

*1/18/2024 Rider Experience and Operations
Committee Meeting Written Public
Comment Submissions*

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Lisa Pfeiffer

Dear Sound Transit Board:

My most urgent and highest priority comments are:

1. Build the stations and rail you committed to build. NOW. We have waited far too long.
2. Trains run far too infrequently. In any European city of comparable size, there are 10X more stations and trains run every 2 minutes.
3. Do maintenance in the middle of the night. Again, look to any European city. They don't disrupt an entire commuter system to do maintenance.
4. Use the existing roads to lay tracks. Trains should replace roads, not expand them or avoid them.
5. Fast, easy transfers with limited walking are of utmost importance.

Sincerely,
Lisa Pfeiffer

Will Sladich

Hello,

My name is Will Sladich and I commute five days a week on the 1 Line from Capitol Hill to University Street and I wanted to express my experience regarding Sound Transit's handling of the current delay situation.

I will attempt to keep my remarks brief, I do not think that any 1 Line rider potentially hearing this needs an account of my experience as they have their own to go off of. I believe that Sound Transit has absolutely dropped the ball on creating a contingency plan to address the obvious delays that this situation would cause. I read a quote from John Gallagher saying "I don't think we anticipated the crowds to have that much impact on schedules". I genuinely do not understand how this happens. If the best case scenario for train arrivals is every 26 minutes, an already laughably infrequent interval to support the daily commute, then it seems obvious to me that bottlenecked ridership will cause further detriment to the ability to meet those times.

The 1 Line is a crucial service and thus absolutely needs regular maintenance so it should be inexcusable for maintenance to cause this much disruption in service. A recorded apology from the CEO sounds nice but the next time something like this happens there should be much more effort put into the minimization of service disruption whatever that may look like. The citizens of Seattle deserve better for their money.

Sam Luikens

Dear Sound Transit Board,

I'm a public service employee for King County who relies on public transit, sidewalks, and bike lanes to get around.

While I was aware of the current rail maintenance project well in advance of the start date, nothing could have prepared me for the mess that it's created at the downtown light rail stops.

Wait times have been misleading, the crowds overwhelming. And after a failed attempt at getting home from work by rail last Tuesday, I opted to walk. I guess that's what I'm going to do until February 5.

But the increasingly unfettered, unregulated, and astonishing danger drivers of personal vehicles impose on pedestrians every moment of every day has made walking a difficult gamble. And I can't speak for those who are blind, use a wheelchair, or are otherwise unable to access alternate forms of transportation, but I imagine it is even more disruptive to their lives.

But that is the current state of American infrastructure isn't it? Our departments of transportation continue to prioritize the movement of the personal vehicle over other safer, connected, equitable, and environmentally-conscious forms of moving people. They decided long ago that the personal car is more important than human dignity and it appears our leaders lack the courage to turn that dusty crusty rotted ship around.

I don't know what the solution is aside from banning cars forever, but I implore you to seek the advice of city planners in cities and countries that have their public transportation figured out. I believe you can do better than this. Let's not force misery on one another.

Sam Luikens
he/him/his

[Joe Kunzler](#)

4 January 2024

Dear Sound Transit Board;

Clearly, you need a new Chair for the Rider Experience & Operations Committee who:

- a) Won't appease Avrum (Alex) Tsimerman
- b) Would light her/his hair on fire over headways of 13-26 minutes.

This is 100% **UNACCEPTABLE**.

This is what happens when the CHAIR of the Rider Experience & Operations Committee does not have Link go through her community. Also when the Chair of the Board is not caught riding Sound Transit products sufficiently. If this was going on with Tacoma Link, I would expect the current Chair of this Committee to be pissed off. Enough already.

This agency needs to be focused on *paying* customer service and satisfaction. That's what "Go Sound Transit" is about.

Thank you;
Joe A. Kunzler

Troy Serad

Hello Sound Transit Board,

I want to express concern about proposed ST Express service cuts that principally affect the 590 route. The 590 is the legacy Downtown Tacoma to Downtown Seattle regional transit service, a foundational offering from Sound Transit. I urge consideration of all options that can avoid or lessen cuts to the 590. The route was previously targeted for cuts in recent Sound Transit service plans.

Suggestion: Please first explore the temporary suspension of the 586 ST Express. The 586 travels from Tacoma Dome to UW Seattle, making it wholly duplicative of existing bus and light rail routes. It perpetually has the lowest ridership of the Pierce County-Seattle bus routes. The 586 is often mired in Seattle-area congestion, whereas the UW campus area is now easily accessible by University and Northgate Links. Its suspension should be evaluated before we target the non-duplicative 590 service for cuts.

On Service "Duplication" in Tacoma's City Center

Segments of the 590 are being evaluated for elimination due to a claimed duplication of transit service. Presumably, this would affect the Downtown Tacoma portion of the route. Please note that direct regional service into Downtown Tacoma is not duplicative of the local transit lines that also serve the city. These are distinct transit operations with unique service objectives.

As the original Tacoma Link Light Rail line is no longer programmed by Sound Transit to be integrated with the 1-Line for one-seat regional service—as it was approved, planned, and designed to do—the T Line serves the function of local transit. It is for this reason that ST Express has continued to operate in Tacoma's city center after Tacoma Link opened in 2003. Precedent, travel demand, and local transit connections mandate that regional trips continue to serve the urban and economic heart of Pierce County, not just the park-and-ride facility near the Tacoma Dome (where 8 in 10 people drive alone to access transit).

Should ST Express buses serving Downtown Tacoma be duplicative, then so too are all buses traveling into Downtown Seattle. It is also served by light rail. The future South Lake Union light rail station, as

another example, is already duplicative as today it is served by streetcars, RapidRide buses, *and* conventional buses. Of course, this perspective is deeply flawed and shortsighted. These "duplicative" stations and services possess independent utility and deliver tremendous value to the broader transit system. The same is true for transit to Tacoma's city center.

Thank you for your consideration of these items.

Respectfully,
Troy Serad
Tacoma Transportation Commissioner

Unnamed Commenters

I understand regular maintenance is required, and given the state of our construction (new stations on the eastside experiencing tile issues pre-ribbon cutting), it's not surprising, but there has got to be a better way of doing it. The rider impacts during this stretch and the previous stretch have been abysmal--we were promised 13 min frequencies outside of the downtown core: I have not seen that myself, maybe others have. I've opted to just take the bus, which I assume you expected more riders to do, but doing that is much harder after we gutted large portions of our network as part of link system expansions. I'm lucky to live close to a transit hub (the university) that has various bus alternatives still running, and I'm privileged to not rely on transit to get to work; I can't imagine what it's like to be someone on the southend having their entire commute ruined for around a month. We've got to do better. Treat the 1 line like the north-south rapid transit spine that it is (or at least is trying to be).

Hello ST Board:

Here are some comments about rider experience I'd love the board to be aware of and take action on.

1. Escalators today are out at Pioneer Square. Again.
2. North/Northeast Seattle has no good east-west route to get to the train station at Northgate, yet the existence of the train station is given as the reason for reducing service on N/NE Seattle bus routes and in some cases discontinuing them. We need good east-west connectivity to the train station in North Seattle.
3. The 1 Line is so unreliable (frequent reductions in service, as currently is the case) that you can't count on it when you need it. We need major safety re-engineering of MLK Way to prevent the high frequency of traffic incidents causing service disruptions, and we need better maintenance and upkeep on 1 Line to avoid major service disruptions.
4. The ST-approved plan for 4th Avenue/International District is not going to be a great rider experience because it will require a lot of walking. This is unnecessary. Please reevaluate this plan so that it maximizes rider experience and ultimately rider usage.

5. Bus connections to high schools are weak throughout the city; scheduling seems to ignore the existence of our city's high school students. Please make student access a high priority in planning, routing, and scheduling.

Thank you for your time.

The current disruption is an embarrassment for this agency, and that is saying something with the non-stop blunders the past couple of years.

It is such a disservice to light rail riders that clearly sound transit didn't even bother to reach out to partner agencies to try to help reduce demands on the light rail as evidenced by the sound transit twitter account sharing on January 10th that metros route 320 was an alternative option for Northgate riders and metro had to be in the replies telling people that it's not back from suspension. We rerouted a significant number of bus routes to make people depend on the light rail and there was clearly no care taken to address the impact to people who, by no choice of their own, have been given no alternative like possibly bringing back old routing to help people get to where they need to be in a somewhat reasonable amount of time.

Sound Transit Bad.

I'll vote for anyone who campaigns on holding Sound Transit accountable for their outrageous spending and incompetence in operations & planning.

30 minute headways, constant elevator and escalator outages. No bathrooms.

Fares??? Why do we have fares???? Why should I pay my fare when I have to wait/climb several flights of stairs. I'm going to start invoicing you for my Lyft rides at this point.

To whom it may concern,

I am writing as a daily ST rider and Seattle voter.

I commute to and from work on a Sound Transit bus, and often use the link on the weekends. **Faster, frequent, more reliable transit is what makes or breaks a transit experience.**

While speed and frequency are what will increase ridership, a recent growing concern of mine has been reliability. A handful of times a month, I will wait for a bus (sometimes two in a row) that is scheduled but doesn't show, which means myself and a large group of riders are left waiting for 30-45 minutes at our stop. This happened this past Tuesday, where temperatures were in the low 30s. If a scheduled route does need to be cancelled because of a driver shortage or other urgent matter, communication about a cancelled route is key to avoid an almost hour long wait outside.

In short, please prioritize increasing route frequency and reliability.

Thank you for your time

Comments submitted after the deadline for the meeting

Ansel Sanger

Yesterday I flew into SeaTac and took the light rail home. The wait time was 20+ minutes for the Northgate train. The train stopped in service several times. All together the trip took 2 times as long as driving that distance.

Trains should arrive every 8 minutes at the latest. Otherwise driving is easier.

Having traveled in many world-class cities with light rail- Its such an amazing beautiful thing to be able to navigate smoothly. Please keep adding new routes as fast as possible, making stations walk centric, and reduce wait times for trains.

Jer Schmidt

Hi, I have feedback on a couple of things that can be improved about the rider experience.

Please consider what it's like for a *first time rider*. People's very first interaction with the train/bus needs to be a good one if you want to keep them riding. It should be intuitive and easy for first-timers. This

means good wayfinding (both for those entering the station to find their train, and for those exiting to orient themselves), as well as clear indications of where and how to pay.

Some specific examples:

1. At Sounder stations, there needs to be clear signage for which platform is northbound and which is southbound. The first time I rode Sounder I went to the wrong platform so I missed my train, and I've observed since that there is *nothing* that tells me which platform I should be at (at least at Kent & Tukwila). That makes a very bad first impression and drives away new riders.

2. At Link stations, I've seen my friends be confused about where to pay. I like the clear yellow "pay to cross" line on the floor with Orca readers on both ends — that's hard to miss and it's intuitive — but it needs to be standardized so the experience is the same at every entrance of every station. But also keep in mind that most first-time riders probably don't have Orca cards yet, so it needs to be intuitive for them to buy a ticket and be confident they're not breaking any rules.

Thanks for your consideration!

- Jer Schmidt

Unnamed Commenter

To the sound transit board:

As an essential worker, a state employee, and a healthcare professional, it is imperative that I arrive to work reliably and on time--not just for my own sake, but for those whom I serve. The disruptions to public transit and the inadequate substitutes for reliable service are unacceptable to a public that requires more than scraps in one of the most forward-looking metropolises in the United States. Our lack of transit options, the lack of motivation to increase transit options, and the lack of awareness on the part of the sound transit board is baffling and infuriating. Seattle deserves transportation options that are as world-class as the city itself. Please consider the plight of those who depend on public transit options for their daily travel, and consider the impact that quicker action on the public transit front would make in our city.

Unnamed Commenter

Removing 577 on Sunday would be a disaster. 578 is hourly, which is insufficient for Federal Way. The necessary service hours should be taken from the 586, which serves no purpose when UW riders can take Link from downtown. Additionally, route 560 should be transferred back to King County Metro, which would take pressure off of Pierce Transit and greatly reduce deadheads.