

12/17/2020 Board of Directors Meeting
Public Comment Submissions

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Representative Message from 440+ Emails Regarding Fare Enforcement

Board Members,

I understand that Sound Transit is starting a year-long fare enforcement ambassador pilot program, during which citations will be suspended. I am excited to see the agency exploring alternatives to punitive fare enforcement. But I would also like to see a strong commitment from Sound Transit to divorce any fare evasion program entirely from policing and the court system.

Many studies, including Sound Transit's own surveys and community outreach, have shown that fare nonpayment correlates strongly with poverty, homelessness and housing insecurity. To respond with court-issued fines, debt collection and criminal charges causes lasting harm and disproportionately impacts communities of color. There is no evidence that this punitive approach results in more people paying fare.

I was disappointed to learn that some Sound Transit board members do not feel they have heard from the community on this issue. For over two years, transit riders have been sending a strong and consistent message to decriminalize fare nonpayment. Scores of community-based organizations and many hundreds of individuals have weighed in with joint letters or emails.

It is also disappointing that Sound Transit has not introduced live public comment after nearly a year of virtual meetings. Other public agencies and government bodies have developed methods to address this. If Sound Transit truly wants the community to engage in its plans and policies, it needs to do the work to facilitate this engagement.

I am hopeful that the upcoming pilot program is a real step toward Sound Transit responding to the nationwide call for racial justice, and changing its policies to minimize or eliminate harmful interactions between transit riders and law enforcement and the criminal-legal system. Please commit to making this necessary shift.

Sincerely,

William Hirt

Board Should Reject CEO Peter Rogoff's 2021 Budget The December 17th Sound Transit Board meeting should reject CEO Peter Rogoff's budget for 2021 and his latest proposals for 2017-2041. It continues his delusions about light rail ridership, failure to increase bus transit capacity, and long-term finances.

Rogoff's "2019 Financial Plan & Proposed Budget" should have been a "wake-up" call for the entire region. It proposed spending most of \$96 billion between 2017 and 2041 on a light rail spine that will do absolutely nothing to increase transit capacity into Seattle.

The budget included a "Summary of Revenues, Expenditures and Borrowing" showing \$2.7 billion in expenditures and \$1.2 billion in debt service payments in 2041. The budget also included "Ridership by Mode" predictions with 160 million link light rail riders out of 190 million total. Thus, in 2041, the 2019 budget projected spending \$3.9 billion in costs for 190 million riders, \$20.53 per rider. The "Fare revenue" for the modes totaled \$480 million or \$2.53 for each of the 190 million riders.

A competent transit board would recognize the folly of spending more than \$1 billion in 2019 as the year's installment on plans to spend \$96 billion extending a light rail system that will cost more than \$20 per rider. Especially if they were competent

enough to recognize actual ridership in 2041 will be less than half Rogoff's projection, doubling costs per rider and halving fare revenue.

Extending the light rail spine results in a transit system, not only too expensive to operate, it results in a \$15 billion debt in 2041, with no means to pay after ST3. All could have been avoided with bus routes using limited access lanes on existing roadways, adding far more capacity than the spine at a fraction of the operating cost.

Instead the Sound Transit Board responded to Rogoff's 2019 budget by renewing his contract for three years with a hefty raise. The result being two more years and hundreds of millions spent extending the spine.

A December 17th Sound Transit Board approval of Rogoff's 2021 budget response to COVID-19 will exacerbate the problem. A competent transit board would recognize the way to respond to the pandemic downturn would be to divert funds from the light rail spine to the West Seattle-to-Ballard link.

It adds transit capacity into downtown Seattle at a fraction of the cost of spine construction and operation. Transit capacity into Seattle and Bellevue would be increased if spine funds were used for local bus routes providing access to existing stations with added bus routes along I-5, I-90, and I-405.

The board should not approve a 2021 budget that delays the West Seattle-to-Ballard link for 4 years and still results in an

additional \$2 billion in debt in 2041, adding to the cost per rider. The Sound Transit Board needs to explain how they intend to pay for transit system debt service and operation in 2042. Until they do the 2021 budget plan to spend \$1.5 billion extending the spine simply adds to the problem.

Bill Hirt

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Susan Davis

Hi Sound Transit Board.

I would like to let you know as a 20 year Kirkland resident that I do not support the 85th street BRT station due to the cost (1/3 of BRT budget), location as it is not an urban center and in the middle of a very busy road (85th). I think the ridership from this location does not warrant the investment and we will have a stop 1.5 miles north at Totem lake which is our urban center and has been heavily invested in with our city tax dollars.

Save our tax dollars you would spend on 85th to help with ST overruns, invest it in a park n ride for more spots or the Kingsgate TOD so we have true public low income housing.

It is my hope that the board understand that 85th BRT does not fit in with an effective and efficient BRT station based on cost and projected ridership. Many other Kirkland residents feel the same and I hope they will send emails.

The city of Kirkland push you around. The board needs to make tough decisions with our tax dollars. I do not think spending 1/3 of the BRT budget on this one stop makes sense.

Thank you for your time. Susan Davis

Matthew Renner

To the Board:

Motion 2020-74 is bad policy. By saying that not paying the fares is okay, and that is what you are saying with this motion. People who follow the law and rules are the ones hurt by this motion. You are telling us that we do not matter and the fare thieves have priority. If there are no real consequences for fare evasion then why should anyone pay. Sending this to the courts sends the proper message that stealing is wrong and it will not be tolerated. It is as simple as that. I do not understand why this is so hated by members of the board. Tolerate small crimes and soon you tolerate large crimes.

Thank you

Mathew Renner

To the Members of the Sound Transit Board:

I am once again writing you to plead that you do not stop the enforcement of fares. When people ride transit they are supposed to pay a modest fare in order to do so. That is the law and those are the rules. Rules and laws need real consequences when they are ignored and broken. The people who do not pay the fare are thieves and nothing more than thieves. They are stealing. By saying no to holding them accountable you are saying that theft is okay. I have said before that I have been in times were it was a sacrifice to pay my fares. I still paid my fares or did not ride. i have filed complaints against two Metro drivers because they blocked off the fare box and refused to let me pay like I am supposed to. This was after Metro started collecting again. I am also saying, again, that no one is speaking out on behalf of those of us who are always honest and always obey the rules. We are being ignored because many on the board think the thieves are better people than the honest riders. Keep crimes criminal and keep enforcement. I know that because I am not from Seattle that many of you do not care what i think.

Thank you,

Mathew Renner

Members of the board:

I am writing today to state my opposition to motion 2020-74. Fares are required by law. Fares are required to use Sound Transit services. I am someone who is very transit dependent. I am disabled and am unable to drive. I use transit almost everyday for basic needs. I am someone who follows the rules and obeys the law. That means that I am someone who never uses transit when I cannot pay my proper fare. I have been in times when paying fares was a struggle and a sacrifice. I have had to cancel plans, including things like making an appointment to see a doctor or a job interview because I could not pay my fare. I understand that it can be a hardship. That being said when those who are supposed to be in leadership take criminal activity, and yes, not paying the fares is against the law so that makes it a criminal activity, and take away consequences what you are doing is saying to those of us who do what is

right is that we are foolish for following those rules. Those of us who do obey the law are not even thought about by those who are advocating for this motion. Who will speak for us? If this motion passes it will not be this board. I thank you for your time in reading this. I would like a response. My email is matren2003@yahoo.com and my phone number is 206-460-3320.

Sincerely

Mathew Renner,