NEPA and SEPA for the new alternatives advanced in the Board action. This analysis will avoid potential project delays and added costs later and ensure the City of Seattle can use the Final EIS to fulfill the City's SEPA responsibilities and streamline the permit process.

The City of Seattle remains a strong supporter of the WSBLE project and committed partner to Sound Transit to plan, permit, and deliver this transformative project. We thank the Sound Transit Board and staff for the partnership through the further studies process. The process produced creative solutions that demonstrated critical responsiveness to community comments on the Draft EIS and will ultimately lead to a better system. We look forward to ongoing partnership in the next phase of work to reach the milestones of the Final EIS and FTA Record of Decision.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Bruce A. Harrell".

Mayor Bruce A. Harrell
City of Seattle