

*3/11/2021 System Expansion Committee
Meeting Public Comment Submissions*

Submissions

Steve Evans 2

Steve Evans

Subject	The West Seattle Solution - Please Read
From	Steve Evans
To	Email The Board
Sent	Monday, March 8, 2021 4:08 PM

CAUTION: This email originated from a contact outside Sound Transit. Remember, do not click any links or open any attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe. Report any suspicious email by clicking the "fish" button in Outlook. Thank you! ST Information Security

Greetings Committee Members,

As everyone involved is well aware, providing ST services to West Seattle involves perhaps the greatest combined set of alignment and construction challenges faced by ST in many, many years: geography, population density, lack of existing right-of-ways and a host of unknowns, to name a few. As is consistently demonstrated, when unknowns become knowns cost estimates increase dramatically (or explode) and public perceptions of ST's transparency and goodwill erode. Nearly without exception.

There are obvious benefits to common transportation modalities, but as the saying goes, one size does not always fit all. And so I believe it is with West Seattle. New surface transportation gets really costly when new infrastructure must be build to support it, and rail is perhaps the most significant example. Costs are not limited to actual dollars, either. They include the cost of time associated with engineering studies and revisions, environmental costs such as loss of lands or pollution in the form of noise during construction and operation, private costs such as condemnations and public perceptions associated with rail, and of course construction-related disruptions and delays.

Until very recently, I have continued to believe that rail service to West Seattle would be the most sensible solution for providing enhanced public transit. But, no longer. Without intention to change, I honestly believe that the "SkyLink" gondola concept represents our region's best choice for providing the desired services.

I am not affiliated with the folks advocating this solution nor do I even know them. But the advantages are clearly demonstrated: lower cost, faster implementation, easier alignment, virtually silent operation, no interference with or from surface transportation or uses, etc. In addition, however, it provides something that I believe is very much needed for both our communities as well as ST, namely, a buy-in.

While not everyone is comfortable with transportation from a cable (nice to know bus service will not be stopped), the fact remains it is proven technology with an exceptional record of safety. More importantly, however, is that anyone riding it would experience the best of what Seattle has to offer. Like the Space Needle, it would provide a unique publicly accessible platform for travelers to experience our city, and particularly visitors. Unlike many stops on the ST light rail lines, West Seattle has a vibrant retail experience in addition to residential options. A gondola solution would therefore not try to overcome the challenges of enhanced public transportation in West Seattle due to its location/geography, but embrace it (dare I say celebrate it?). Above Seattle. Postcards anyone?

You collectively have a chance to do something special, not just something that is needed. You can create both a solution and a focal point with greater benefits for less money and less time than if confined to rail (light, mono, etc.). Something that people other than commuters would want to use, both for the novelty of it as well as the benefit. And, the cost savings could be used, to the extent possible, for other ST projects that need it. But best of all, you would have buy-in from fiscal hawks, nay-sayers, environmentalists, business leaders, and many other former foes. How often has that happened in the past or will likely happen in the future?

Please give this option honest consideration, and recognize yourselves as modern day visionaries not just as capacity and longevity bureaucrats (as some would say), but as solution providers for the many facets of the public good.

Thank you for your time today, your dedication to your undertakings, and your openness to the possibilities of the future ;-)

-Steve Evans, Vashon Island

<https://nam11.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwestseattleblog.com%2F2021%2F01%2Fwest-seattle-skylink-gondolas-aerial-trams-instead-of-light-rail%2F&data=04%7C01%7Cemailtheboard%40soundtransit.org%7C84534cd8d3484879291408d8e28f7d40%7Cca24b0afd8fb4e629ead8b37062261d0%7C1%7C0%7C637508453197180086%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbgZsb3d8eyJWljojMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzliLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCi6Mn0%3D%7C1000&sdata=g%2FLZWGoBzoAhrxtSyKfUnhkNq8JtESYUzFKH3z%2B5tpw%3D&reserved=0>