

*3/3/2022 Rider Experience and Operations
Committee Meeting Written Public
Comment Submissions*

Submissions

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This is both a general email to the board, as well as my written public comments for the Feb 24 meeting. Thank you, Eric

Dear Honorable Sound Transit Board Members:

My name is Eric and I am a resident of Tacoma. I have lived here for a little over a year now and have been studying the Sounder Train during that time. I study it because I am a big believer in a robust public transit system. Through my time of study, I have come up with some questions which I can't seem to find an answer too. I was hoping you would be able to provide some insight into these questions.

My first big question reveals around service. Looking at the Sounder train service, it looks like you only run trains in the early morning and early evening with the majority of morning service being north bound and the majority of evening service being south bound. The time schedules of the trains appear to be set up to exclusively help people who work in Seattle from 8-5 Mon-Fri. Anyone needing to get to any of the stops outside of this limited window don't seem to have any good options.

I find this odd as this only serves a very small portion of the Sound Transit cliental. It is also odd given the financial crisis you are in. I have done some research and know that you are struggling with ridership numbers which is causing a budget shortfall; and this is the rationale for such limited service. However, while keeping service reduced seems like the obvious option (especially in the short term) I am curious why sound transit has not yet figured out it is the wrong option. Sometimes the obvious option is the wrong option. As long as the Sounder Train has its scheduled limited to such an extent that it only services a very small niche portion of the Sound Transit Cliental, it will be impossible for ridership to increase enough for Sound Transit to get out of this financial situation. The amount of people who need and/or want to travel during the limited hours you have set, is not enough to make any transit service solvent.

I would recommend looking into the model that the Bay Area Rapid Transit System (BART) has. Of course, much like you, they have a lot of service during that 8-5 commutes, but they have also found a way to have reduced service outside of the commute time. They understand that no one will want to use the transit if the only thing they can do is go to work and get home. Well obviously Sound Transit won't be able to reach the same level of service BART has due to its smaller area with less funding, the model is still worth studying if Sound Transit wishes to get out of this rutt. **A thoughtful deliberate expansion of service that allows use where the majority of Sound Transit Cliental need the service will help to rapidly increase both faith in the system and there for ridership.**

The next question I have, and have been unable to figure out, is the completion time line for your projects. The majority of the projects have expected completion dates decades away, which seems like an unnecessary amount of time. Going back to BART, a few years back when I visited family in the Bay Area, BART had an expansion plan to be accessible in some new cities. When I visited the bay area 2 year later, that expansion was complete. While again, I recognize

that it would be impossible for Sound Transit to do things as quickly as BART, getting's these projects completed promptly should be a priority. While pushing these deadlines out seems like a good way to save money, much like the above; I am confused on how Sound Transit does not see that the obvious path is not the right one. When you are telling people, you are going to service various areas but that service wont' be available for decades, no one is going to take you seriously. It is a bad customer experience which further reduces people's desire to use the Sound Transit System—Both in the new areas your expanding and in your current service area.

While spending the extra money to increase service and speed up new stations will increase the financial hardship at first, it will help to solve the financial hardship in the long run. However, the current system that sound transit is using isn't going to solve the financial hardship, it is just going to create a spiral where the financial situation keeps getting worse. I would love some insight onto why sound transit has made these decisions and if I am missing anything? I am a big believer in a robust public transit system and want to see Sound Transit be successful as I know it can be.

I look forward to your response.

Thank you

Eric