

2/8/2024 System Expansion Committee Meeting Written Public Comment Submissions

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John Ho

Dear Sound Transit and King County Executive Dow Constantine,

Across three proposals throughout December of 2023, I had advocated for a Midtown—South (of CID) route with the South of CID station connected to Union Station with an underground people mover, elevated gondola system, ground level streetcar line or shuttle bus line as a compromise between the 4th Ave—Midtown route and North (of CID)—South (of CID) route. In early January of 2024, I had pivoted to advocating for a Midtown—NORTH (of CID) route. Later in January, I discussed a potential missed opportunity for a Pioneer Square Superstation serving the 1 Line, 3 Line, Amtrak, Sounder and potentially even high speed rail.

Now, I would like to propose a Midtown—Seattle Center Monorail if the Midtown light rail station absolutely cannot be saved. A name consistent with Sound Transit's modern naming conventions would probably be the M Line. The M Line could be bundled together with the Culture Connector as part of Sound Transit 4.

The M Line basically extends the existing Seattle Center Monorail into First Hill, making two or more stops in Midtown. If Midtown is going to lose a light rail station permanently, First Hill deserves at least two monorail stations as compensation.

This monorail extension gives Midtown residents direct access to Westlake Station (allowing them to transfer to the light rail network), as well as direct access to Seattle Center. And the elevated nature of monorail means that tunneling through the soft soil of First Hill could be completely avoided.

The existing tracks, stations and trains will almost certainly need to be replaced if the Seattle Center Monorail were to expand into a Midtown—Seattle Center Monorail, but the existing Alweg trains are already very old and they can only be repaired so many more times before they become ships of Theseus. Disney have already replaced the rolling stock of their own historic monorail at least once at Disney World and several times over at Disneyland.

If it hurts to throw the Alweg trains into a museum, then maybe repurpose them into a shuttle between opposite ends of Seattle Center?

As for the new monorail tracks and trains, if a double track cannot fit through the monorail cavity of MoPop, then just route a single track through the cavity and have the other track take a different path.

Monorail may seem like an odd choice, but I think it's a great choice, especially given Seattle's close association with the monorail. The monorail systems in Chongqing and Sao Paulo prove that monorails can be serious public transit and not just amusement rides in theme parks.

If for whatever reason, the Ballard Link Extension needed to be entirely cancelled due to insurmountable financial and/or engineering difficulties, the M Line could be further expanded into a Midtown—Ballard Monorail (a sort of M Line Plus). The segment of the M Line Plus going beyond Seattle Center to Ballard could take inspiration from the proposed Green Line of the cancelled Seattle Monorail Project.

Canceling the Ballard Link Extension in its entirety will result in the loss of a possible Pioneer Square Superstation, but the North of CID site could be repurposed into an operations and maintenance facility for the M Line Plus, accessible through a switch near Westlake allowing trains to switch between the track to Midtown and the track to the Pioneer Square OMF.

How will the Ballard Link Extension's cancellation affect Sound Transit 3? The 2, 3 and 4 Lines should be completely unaffected, except they can now be completed more quickly thanks to freed up Sound Transit 3 funding. As for the 1 Line, I propose a balloon loop, reversing loop, turnaround loop, turnback loop or return loop (there seems to be no universally agreed upon terminology) and station at the South of CID site. Some tunneling may still be needed if the South of CID station and turnaround loop can't be completely above ground, but it should still be significantly cheaper than tunneling all the way to Ballard.

Residents of Ballard and South Lake Union will feel betrayed and become resentful if they have to approve Sound Transit 4 in order to receive rapid transit they were originally promised with Sound Transit 3, so cancelling the Ballard Link Extension should probably be the ultimate last resort.

In conclusion, given the extremely high likelihood of Midtown permanently losing a light rail station, I strongly endorse a Sound Transit 4 package that includes a Midtown—Seattle Center Monorail along with the Culture Connector. Thank you for your time.

—John

Kyle Jacobson

I am writing to strongly urge the board to resurrect plans for Link Light Rail stations on 4th Ave in the CID and on First Hill (Midtown).

First Hill has been growing rapidly, with the redevelopment of Seattle Housing Authority land, 365 units of affordable housing developed by Plymouth and Bellwether, and numerous other new high-rises. The housing is here now, with more imminent, whereas changes to County land downtown remain speculative. Additionally, the hospitals on First Hill employs thousands of workers, many of whom will be unable to afford housing near their places of employment. And of course First Hill is home to Seattle University. For these reasons and because the plan voters improved included a First Hill station, it's essential to honor plans to build one.

CID residents, of which I'm one, have raised important concerns about disruptions to businesses and daily life if the new station is built in the CID. However, 4th Ave has far fewer businesses than 5th, and the solution to concerns is to invest heavily in mitigation with community input and investment, not to deny the community a conveniently-located station well into the future. The proposed south-of-CID station is further from today's residences than the proposed 4th Ave station and is near fast-moving, heavily trafficked roads like Dearborn. The north-of-CID station wouldn't serve the CID well at all, as it is steeply uphill from most CID residences, and separated from them by I-5. Meanwhile, those commuting to work in First Hill or returning to homes there would have to walk steeply uphill from the proposed north-of-CID station to reach First Hill, and would have to cross under I-5 on bust, polluted streets.

Finally, if we skip the 4th Ave station in the CID, we will forever be kneecapping the regional transit backbone, by forcing Sounder and Amtrak riders to walk untenable distances between services.

Thank you,
Kyle Jacobson

Steve Savage

Board -

I am writing as a concerned citizen and active user of public transit. As I have watched this iteration and previous iterations of the board slowly and deliberately denude the ST3 plans for West Seattle/Ballard Link Light Rail Extension, I cannot stand by passively anymore. You are wandering down the wrong track in regard to creating a coherent and robust rail transit system. We must think to the future with these line extensions, not the present. To best meet our current and future needs, we have to move forward with the most important aspect of this whole extension: Building the 4th Ave Station.

The decision by Mayor Harrell and KC Executive Constantine to propose abandoning the CID and place the core transfer of all systems for deliberately poor locations in south CID and north CID instead will forever be a mistake in a system we are building for future generations. I plead with you to ignore the shiny of these other options and keep this ST3 extension as close to what we as the voting public overwhelmingly approved. A station at 4th ave is what makes the most sense to not only integrate the current systems, but give the opportunity to have a portal to heavy rail of Cascades and Sounder trains and give the opportunity to cross 4th ave without crossing a road. This integration has advantages in many ways - it is known the 4th ave viaduct is already a degraded asset and in need of retrofit or replacement, this is an opportunity for all to fix or replace. It also is away from the core of the CID, giving the best integration of our important transit hubs as well as avoiding the most disruption to CID.

We must also maintain a midtown station as close to First Hill as possible for shorter access up the hill, as previous light rail has abandoned this thriving and dense neighborhood. We also must maintain a station in the core of the SLU neighborhood at Westlake and Denny. The tunnel from Interbay to 15th in Ballard is also a must. Traffic disruptions in the short term are the right decision for now and the future, being short-sighted that a dying mode of transport must take precedence over the future is and will always be a poor decision. Put the stations where we currently are and want to go, it will always be the right decision. We must tunnel into the Alaska Junction from Avalon.

Thank you for your consideration.
Steve Savage

Gordon Werner

Good morning!

I would like to request that when SoundTransit considers purchasing new LRVs, that the Board and relevant committees consider extending the current fleet. Kinkisharyo has added additional car bodies to their LRVs operated by NJ Transit and Siemens offers 5 car (A-C-D-E-B) versions of their product.

While this might require changes to the OMFs, it might be cheaper than a fleet of a third type — as two longer LRVs per train could do the job of three or four existing cars

thx

Gordon Werner

Betty Lau – transcript of in person comment

Public Comment by Betty Lau at Sound Transit System Expansion Committee Meeting, Thursday, 2/8/24 at Union Station

SEC Committee Members: I'm Betty Lau of Transit Equity for All.

Gung Hay Faht Choy! Happy Year of the Dragon!

Motion M2024-5 needs to be transparent about specific stations and costs getting the Transit Oriented Development treatment. There's nothing about the March 2023 vote approving continuation of the environmental studies of the 4th Avenue South Transit Hub station location.

We are now at the 11-month anniversary of the vote for continued studies on 4th Avenue, and community has had zero collaboration, zero communication, and zero information.

How does integrated TOD apply to the 4th Avenue station studies?

It's time to create Motions on studies for 4th Avenue in the name of equity, race, and social justice. We're still waiting.

Thank you.

Brien Chow – transcript of in person comment

I'm Brien Chow, Transit Equity for All

System Expansion Committee Members:
Gung Hay Faat Choy!... Happy New Year!

On Saturday, it will be the Year of the Dragon.

I've been reading about the Cascadia high speed rail to connect Vancouver, BC... to Portland, Oregon...

It would be capable of getting from Seattle to Portland in under an hour, currently a trip that takes three hours or longer... It's a great idea!

One of the stops will be Seattle...
and if the Transit Hub is at 4th Avenue by Union Station...
it will be a terrific connection to other transit modes...
as brought out in the DEIS.

The region, as well as Chinatown, Japantown, Little Saigon and Pioneer Square will benefit tremendously from this new connection to the 4th Avenue Transit Hub.

But... I see in Motion M2024-5...
there's no mention of funding for environmental studies... for the 4th Avenue Transit Hub that the ST board approved last March 2023.

Keep your promise and Move Forward on Fourth!...
As Chair Balducci said in the Seattle Times...
"It's important to keep promises."

Thank you.
Brien Chow
Transit Equity for All

Alex Tsimmerman

STOP!!!

gety dem Nazi
Fascist Junta
Bandito!
for 40yr not blood
en money!

Alex Tsimerman
Alt For America, & on