

3/28/2024 Board of Directors Meeting Written Public Comment Submissions

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Tanya Hurst

Hi there,

As a west Seattle resident, I'm not happy with the current light rail plan nor the relocation assistance. We can not demolish Ounces, Skylark, Mode Music, Alki Beach Academy, West Seattle Health Club, all tenants of the Frye Commerce Center, Uptown Espresso and many more.

We'd love a light rain! However, please do not destroy these businesses nor the Longfellow creek beavers, fish, birds! Plenty of empty lots, government owned properties and vacant buildings to explore. Also lack of financial assistance! Don't forget the NO BUILD option as well.

Thank you,

Tanya Hurst

Martin Westerman

Board Members,

Downtown job growth, not population density, drives transit growth. The jobs-transit ridership correlation coefficient for the top 50 urban areas is 0.7; for urban population density — 0.4. Density increases in most urban areas had little or no effect transit ridership. Seattle, the one urban area that increased downtown jobs, mostly thanks to Amazon, increased its transit ridership. And buses, not light rail, carried most of those passengers.

Presently, Sound Transit's Ballard-West Seattle light rail project is the most expensive of its kind on Earth — estimated at nearly \$1 billion per mile. While Sound Transit board members claim this is what ST3 voters approved in 2016, it isn't. The \$4 billion price tag is double what voters approved, and the objective to improve public transportation will not be met.

Buses carry as many passengers now on a one-seat, no-transfer ride between downtown and West Seattle as light rail promises, with 2-3 transfers in 20 years. We can create better transit for \$4 billion than a train from Downtown to West Seattle with three stops.

Yet, you support this massive expenditure of taxpayer money, with no improvement in transit. What is your rationale? Your constituents deserve to know. They'll be paying for this project into the 2080s. Unless you act now to stop this "runaway train."

Section 2 of the ST3 package approved by voters, allows and obligates the ST board to change plans if a project proves unaffordable, unbuildable or infeasible. This enterprise is all three. Act now to avoid public displacement, economic and job losses, and environmental destruction.

All the best from your voting constituent,

Martin Westerman

Martin Pagel

Dear Board members,

West Seattle business owners lost properties due to eminent domain to the Monorail project. Let's not make the same mistake again.

Why would we build a light rail stub which may attract a few more white affluent riders but will make transit more arderous and time consuming for most riders, especially from more diverse brown neighborhoods?

Why would the FTA provide funding for a project with low projected ridership increase from the RapidRide lines it just funded?

Why generate 614,000 tons of carbon during construction and spend \$4 billion when we need to delay Ballard line due to funding?

Please consider these facts before approving land acquisitions.

Martin

Maggie Fimia

The substance of this comment is within a document included at the end of this summary.

Hello,

Attached please find our written comments for tomorrow's meeting along with a graphic. Thank you in advance for getting these to the members.

Maggie Fimia

Marilyn Kennell

"CLIMATE CHANGE IS A GROWING THREAT TO ALL LIVING THINGS THAT CALL KING COUNTY HOME."

“SO KING COUNTY SET AN AMBITIOUS FIVE-YEAR GOAL IN THEIR 2020 STRATEGIC CLIMATE ACTION PLAN TO PLANT, PROTECT, AND PREPARE COMBINED 3 MILLION TREES BY THE END OF 2025. THIS EFFORT CONTRIBUTES TO CLIMATE CHANGE MITIGATION, FOREST HEALTH, IMPROVED SALMON HABITAT, AND MORE TREE CANOPY IN URBAN AREAS.” (DOW CONSTANTINE, 2020)

SOUND TRANSIT WEST SEATTLE LINK EXTENSION, HOWEVER, WILL CAUSE NEEDLESS DEFORESTATION AND DESTRUCTION OF NATURAL HABITATS THAT WILL AFFECT OUR ENTIRE REGION.

WEST SEATTLE HOUSES UP TO ONE-THIRD OF SEATTLE’S URBAN TREE CANOPY. SEATTLE HAS LOST MORE THAN 255 ACRES OF FOREST CANOPY SINCE 2016. ALREADY, SOUND TRANSIT HAS CUT 14,000 TREES FOR THE EVERETT-TACOMA SPINE. WSLE PLAN WILL CARVE OFF 2-3 ACRES OF PIGEON POINT, DISTURB THE NATIONALLY PROTECTED HERON ROOKERY AND PUT LONGFELLOW CREEK’S THE RECENTLY RECOVERING BEAVER AND NATIVE SALMON AT RISK.

THE PROPOSED WEST SEATTLE LIGHT RAIL CONSTRUCTION WILL GENERATE 3 MILLION TONS OF CO2, INCREASING THE CARBON FOOTPRINT PREVENTING SEATTLE FROM ACHIEVING ITS 2035-2050 CARBON NEUTRALITY GOALS.

THESE ARE JUST SOME OF THE “COMPONENTS THAT REQUIRE FURTHER STUDY”. WE ASK YOU TO **VOTE NOON MOVING RESOLUTION #R2024-07 FORWARD.**

Jan Roberts

I oppose the passage of Resolution R2024-07, which authorizes the early acquisition of 25 parcels in West Seattle and SODO. Please consider my comment when casting your vote.

I have lived in West Seattle for 45 years. I love our community and what it offers, but that does not mean I cannot accept change.

“Sound Transit Light Rail- WHO NEEDS IT?”

I am for mass transit. Our bus system is sound but could be better. Light rail will NOT improve West Seattle to Downtown transit service. Metro buses now carry as many riders (27,000) between Downtown and West Seattle on a one-seat ride as Sound Transit says light rail will carry in 20 years – with 2 to 3 transfers.

I want a say in my/our future.

Sincerely,

Jan Roberts

Margaret (no last name provided)

Dear Sound Transit,

Please reconsider voting to acquire three properties in west seattle today, and instead keep West Seattle in the draft EIS process until you review components that require further study.

Without the Delridge Deli Mart, the area would basically be a food desert, Alki Academy provides daycare for more than 150 children under the age of six years old, and the so-called "vacant space" at 28th and Yancy contains several houses, the West Seattle Health Club, and is directly behind the Longfellow Creek Greenspace.

Again, please reconsider these acquisitions and instead focus on the EIS process for the area. Thank you very much,

Margaret

Unnamed commenter

“CLIMATE CHANGE IS A GROWING THREAT TO ALL LIVING THINGS THAT CALL KING COUNTY HOME.”

“SO KING COUNTY SET AN AMBITIOUS FIVE-YEAR GOAL IN THEIR 2020 STRATEGIC CLIMATE ACTION PLAN TO PLANT, PROTECT, AND PREPARE A COMBINED 3 MILLION TREES BY THE END OF 2025. THIS EFFORT CONTRIBUTES TO CLIMATE CHANGE MITIGATION, FOREST HEALTH, IMPROVED SALMON HABITAT, AND MORE TREE CANOPY IN URBAN AREAS.” (DOW CONSTANTINE, 2020)
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THESE ARE JUST SOME OF THE "COMPONENTS THAT REQUIRE FURTHER STUDY". WE ASK YOU TO **VOTE NO ON MOVING RESOLUTION #R2024-07 FORWARD**

Unnamed Commenter

As a member of the North Delridge neighborhood in West Seattle I would please ask the board members to vote no on Resolution No. R2024-07.

I would like to continue to see our neighborhood business thrive as they are such an important part of our community.

Lisa Farmer

Dear committee members,

I am writing about the West Seattle light rail project. One priority with all projects should be preserving small businesses that currently exist. My idea is to be sure that current businesses, such as The Skylark, Ounces and the deli mart would receive a space in the new station. This pattern would be the case for every station and the businesses that it displaces.

During the construction time, the city would build small temporary structures for these businesses. Maybe locals could vote which businesses to prioritize. Perhaps shipping containers, or sheds with outdoor space could be used. Much of business would likely need to be outdoors but we have all lived through covid and are familiar with this model. This could help the businesses survive the long construction period.

After construction, in their new spaces, rent should be maintained at the level the businesses currently pay, increasing gradually over the course of 5 years. This would give the businesses a chance to establish themselves in the new space without a significant increase in rent (something that regularly displaces businesses

in the city). Some businesses will survive, others will not. This model will at least give them a chance to do so.

The preservation of these businesses could be a major selling point for the project. People are really upset about losing their homes and these businesses that have been staples in the culture of our communities. If you demonstrate that the plan is to preserve them, voters might be more inclined to support the project, even at an additional cost.

Thank you for considering,

Lisa

Concerned Pigeon Point Resident

Lisa M. Farmer, M.Ed.

Giuliana Plut

To whom it may concern,

I am a West Seattle resident, I live across from the Delridge park and have closely followed the light rail developments for 6 years. I am reaching out because of the recent conversations with delridge businesses and my growing concerns.

The original plan 6 years ago involved the light rail either:

- A) Taking out my home and dozens of other homes
- B) Having the light rail go over my house, or right in front of my bedroom window with no easement requirements (I spent hours talking with transit workers, there are no easements, the train could be 10 feet from my window).

I have spent countless hours attending community meetings, providing feedback online and in person, helping suggest new routes, and even hosting officials in my home with massive print outs of the proposed routes to better understand it.

I was thrilled when I saw that the route had changed and that it was going to miss the park, community center, and my house. Having a MASSIVE stop in that location would destroy the neighborhood, not to mention ruin many people's financial and personal well being by having their neighborhood destroyed/permanently altered. I have been disappointed that our suggestions to use the empty parking lots, Bartell drugs headquarters, and abandoned buildings in the areas were not chosen, and instead all of the thriving restaurants, day care, and music school are now being affected with the new route. However, even though I am concerned, I am still more in favor of the current preferred route as it is. It's current layout will keep the neighborhood residents intact, and provide new commercial spaces in the commercial sector, hopefully uplifting the area. I love the current businesses in north delridge and am a frequent patron. Ideally I would like a solution that accommodates both, however with the business

owners growing concerns it seems as though the businesses are using their followings to drum up support at the final hour or this to propose going back to the original plan - taking out all the houses. I want to remind you of the last 6 years and the people of north delridge fighting for our neighborhood. These were a majority of young families, newly married couples. I would urge you to continue to consider the implications to the neighborhood and the feedback that we provided you for 6 years. While the business may be louder at this moment, if you move back to the 26th and Genesee plan route, we are the patrons of those businesses and if you knock us out the businesses will likely not make it due to a huge portion of their regular customers being forced to move.

I urge you to start working with an ALTERNATIVE solution, either giving more leeway for business to start moving ASAP after the route is decided in June, OR to look at the empty parking lots and abandoned buildings in the area. But ultimately if you don't find a solution to hold to the preferred route as it stands today.

Please feel free to contact me,
Giuliana Plut

Tiffany Spatafore

Hello,

I am a West Seattle resident, mom of two, and am writing about the Delridge Light Rail plan and Relocation Assistance that impacts childcare in our neighborhood, specifically Alki Beach Academy, and other small businesses (Ounces, Mode Music, etc.). **We need creativity in a plan that will keep access in our neighborhood to vital community amenities like childcare, music & performing arts education, fitness amenities and community spaces while we create light rail options in our region. We know there are empty parking lots, government owned properties and vacant buildings as options to explore. Additionally, the lack of financial assistance should these small businesses face displacement will lead to their closures, and negatively impact so many families.**

Finding affordable childcare in Seattle is a horrific experience -- it is years of waitlists, fees, trying to juggle jobs, and stress. We desperately need help keeping affordable childcare options open and able to expand, ABA has been a bright spot in an otherwise empty desert of childcare. Finding a home at Alki Beach Academy for our children has been imperative for me to be able to stay in the workforce and for our family to stay in Seattle. Beyond being affordable, Alki Beach Academy is a family, our children thrive under their curriculum and loving support.

Please visit Alki Beach Academy to see the positive impact this childcare center is making in our community and with our children. **I beg you to please ensure that ABA stays open to avoid impacting more families and children who rely on critical childcare.**

Thank you,
Tiffany Spatafore
West Seattle Resident

Arielle, David, and Naomi Pagryzinski

March 27, 2024

Dear Sound Transit Board of Directors,

I am writing on behalf of myself, my husband, and 2.5-year-old daughter—who are residents of West Seattle—to ask, as you prepare to vote on the early acquisition of properties to make way for the West Seattle Light Rail Extension, for your consideration of supporting and protecting the very important (and limited) community resource that is childcare in West Seattle, particularly Alki Beach Academy.

As I'm sure you are aware, daycare availability and accessibility are ongoing challenges in West Seattle, and greater Seattle as a whole. I would like to share with you our personal story to shed light on the significant stress and burden of securing childcare, as well as, illustrate the impact the forthcoming Link Light Rail Delridge Station's preferred alternative location will have on West Seattle families.

In March 2021 we began our search for daycare facilities in West Seattle for our daughter, who was due in August 2021, and would need childcare services starting in November 2021. Both my husband and I have full-time careers and no local/in-state family to assist with caring for our child during the workday, so finding childcare was a necessity. We placed our daughter on several waitlists with local daycares with no guarantees of a spot. Eventually, we were fortunate to secure an infant room spot at the WorldKids located in Burien. While we were thankful to have childcare, driving to Burien resulted in an approx. two-hour commute (round trip; 3.5-4 hours total daily) Monday-Friday, as this was during the West Seattle bridge closure and COVID-19 pandemic (following the reopening of the bridge, it became a 40-minute round trip commute; 1 hour 20 minutes totally daily). After 9 months of this lengthy daily commute, we got the call from Alki Beach Academy that a spot had opened for our daughter starting in September 2022. This came as a huge relief as Alki Beach Academy was more closely located to our West Seattle home and was highly regarded by many neighbors and family friends.

We have spent the last 1.5 years watching our daughter grow and thrive under the care of the amazing team at Alki Beach Academy. The administration and staff have ensured she has not only reached, but exceeded age-appropriate developmental milestones and it has been a thrill to witness how much she learns every day she goes there. Alki Beach Academy takes outstanding care of the children it is entrusted with while also providing a close-knit community where families support one another and form lasting relationships. This is more than a daycare and has truly become an invaluable part of our lives.

The current Sound Transit Link Light Rail Delridge Station's preferred alternative, that would result in the demolition of Alki Beach Academy, have us and many local families concerned about the future of childcare availability in West Seattle. As we anticipate the arrival of our second child in June 2024, we find ourselves in a familiar and anxious position of uncertainty surrounding whether or not we will have access to the high-quality childcare that Alki Beach Academy currently provides.

Alki Beach Academy is integral to the West Seattle community, representing one of the largest daycares on the peninsula and one of the few with infant care. We are faced with a challenge

unique to our generation that, if not immediately addressed, could have long reaching effects on families and the West Seattle community.

We, and many Alki Beach Academy families, fully support the need for more robust public transportation. As a daily bus rider, I am greatly looking forward to more options to get to and from West Seattle without having to rely on a car. However, this should not come at the cost of losing the essential community resource that is childcare.

I hope that the Sound Transit Board of Directors carefully considers the importance of childcare and the impact that losing Alki Beach Academy would have on West Seattle.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,
Arielle, David and Naomi Pagryzinski

Carol Caley

Hello,

As much as I love the local businesses (Ounces and so forth) in Delridge, it's more important to me to have light rail access. Just wanted to put a word in, as I know some folks are upset about losing or relocating businesses. I live within walking distance of the location.

Thanks!

*Jennifer Halverson – Tacoma Bicycle and Pedestrian Technical
Advisory Group*

The substance of this comment is within a document included at the end of this summary.

Hello,

I've attached a comment letter from the City of Tacoma's Bicycle Pedestrian Technical Advisory Group for the 3/28 Sound Transit Board Meeting, related to Resolution No. R2024-05 South Tacoma Station Access Improvements.

Thanks,

Liz Kaster
Active Transportation Coordinator & Principal Tra

Kathleen Johnson – Historic South Downtown

The substance of this comment is within a document included at the end of this summary.

Please see attached letter.
Thank you.
MaryKate

Paula Goode

A document supplementing this comment is included at the end of this summary.

Sound Transit Board and Associates,

I have spoken to you before over the last few years, dealing with the ST3 segment passing through Lake Forest Park, (LFP). Forgive the harsh and emotional tone of these comments, but I feel it is necessary in light of the current situation.

I understand that people confuse 'Transit' with 'Sound Transit' as if these are the same issues. In my mind they are not. We all know and agree that a right-sized transit system is needed and required. Covid changed everything, yet *Sound Transit* is still proceeding as if it never happened, and Sound Transit is in dangerous waters financially. You seem unwilling to look for cost-effective options that will accomplish the same stated goals at huge cost savings. That you do not consider options, with no investigation of cheaper methods leads to the belief by citizens (per comments received) that something 'nefarious' is going on. Board members need to listen to the constituents that you receive funds from!

We in Lake Forest Park have tried to work with Sound Transit (after much investment into our own studies) to show scientifically (and based on existing Sound Transit information) that there is a 'better way' to accomplish the stated goals through our corridor. We have also heard that the 'reason' is that the Board and ST must '*provide what the voters approved*' yet a BAT lane through Lake Forest Park was never disclosed on any voter information (look it up). This is our taxpayer funds, it affects the citizen's ability to afford housing, it affects our environment hugely, and a duty of care is warranted to preserve our tree canopies and prevent other environmental impacts.

This is why we must separate 'Transit' with 'Sound Transit'. I am afraid that politicians think they are the same while all of us paying the taxes and putting up with the devastation are being irreparably harmed. We need Transit, and we need Sound Transit to do a better job and to listen to the people footing the bill.

Since the board may be unwilling to work with the local communities for better *proven* options, the next question becomes how can we repeal the RTA Tax? How can we move to have the

Board of Sound Transit ELECTED and not APPOINTED? This is a serious job that affects our affected communities severely.

Sitting on the ST Board is an honor. However, I understand that this may be board members' SECOND part time job, so you may not have time to look at real issues in detail, often missing important topics thereby not budging on your opinions. This is affecting the lives of not only Lake Forest Park, but West Seattle and Ballard equally. Different cities, SAME issues.

Sound Transit has apparently refused to pivot post COVID, and ridership is not able to support existing expansion plans, (it is down 60% in our area-still). ST should not be able to continue wasting taxpayer money while being so ineffective at the production of a transit system that is not current and of an era a decade ago. Why not get the light rail '*spine*' north and south completed? Got transit to Paine Field where it will do better for the riders?

We can now see that costs are many times higher than voters were told and ridership is far short of what had been projected. If Sound Transit were mandated to be accountable, you would have paused work on the project and gone back to the drawing board.

We know there is more bad news to come. We know that materials distributed for the recent Sound Transit board retreat show staff have expressed concerns about the agency approaching its debt limit. Also discussed were major cost increases for construction projects (though curiously, the examples they cited were all for other agencies). We know that current ST3 costs (2024) have not been projected which only makes this project even more over budget.

*Reading between the lines we know that you are sitting on more cost increases, very likely so large that paying for them would exceed your borrowing capacity. You have the ability to delay expenditures by pushing completion further into the future (beyond 2044) but that isn't something you probably want to do, nor does it make sense to push off a vintage transit idea into the future. Of course, what you **should** do is take a step back and ask whether the 'plan' still makes sense. Cancelling a few billion dollars of wasteful projects would also allow you to reduce the property tax, which would take a little pressure off housing costs.*

You, the board, can still make changes, subject to any bond covenants or other legal obligations. Indeed, last Fall the Sound Transit board instructed staff to explore sources of state funding, which is another indication your financial plan doesn't pencil out.

The remaining avenues for making Sound Transit accountable for taxpayer's money seems to be limited to voting board members out of their local offices, so that of course is an option to be pursued. The legislature enabled Sound Transit to come into existence, and new legislation could require a directly elected board and enact more financial accountability options. I hope this changes in the future, and if there is still stubbornness in moving forward with blinders on, legislation is indeed warranted.

Sound Transit should thank members of Lake Forest Park for expending the time and effort showing how to reduce the cost of the LFP portion of the bus rapid transit project by several

hundred million dollars, and reduce neighborhood impacts, without adversely affecting ridership.

I am attaching a white paper, the result of CORE investigation and study that covers this issue in detail. I am also providing a link, a 3 minute read, that describes our efforts at CORE to date that describes a better way through our corridor. <https://www.lfpcore.org/post/it-s-not-too-late-core-report-strongly-suggests-that-sound-transit-design-alternatives-are-viable-a>

I also know that our new City Mayor has reached out to members of the board and interim CEO to discuss how we can avoid 110 property takes and the removal of vegetation equivalent to 4 acres of forest (calculated via I-Tree). That they have not offered LFP any alternatives show there is no honest 'collaboration' between LFP and ST present.

I urge you to read the Blog and the Whitepaper. It is all fact-based using Sound Transit Data, and it shows that you CAN save money and accomplish the same goal. Will you please consider a 'Better Way'?

Regards,

Paula Goode

Sheridan Market & Roadhouse

Prem Subedi

Dear Sound Transit Board Members,

I hope this message finds you well. My name is Prem Subedi, and I am a resident of Kent and a dedicated member of the Kent Bicycle Advisory Board. I am here to express my concerns regarding the proposed construction of a second parking garage at Kent Station by Sound Transit, especially in light of recent climate data and our collective commitment to reducing CO2 emissions.

As we reflect on the alarming fact that last year was the hottest year on record, it becomes increasingly clear that we must take decisive action to address climate change. Investing in sustainable transportation solutions is paramount in this effort, and subsidizing additional parking infrastructure at the expense of such solutions is a step in the wrong direction. Allocating substantial resources towards building a 500-stall parking garage, costing over \$100,000 per stall, contradicts our goal of reducing CO2 emissions and combating climate change. Instead, I implore Sound Transit to prioritize investments in sensible connections to transit that promote accessibility, affordability, and environmental stewardship at Kent Station. It's crucial to recognize that subsidizing parking infrastructure not only exacerbates traffic congestion and air pollution but also undermines our collective efforts to mitigate the impacts of climate change. By diverting resources towards sustainable transit alternatives, we can

encourage more people to choose public transportation, cycling, and walking, thereby reducing our carbon footprint and creating healthier communities.

I commend Sound Transit's recent initiatives, such as R2024-04 and R2024-05, which prioritize alternative transit options over additional parking infrastructure at stations like Lakewood and South Tacoma. These initiatives demonstrate a commitment to sustainable transportation solutions that align with our shared goals.

In light of these pressing concerns, I urge Sound Transit to reconsider the necessity of building a second parking garage at Kent Station. Let us instead explore more sustainable alternatives that align with our shared commitment to addressing climate change and promoting multimodal transportation.

Thank you for your time,
Prem Subedi

Comments submitted after the meeting's deadline

Betty Lau – Transcript of in person comment

Transcript of Sound Transit Board Meeting Public Comment by Betty Lau, Mar. 28, 2024, 1:30 p.m., Union Station

Greetings! I'm Betty Lau, co-founder of Transit Equity for All.

Our CID community struggle for race, social and economic justice from Sound Transit continues.

The Technical Advisory Group recommends re-building trust between staff and the Sound Transit Board. Community trust needs to be included.

March 23, 2023 Sound Transit created an information desert on the 4th Avenue Transit Hub, North of CID & South of CID stations.

That's top-down management.

On Feb. 28, 2024, Sound Transit and Seattle partnered, without including our community organizations, to engage community in streetscaping.

That's top-down management.

Today's Sound Transit Equity workshop has zero community organization input on setting the agenda...

More top-down management.

Top-down management never builds trust!

Keep your promise to meaningfully collaborate with and involve us in planning and problem solving!

Thank you.

Brien Chow

Sound Transit Board Meeting Public Comment by Brien Chow, Thursday, February 22, 2024 at Union Station, 1:30 p.m.

Hello Board Members. I'm Brien Chow, from Transit Equity for All and the Chong Wa Benevolent Association.

I'm giving you notice...

Racism...

**An ugly word thrown at White supporters.
of the 4th Avenue Transit Hub at Union Station...
encouraged by political leaders,
by not responding to racist statements of their allies!**

Supporters of N&S of CID stations...

...are accusing white people who support the logically data-based 4th Avenue South Transit Hub at Union Station of “Racism.”

**They spread the lie people of color who favor 4th Avenue
are easily manipulated “Puppets” of Whites.**

I know this because a White guy asked me about it.

I say...

Supporters of N&S of CID stations “HAVE NO FACTS.”

I repeat... “THEY HAVE NO FACTS”

...and therefore, fall back on fear mongering, fake “facts” and false accusations.

As Boardmember Upthegrove stated a year ago...

**“Construction is temporary.
The benefits of light rail are permanent.”**

Thank you.

Brien Chow

[Alex Tsimerman](#)

The substance of this comment is in a document included at the end of this summary.

March 28th 2024 Statement from SmarterTransit.org

RE: Resolution R2024-07: Property Acquisition authorization by Sound Transit for West Seattle Light Rail Extension

Smarter Transit opposes the passage of Resolution R2024-07 which authorizes the early acquisition of 25 parcels located in West Seattle and SODO.

Based on the environmental review process to date --- not scheduled to be completed until mid-August – no complete, coherent justification has been offered so far for spending \$4 billion or more in tax dollars to construct a 4.7 mile extension of light rail from a transfer hub in SODO across a new high-level railroad bridge to three stations in West Seattle. That's \$850 million dollars per mile. A Draft EIS has been prepared which reveals massive carbon generation by the construction of this project and surprisingly low ridership.

Carbon coming from construction for the now preferred alignment comes to 600 thousand tons generated through opening in 2032. The payback on the carbon construction of West Seattle light rail computes to 78 years.¹ You already know about the carbon tipping point that is expected to occur way sooner than that.

A less expensive, more geographically wide-ranging alternative of electric bus rapid transit deployed on many arterials is being ignored, even though suggested in past planning by the City of Seattle, published in 2001. And then suppressed in the Sound Transit review of documents about past work on West Seattle transit.

By spending less than half of that \$4 billion on high-frequency service with electric buses big and small, covering all neighborhoods of the Peninsula from Burien to Alki,

¹ Latest new GHG methodology from the National Academy of Sciences, which takes into account the VMT reduction benefits of both electric train ridership and walkable urbanism near stations.

that region's public transit could generate three times more daily transit trips than Link and starting many years before the train's 2032 hoped-for opening.

At the same time, creating more bus lanes and bus priority traffic signals would avoid the environmental damage of heavy construction to wildlife, trees, existing housing and commercial buildings, and the global climate. Building tunnels, bridges, and stations spews carbon that electric trains, transit-oriented development, and reduced driving will not be able to offset.

Equity will be served by a more wide-ranging bus service to more neighborhoods compared to a three-stop train. Bus lines can be set up to serve mobility disadvantaged populations wherever they live, whether in legacy housing or new housing.

Sadly, this appears to be nothing but a premature land grab with the communities, given very little notice.

As you know, good public policy decisions start with these questions:

1. What is the problem(s) we are trying to solve?
2. Who should be at the table?
3. What are the viable alternatives to solve them?
4. What are the costs and benefits of each of those alternatives?
5. How do we measure success?
6. How do we adjust the solutions as needed?

For transit, there are three specific questions that your staff should answer:

1. How many NEW riders will this investment bring?
2. What's the cost per new rider?
3. What are the risks if it doesn't work?

We maintain that continuing to extend light rail as planned in ST3 is the absolute opposite way to increase transit ridership, decrease CO2 emissions, reduce traffic and build communities.

Please see the attached picture from Sound Transit 3 information that shows how this extension into West Seattle, as with the other ST3 extensions, brings abysmal ridership

– mostly from existing riders forced to transfer. These numbers are annual ridership numbers, not daily. To keep that in perspective, according to PSRC’s 2050 Transportation Plan, we will be taking 24,000,000 trips/day by all modes – most of those will be still be in automobiles. Transit ridership remains about the same as today. These numbers, we believe, still do not account for the enormous change in work from home numbers and drop in transit ridership since COVID.

We are available for any follow up questions and/or briefings.

Thank you,

Maggie Fimia

A Citizen’s Toolkit, For Repairing or Building a Democracy

<https://maggiefimia.com>

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/margaret-maggie-fimia-094444/>

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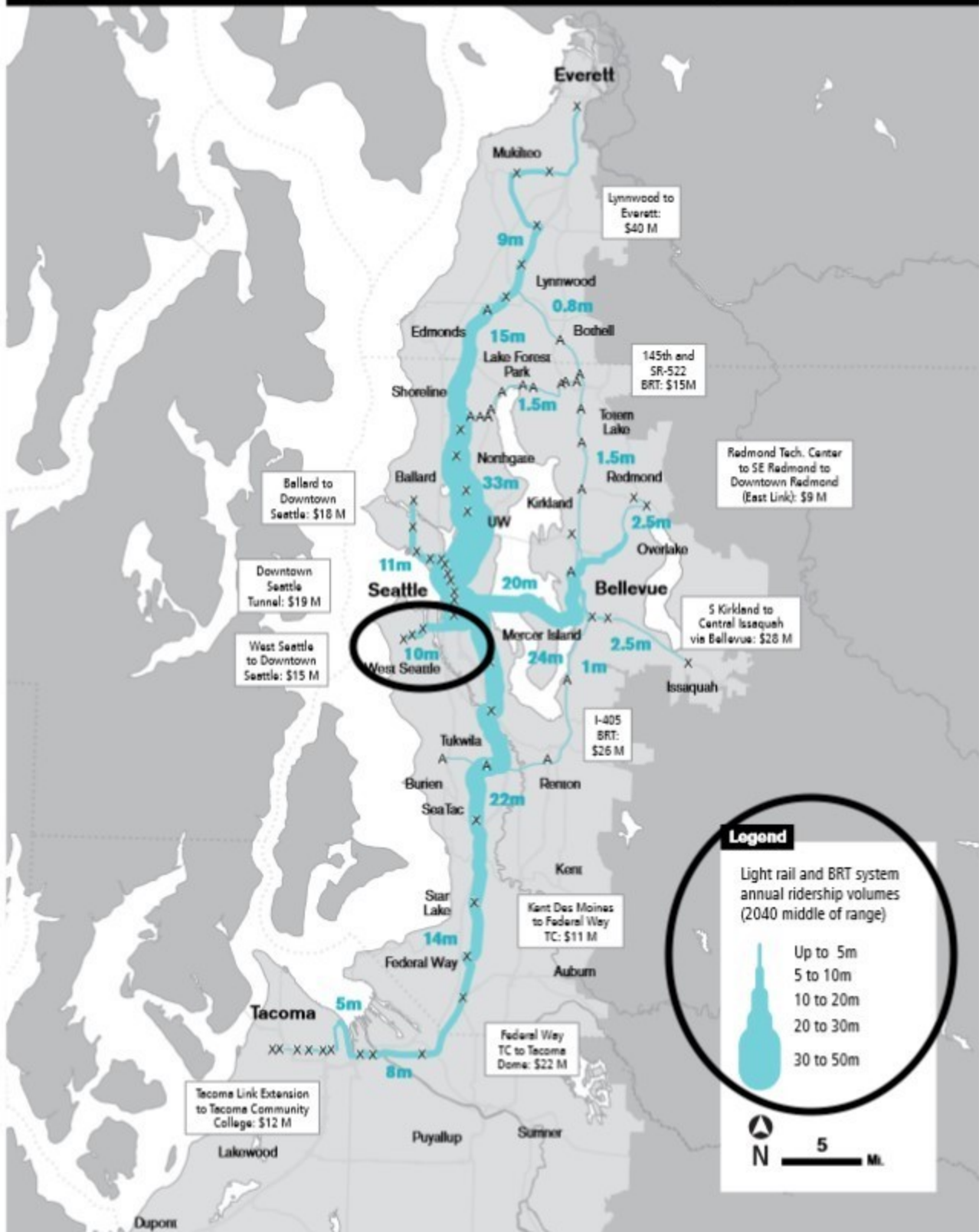
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[Preview *End of Driving* textbook 2nd edition](#)

Light Rail and BRT Annual Ridership and Operations Costs (2014\$)



Legend

Light rail and BRT system annual ridership volumes (2040 middle of range)

- Up to 5m
- 5 to 10m
- 10 to 20m
- 20 to 30m
- 30 to 50m

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City of Tacoma
Bicycle Pedestrian Technical Advisory Group

March 27, 2024

Re: Sound Transit South Tacoma Sounder Station Access Project

Dear Sound Transit Board of Directors,

We, the City of Tacoma's Bicycle and Pedestrian Technical Advisory Group (BPTAG), thank Sound Transit for your commitment to increasing access to the South Tacoma Sounder Station!

We appreciate the outreach efforts that Sound Transit's staff made with us and the South Tacoma community throughout the planning process to inform us of plans and gather our feedback on this incredible investment in improving multimodal access to the South Tacoma Sounder Station.

We are incredibly supportive of the final list of projects that prioritize the movement of people trying to access the station and we feel they will fill significant gaps in our transportation network. Currently, accessing the South Tacoma Sounder Station is unsafe and impractical, if not impossible, for many community members who cannot or do not drive or who would prefer the option to connect to regional transit via active transportation or local bus service. Specifically, we appreciate the focus on:

- Creating a connected and protected network that is safe for people of all ages and abilities to use active transportation,
- Improving connections to existing facilities like the Water Flume Line Trail and key community destinations like the South Tacoma Business District, Metro Parks' STAR Center and SERA fields, neighborhood schools, and the Tacoma Mall area,
- Constructing sidewalks, improving ADA accessibility, and building safer crossings,
- Creating a better experience for transit riders at the station with improved wayfinding, accessibility improvements, and a public address system, and
- Increasing connectivity between the station and local Pierce Transit service.

We celebrate all of this momentum towards making it safer and easier to access regional transit, and see the many ways it helps the City of Tacoma fulfill its commitment to the Green Transportation Hierarchy (prioritizing the movement of people over cars) and adhere to priorities laid out in its Transportation Master Plan, Climate Action Plan, as well as the City's safety and equity goals.

Specifically, we support this project focusing on active transportation and transit access, rather than parking. Since the current parking lot at the South Tacoma Sounder Station is not full, despite being free and there being few safe alternatives to driving, we do not believe vehicular parking should be a priority for these funds. **We concur with the staff-recommended project list which dedicates funding to improvements that make it safe and easy to access the station via active transportation and local transit and urge the Board to adopt these recommendations.** If demand for parking grows over time, we urge Sound Transit to utilize parking management and transportation demand management strategies rather than building additional parking. In order for such strategies to succeed, however, we need make sure that infrastructure exists to allow transit riders to safely access the station by walking, rolling, biking or taking a Pierce Transit bus.

We look forward to working with Sound Transit and the City of Tacoma as this project progresses and look forward to the construction of these improvements and the safety, equity, and access benefits they will bring.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jennifer Halverson Kuehn". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being the most prominent.

Jennifer Halverson Kuehn

Chair, City of Tacoma Bicycle Pedestrian Technical Advisory Group

Cc:

Tacoma City Council - Infrastructure, Planning, and Sustainability Committee

Tacoma City Manager Elizabeth Pauli

Public Works Director Ramiro A. Chavez, P.E. PgMP

City of Tacoma Transportation Commission

Zac Eskenazi, Sound Transit High Capacity Transit Development Manager – Sounder South



HISTORIC SOUTH DOWNTOWN

28 March 2024

Dear Sound Transit Board of Directors,

Since 2018, Historic South Downtown (HSD) has participated with Sound Transit on the Ballard Link Extension (BLE) light rail system expansion. We do this to ensure the BLE project best serves the people and businesses that call Chinatown International District and Pioneer Square home.

We remain committed to strong participation and have questions about the path forward. Specifically, we ask for Board reflection and input into the following concerns:

1. **Impacts of Continued Delay.** The delayed timeline has created confusion and disaffection among community members. We join with other community leaders in expressing our concern that the passage of time now will be used to justify shortened public review periods for the DEIS and EIS, when it is eventually issued. We are also concerned that the spiraling costs – a foreseeable result of the ongoing delay – will be used to justify further cuts to the budget available for the South Downtown station.
2. **Pioneer Square Station and Transit Hub Improvements:** To ensure public safety, the existing Pioneer Square station and the transit hub around Union Station need critical repairs and improvements. These investments should not have to wait for BLE planning process; we need this work to benefit riders and neighbors now.
3. **Realignment and Feasibility.** The realignment process initially identified an “affordable” alignment for each proposed station area. In the CID, that affordable model is the 5th Avenue S. “representative alignment.” Since the realignment process, this Board itself has deemed a 5th Ave S station “culturally infeasible.” This has resulted in the community needing to argue against any option that exceeds the budget of a culturally infeasible option if it results in the need for 3rd party funding. We believe this unintended but true situation obligates the Board to realign the baseline budgets to reference only buildable options.
4. **Continued study of the 4th Ave S option.** A strong coalition of community members see that 4th Ave S. delivers the greatest benefit to the community, in terms of efficient regional connectivity, access and navigability, clear wayfinding and smooth transfers to other public transit. Additional study is needed to shorten construction duration and reduce impacts on the community while still delivering these benefits. The community continues to await the results of the further study of these areas to ensure that best construction practices are used.
5. **Community input in subsequent DEIS process.** We value the workshops hosted by Sound Transit staff to seek community input. However, we ask the Board to be aware of, and remember, that significant numbers of those attending community forums come

expecting to be able to talk about station location. At the February 28th community event, several attendees voiced their concerns about station location. These concerns were raised in the large group and during the table-level break out discussions. We ask the Sound Transit Board to ensure these statements, while not germane to the intent of these forum, are captured and used appropriately. We also ask Sound Transit to ensure that they properly contextualize public comments at the workshops in future DEIS analysis, specifically that they not be used as evidence of station location planning.

We remain committed to being a constructive partner to Sound Transit and request adequate staffing and resources to fully understand the impacts of all station and alignment options, and appropriately engage our community members in the process.

Sincerely,

DocuSigned by:

AE3B74C15527491...

Kathleen Johnson
Executive Director
Historic South Downtown

Summary and Recommendations

- Sound Transit’s public engagement was insufficient and once Lake Forest Park residents became aware of the impact on their community there was considerable public outcry.
- The 2020 design change to shift the roadway to the west greatly increased impacts and costs.
- Despite the additional cost and impact of the west shift, no alternatives were considered.
- The 2021 SEPA determination of non-significance was based on underlying technical assessments that did not fully encompass the environmental impacts of the west shift; the impact of over 100 property acquisitions, the removal of 391 trees, the construction of a nearly mile-long retaining wall as high as 16 feet all done in areas with severe slopes and stormwater runoff issues. SEPA reports such as the Noise and Vibration Technical Report were clearly insufficient given the impact of the west shift.
- The pollution created by construction moving over 90,000 tons of dirt and debris as well as the loss of the counteracting value of trees and shrubs will offset any environmental benefit from using electric buses.
- Continuous BAT lanes are not present throughout the planned route and are not essential to provide transit benefits.
- Due to a Sound Transit error including a congested section of 145th/30th to Bothell Way, the actual average time savings through Lake Forest Park will be less than two minutes, not 2.3 minutes.
- The enormous (and growing) cost of the project is completely out of proportion with expected benefits.
- CORE was unable to reproduce Sound Transit’s Google Maps screenshot of afternoon congestion showing a heavy red line and 5-14 minute travel times along the route planned for the new dedicated BAT lane construction. CORE data analysts saw much shorter times and were able to confirm a low likelihood of maximum delays.
- CORE’s Google traffic data analysis demonstrated that the likelihood of congestion over 50% only occurs from 145th/Bothell Way to 153rd/Bothell Way and 165th/Bothell Way to 41st/Bothell Way showing that bus queue jump are, indeed, a viable lower cost, lower impact alternative.

The city and community groups should pressure Sound Transit to consider either delaying the project or seriously investigate the bus queue jump option that is so successfully planned for the Seattle/Shoreline segment. The Google Maps analysis showing the viability of bus queue jumps should encourage the city to engage with a design firm to assess the feasibility, reduced environmental impact and reduced cost of a bus-queue option in Lake Forest Park. Community groups such as CORE should continue to communicate this information to Lake Forest Park residents and to the local press. Action is needed very soon since the likelihood of design changes may diminish as property acquisitions progress to completion.

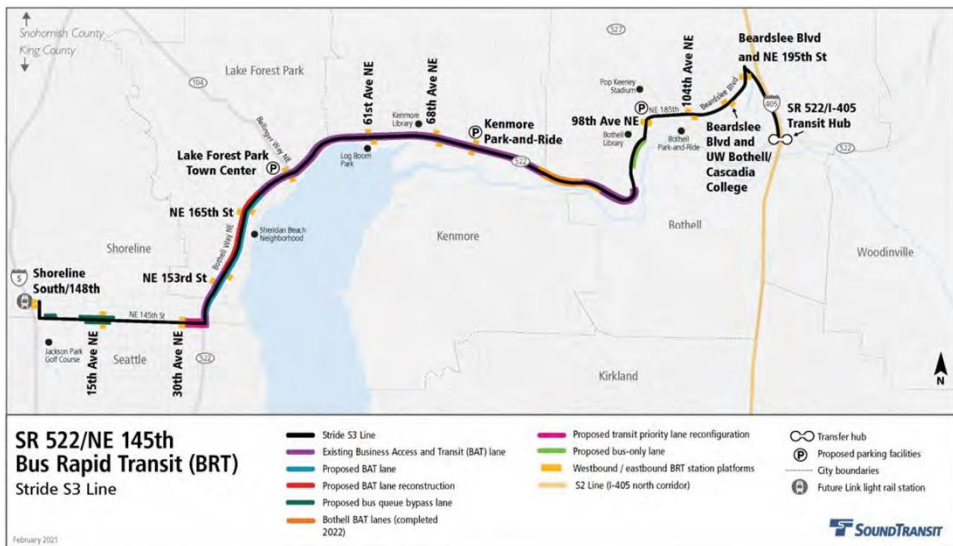
1. Introduction.

As part of the voter approved Stride 3 project, Sound Transit plans to build bus rapid transit (BRT) capability connecting to light rail and to communities north, east, and south of Lake Washington. The section of the Stride 3 project as illustrated in Figure 1 is known as SR 522/NE 145th BRT.



SOUND TRANSIT SR 522/145TH BRT IMPACTS AND ALTERNATIVES IN LAKE FOREST PARK

Figure 1 - SR 522/NE 145th Bus Rapid Transit (BRT)



The current design calls for the addition of 1.3 miles of dedicated bus rapid transit lane through Lake Forest Park on the east side of Bothell Way running northbound. A dedicated bus lane already runs South on Bothell Way through town, so any construction or expense has no impact whatsoever on the speed and reliability of the bus in this direction.

There is broad support for public transit and the Stride 3 Project in Lake Forest Park, but there is also broad opposition to the current Sound Transit design due to the costs and permanent environmental damage to our community.

This report lays out the reasons why our community is asking Sound Transit to postpone this project, as they have with the originally scheduled Lake Forest Park parking garage, or re-design with bus-queue jump lanes as are proposed in other segments of the project corridor.

Though the Lake Forest Park segment makes up only a small portion of the proposed 9-mile bus rapid transit route, it comprises the lion’s share of the cost and environmental damage of the project. The project will shift Bothell Way to the West, remove nearly 400 trees, erect a nearly mile-long high retaining wall, and will force over 100 property owners to sacrifice some of their property and place them closer to the roadway. Sound Transit’s insistence on building this single dedicated northbound bus lane was done without exploring any potentially less environmentally damaging and costly alternatives that could provide equivalent benefits for bus riders regarding speed and reliability.

2. How Were Lake Forest Park Residents Informed About the Project?

Sound Transit maintains that they have provided considerable public engagement with affected communities, though since much of this engagement happened during COVID and did not reveal the full impacts of the project, many residents of Lake Forest Park were unaware until the Lake Forest Park city, CORE, and other groups began to communicate these impacts.

2.1 Sound Transit Outreach

Prior to the November 2016 vote on ST-3, there was no public disclosure of plans to construct a dedicated northbound bus lane through the heart of Lake Forest Park.



Voters in Lake Forest Park who supported Proposition No. 1, “Light-Rail, Commuter-Rail, and Bus Service,”¹ in November 2016 were totally unaware that Sound Transit planned to build a northbound dedicated bus lane on HWY 522/Bothell Way.

- Despite the comprehensive 2,700-word voter's guide and the obligatory 6-page full-color mailer Sound Transit was required to send to every household in Pierce, King, and Snohomish Counties, there was no mention of a plan to build a 1.3-mile-long bus lane through the heart of Lake Forest Park².
- The proposition received varying levels of support across the three counties, with King County voting in favor by 59% to 39%, Snohomish County by 52% to 48%, and Pierce County voting against it by 56% to 44%. Lake Forest Park voted for it 54% to 46%.

Stride-3 Community Outreach efforts between 2018 and 2023 netted Sound Transit little meaningful citizen engagement.

- Between 2018 and 2023, Sound Transit's online meetings attracted less than 10% of Seattle, Shoreline, Lake Forest Park, Kenmore, and Bothell adults to their websites. Those few who visited the website averaged just 3.5 minutes per session and 3 page views.
- Approximately 640 people attended one of the on-site community meetings held between 2018 and 2023, 300 attended a 2023 Sound Transit-sponsored Lake Forest Park event. They attended because Citizens Organized to Rethink Expansion (CORE) sent out a city-wide mailer alerting citizens to the consequences and environmental impacts of this dedicated bus lane on our city, urging them to make their feelings known.

2.2 CORE Efforts to Inform Residents

Figure 2 - Excerpt from CORE Mailer to Lake Forest Park Showing Before and After



Beginning in 2022, Citizens Organized to Rethink Expansion (CORE) embarked on a campaign to inform Lake Forest Park residents about the impacts of the project through a series of communications, events, and initiatives:

SOUND TRANSIT SR 522/145TH BRT IMPACTS AND ALTERNATIVES IN LAKE FOREST PARK

Date	Communication/Event/Initiative
	Mailed a flyer to 6,000 Lake Forest Park residents (see Figure 2). CORE raised considerable awareness by including a 3D rendering of the proposed wall – while Sound Transit provided only 2D overhead “roll-plots”.
Nov. 2022	CORE members attended a Sheridan Beach Community Club meeting with Sound Transit.
Feb. 2023	Creation of a web site https://lfpcore.org .
Feb. 2023	Change.org petition ³ yields nearly 1,000 signatures from the Lake Forest Park area.
Mar. 2023	Sound Transit hosted open houses in Shoreline, Lake Forest Park, Kenmore, and Bothell. A total of 305 people attended- 240 in Lake Forest Park at Brookside Elementary. CORE had a booth at Brookside Elementary ⁴ and collected 165 signatures opposing the current design from a majority of those attending. CORE sent copies of the letter to the Sound Transit CEO Julie Timm and Board but never received a response or acknowledgement.
May 2023	Interview with Seattle Times reporter Mike Lindblom yields article ⁵ .
July 2023	CORE organized a rally for a Lake Forest Park City Council meeting featuring Sound Transit CEO, Julie Timm. More than 200 residents attended and provided two hours of public comment.
July 2023	King TV aired an interview of CORE members.
Aug 2023	Sound Transit held “Information Session” with CEO Julie Timm. CORE mailed a flyer prior to the event. The preceding rally and event drew over 400 residents and over two hours of public comments.
Oct 2023	CEO Timm and Sound Transit staff met with CORE, the Lake Forest Park Stewardship Foundation, and members of the Lake Forest Park City Council. They explain why the BAT lane is a must vs Q-jumps providing a Google Maps screenshot as justification.

2.3 Engagement with the Lake Forest Park City Leadership

The City of Lake Forest Park has made numerous efforts to inform residents and encourage Sound Transit to reconsider the plans for a dedicated northbound bus lane in Lake Forest Park:



Date	Communication/Event/Initiative
Oct 2022	The city wrote to Sound Transit requesting a more robust process to ensure the success of this project as it traverses our community.
Nov 2022	Lake Forest Deputy Mayor Tom French and Council Members Bodi and Furutani wrote Sound Transit asking to postpone plans here until 2044.
Dec 2022	The city sent a letter requesting a 90-day project pause “to hear our citizens concerns and work directly with the city and to develop new design requirements.” Sound Transit staff wrote and presented a report to the Sound Transit Board in January 2023 recommending against the 90-day pause, citing, among other things, that traffic delays could be as much as 10 minutes in Lake Forest Park during afternoon peak hours.
Sep 2023	CEO Timm wrote an official response to Lake Forest Park elected officials, denying the request for a 90-day pause – nine months after the request was filed!
Oct 2023	Lake Forest Park City Council wrote to the Sound Transit Board requesting a cost-benefit analysis comparing BAT lanes to q-jumps. To date, Sound Transit has not responded.

3. Sound Transit’s Design Change to Shift the Roadway to the West in 2020 Increased Costs and Environmental Impacts

As early as December 2015, Sound Transit knew the plan was to build a full northbound BAT Lane through Lake Forest Park⁶. Surprisingly, it wasn't until mid-2018 that it became publicly apparent that Sound Transit was committed to the singular approach of the full BAT Lane⁷. Then, in June 2020, Sound Transit announced they were “considering” shifting roadway construction to the west side of SR 522/Bothell Way⁸. However, the local stakeholders involved in this decision-making process, as well as the rationale behind it, remained unclear. The actual financial and environmental impacts and increased amount of property takes required only came to light with the publication of Sound Transit's SEPA submissions in March of 2021. Unfortunately, the details pertinent to this decision were buried within multiple documents and addendums, making it challenging for citizens to discern the true impact of this decision on Lake Forest Park. Then, late in 2023 it was revealed via a public records request that Sound Transit's reason for the shift was to avoid nine full property takes between 157th and 165th on Bothell Way. This decision and its implications were made nine months before issuing the SEPA Environmental Checklist and addendums. Sound Transit contractors largely completed significant portions of the underlying technical justification before this decision. Examples include the noise study in 2019, geotechnical borings (two borings in 2020, one in 2001), and none on fish-bearing Bsche'tla Creek.

4. Sound Transit Stride Never Considered Alternatives to the Northbound Dedicated bus lane in Lake Forest Park.

Sound Transit never considered or evaluated the cost/benefits of alternatives to the dedicated, northbound bus lane in Lake Forest Park. Sound Transit SEPA documentation and subsequent documents make this clear. From the start, the



plan to build a northbound, dedicated bus lane through the heart of our community was and still is the only plan Sound Transit ever considered.

Sound Transit offers a variety of rationales for this decision. Former Sound Transit CEO at the August 2023 Lake Forest Park Information Session attended by 400 Lake Forest Park residents said the BAT Lane here was critical. "Bus Rapid Transit, to be functional, requires a substantial number of BAT lanes. The more you reduce or change that, the more you degrade it into Rapid Ride Buses, which is not the voter's mandate." It is questionable whether voters in 2016 considered such a nuanced mandate when approving the 2016 ST-3 Proposition.

In the broader context of Stride 1, 2 and 3 projects, adding the 1.3-mile dedicated bus lane in Lake Forest Park increases BAT lane coverage by just 2%, and for Stride-3 increases BAT lane coverage by only 7%, from 47% to 54% across the entire stretch of the Stride-3 roadway.

How many potential bus riders would benefit from a faster speed?

- Because there already is a dedicated bus lane in Lake Forest Park going the other direction, it can only impact the speed of the bus going from the South Shoreline Light Rail station to Bothell Way.
- It also matters at peak hours, weekdays, Monday through Friday, in the afternoon when traffic is at its greatest. That equates to 18 buses.
- Assuming Sound Transit's plan for running 6 buses per hour (18 buses total) and they are double articulated buses each at passenger capacity (150) equates to a maximum of 2,700 riders per day. To put that into perspective the 520 Bus is averaging less than 1,900 total boardings per day, 70% below pre-covid numbers.

Sound Transit did not even consider refinements to road width, nor support a speed reduction request from city leadership that may have allowed for narrower lanes and a calmer traffic environment.

5. The Devastating and Permanent Impact of Sound Transit's Design in Lake Forest Park

The route through Lake Forest Park, unlike any of the neighboring Stride-3 communities, is primarily residential and heavily wooded. Preservation of the natural environment is a key value in Lake Forest Park.⁹

The toll on our community far exceeds any purported benefits, emphasizing the need for Sound Transit to reconsider its approach and explore alternative solutions that prioritize the well-being of our residents, the environment, and taxpayers.

The construction of a 1.3-mile dedicated northbound BAT Lane presents devastating and inequitable consequences for our community, far surpassing the impact felt by neighboring cities. The exorbitant expense born by taxpayers far outweighs the benefits derived by bus riders. This project will bring traffic perilously close to homes, condominiums, apartments, and businesses along Bothell Way. Large numbers will be forced to navigate entering and exiting directly into a BAT Lane from one of the 46 driveways and roads northbound from 145th and Bothell Way to Town Center, thereby exacerbating traffic congestion and safety concerns while impeding bus transit speed.

The environmental repercussions of this project are profound and lasting. Massive tree removals (394 trees 6" or larger DBH), hauling of tons of dirt and debris (90,000 tons, 64% of the Stride-3 total) replaced by lengthy concrete retaining walls, increased stormwater runoff, disturbances to fish-bearing streams, construction activities on unstable ravine slopes, and damage to sensitive areas are inevitable outcomes.



Sound Transit SEPA submissions in March of 2021 were insufficient and incomplete in terms of the roadway section in Lake Forest Park. Examples include heightened noise pollution (noise monitoring was measured in 2019, before the “West Shift” and before knowing the size and extent of the sound-reflecting retaining walls) and the establishment of permanent cut-through traffic patterns in our neighborhoods and near our schools. There were no studies on the impact of heat islands caused by the loss of trees, added impervious surface sound reflection and retaining walls.

The impact on Lake Forest Park is disproportionate, enduring, and fundamentally unjust. The toll on our community far exceeds any purported benefits, emphasizing the need for Sound Transit to reconsider its approach and explore alternative solutions that prioritize the well-being of our residents, environment, and taxpayers.

5.1 Property Impacts

There are 110 properties along the Lake Forest Park segment of Bothell Way scheduled for partial property acquisition and/or permanent easements for the project. Before the “west shift”, nine properties were scheduled for full acquisition. The Sound Transit Board is grateful that no residents will be forced from their homes, but many have their front or back doors much closer to the highway. Anecdotal evidence suggests that many affected residents are receiving offers that reflect only the square-footage of acquired property, without regard to any reduction in value of the main property, damage to the property during construction, or degradation in quality of life suffered through increased noise, heat, crime, or other factors.

Residents have raised concerns about property damage and lack of support from Sound Transit. Residents on the west side of Bothell Way are worried about:

- Property slippage: They fear their land could slide due to the construction project.
- Damage to drains and water supplies: their water and drainage systems run directly to the highway and could be affected by construction.

Residents expressed these concerns to the contractors hired by Sound Transit to handle property acquisition offers. They were allegedly told they could “sue” Sound Transit if their property suffers damage.

Residents and the City, CORE and others believe this is an irresponsible response. They argue that Sound Transit should, at a minimum, pay for an assessment of their properties and drainage systems before construction starts. This would establish a baseline and allow for fair compensation in case of damage, avoiding the need for lawsuits.

Residents are concerned that construction work between 153rd and 155th Street, given the steep terrain and history of landslides, poses a high risk to their properties, and residents from 155th to Towne Center are worried that carving 16 feet off the back half of their property (even WITH the retaining wall) without additional study of the topography, is irresponsible and lacks concern for public safety.

Though Lake Forest Park represents only 13% of the project distance, 56% of the property acquisitions and \$83 million in property acquisition costs are in Lake Forest Park.

5.2 Environmental and Aesthetic Impacts

5.2.1 Trees

Sound Transit published a Stride BRT Tree Factsheet ¹⁰for the project in August 2023 with the table below.



SOUND TRANSIT SR 522/145TH BRT IMPACTS AND ALTERNATIVES IN LAKE FOREST PARK

Table 1 - Sound Transit August 2023 Tree Removals By Category

Tree Removals by Category				
City	less than 6" Diameter	6 to less than 12" Diameter	12 to less than 24" Diameter	24" Diameter and greater
Seattle/ Shoreline	10 3	30 29	17 13	1 11
Lake Forest Park	33	186	122	50
Kenmore	3	8	0	0
Bothell	25	38	14	1

It is not surprising that the majority of tree removals (66%) are slated for Lake Forest Park since it is the most wooded and residential section of the project. The number of 391 trees was as of the publication of the 90% Sound Transit engineering drawings which include the tree inventory. That number is almost certainly going to rise with the seven additional property acquisitions which were approved by the Sound Transit Board in January 2024.

The above table reveals that 50 so called "landmark" trees with diameter 24" or greater will be removed in Lake Forest Park. This represents nearly 80% of the landmark trees scheduled for removal along the entire route.

Over five acres of trees are slated for removal. Replacing this magnitude of trees and shrubs in Lake Forest Park will exacerbate the existing issue of urban heat islands and create additional health hazards.

The conversion of tree canopy to concrete surfaces is creating islands of heat that were previously moderated by nature. In the face of climate change, this is an emerging health hazard. Uncontrolled growth can lead to unlivable communities. The EPA has recently called for action in the face of these risks. And locally, a quote from the August 5, 2023 Seattle Times article (Seattle's growth is heating up the region - literally¹¹) says it all:

Around Lake Washington, trees are rapidly being replaced with a growing density of concrete, asphalt and other heat-absorbing surfaces in buildings, roads and other pieces of urban infrastructure. That produces what's known as an "urban heat island," and it's boosting temperatures around the Emerald City by at least 8 degrees Fahrenheit.

About 80% of area residents, even those in verdant, affluent neighborhoods, are now exposed to heat extremes much worse than the city's rural surroundings, according to a new study by Climate Central, a nonprofit, climate-science research organization.

"Most of the planet is warming due to human-caused climate change, but the built environment in cities amplifies both average temperatures and extreme heat," the study said.



By a wide margin, heat is the deadliest natural hazard in the U.S., and heat waves are growing hotter, longer and more frequent as climate change progresses, putting children and older adults especially at risk.

Among the 44 cities Climate Central analyzed, Seattle ranks in the top five for increased heat.

The cost to the community of this tree removal goes far beyond replacement cost. Using iTree¹², Lake Forest Park will suffer the following losses and impacts:

- Loss of **350 pounds of pollution** removal per year
- Loss of **185 tons of carbon storage**
- Loss of **5 tons of carbon sequestration**
- Creating **118,000 gallons of additional runoff per year**
- Estimated replacement cost of **\$1.2 Million**

Sound Transit will fund tree replacements but there won't be sufficient space along Bothell Way for the replacement so any replacement benefits will not be in the immediate area and may not even be in Lake Forest Park. Since any replacements will take many years to mature, it's likely that the 20% of the population of Lake Forest Park that is 65 years of age or older will not live to see the benefits. Meanwhile that million full bathtubs of stormwater that would have been retained will be washed through residences on the way to Lake Washington.

Figure 3 illustrates the many benefit of an urban forest.

Figure 3 - Summary of Urban Forest Benefits

Summary of Urban Forest Benefits



Pollution Abatement: Urban forests serve as natural filters which improve water quality and air quality by trapping, absorbing, and transforming pollutants and excess nutrients, resulting in public health benefits, lower illness rates, and safeguarding ecosystems.



Shade and Cooling: Cities and metropolitan areas experience greater temperatures due to land use changes which alter the energy budget in an urban setting, known as the urban heat island effect. Through shading and evapotranspiration, urban forests mitigate the heat island effect through shading and cooling which lowers air and surface temperatures in densely populated regions.



Stormwater Reduction: Rainfall on impermeable surfaces, like concrete and asphalt, generates stormwater issues in cities, leading to problems such as flooding, water quality impairments, and reduced continuity of streamflow. In natural systems, rainwater interception and evapotranspiration minimize stormwater and reduce the reliance on costly engineered stormwater solutions.



Wildlife Habitat: Urban forests function as crucial wildlife habitats within the urban landscape, supporting a diverse range of species that have adapted to living alongside humans. These flora and fauna communities rely on these forests for essential resources, including refuge, food, water, and shelter, in an otherwise demanding environment.



Carbon Sequestration and Storage: Carbon dioxide (CO₂), the primary greenhouse gas driving global warming, is absorbed, and stored by trees during photosynthesis. This sequestered carbon is stored in the plant tissues during the lifetime of a tree.



Noise Buffering: Urban forests and tree canopies serve as natural noise buffers, reducing sound from traffic and other sources. The reduction of nuisance noise is beneficial to human health and well-being and can minimize noise impacts which negatively affect wildlife habitat.



Economic Benefits: Trees bring numerous economic advantages, such as higher property values, increased business traffic, heightened demand, tourism attraction, reduced energy costs, and resident appeal. Research indicates that urban forest programs typically yield substantial returns on investment, believed to be 2:1 or more (Endreny 2018).



Human Health and Wellness: Urban trees provide intangible yet significant societal benefits including recreation, enhancing the aesthetics of city streets, and fostering community pride and identity. Research also shows that trees play a role in improving health outcomes, reducing stress, enhancing mental well-being including cognition, attention, and anxiety, clinical outcomes, and crime reduction (Wolf et al. 2020).

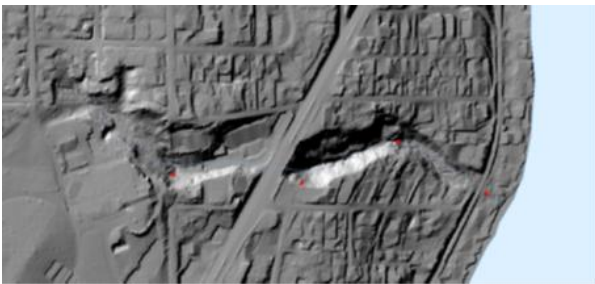
5.2.2 Stormwater Runoff and Soil Stability

Stormwater runoff is already a major problem for residents who live east of Bothell Way. Several residences have had to install sump pumps and other mechanisms to deal with stormwater runoff. As noted above, the removal of trees and shrubs that retain water will result in the addition of the equivalent of 1 million bathtubs of water to the stormwater runoff. Considering that many of the SEPA analyses appear to have been conducted without regard to the full extent of increased construction and tree removal of the “west shift” it appears doubtful that potential increases in stormwater runoff are adequately addressed in the design.

Three named streams cross the highway. These fish-bearing streams require state mandated culvert remediation. It is not clear how Sound Transit intends to cross Bsche'tla Creek, but it is in line for required culvert remediation. Additionally, the steep Bsche'tla Creek ravine immediately east of Bothell Way is extremely unstable, where a landslide forced evacuations of several households in recent years.

The figure below shows clearly how the deep ravine of Bsche'tla Creek runs through Bothell Way and the instability given the 90-foot drop to Lake Washington

Figure 4 - LIDAR Image of Bsche'tla Creek Ravine



5.2.3 Aesthetics

Despite the environmental damage, noise, and other impacts we shouldn't discount the overall aesthetic impact. The green, tree-lined gateway to our city will be replaced with a concrete corridor, nearly a mile-long, plagued by graffiti with the city charged with removal.

Sound Transit is charged with evaluating aesthetic impacts and in their 2021 SEPA Visual and Aesthetics report they say:

"...the combination of mature tree removal from foreground views and the installation of extensive retaining walls along Bothell Way (between 38th Avenue NE and a location north of NE 165th Street) would reduce the natural harmony of the project corridor"

"...in Lake Forest Park, specifically in the vicinity of NE 165th Street, the combination of tall retaining walls and the removal of characteristic tall trees in the foreground could be perceived as less compatible with the existing visual character, and residents of Lake Forest Park have expressed high sensitivity to tree removal. Therefore, on SR 522 in Lake Forest Park, adverse visual impacts would result at locations where both large retaining walls would be installed and tall conifer trees would be removed."

The Lake Forest Park segment is mostly residential, while the Kenmore and Bothell segments are mostly commercial. Only Lake Forest Park has adverse impacts noted in the SEPA report. It appears that adverse impacts to aesthetics have no bearing on the SEPA determination of non-significance.

5.3 Noise

Sound Transit says that there will be no appreciable increase in traffic noise after they widen Bothell Way, clear 391 trees and several hundred shrubs, erect in their place a nearly mile-long concrete retaining wall as high as 16 feet, and run 220 additional bus trips per day.

5.3.1 Will Noise Increase?

Instead of a more thorough Environmental Impact Statement, ST was able to do a less comprehensive SEPA Checklist which the agency then approved. Their conclusion – that the environmental impacts in Lake Forest Park are negligible.

Traffic noise is already at high levels for residences along Bothell. Traffic noise is not just a nuisance, it's also a serious health risk.

UW Professor Edmund Seto, a noted expert in exposure assessment and community noise impacts, stated in a July 2023 letter to CORE that:

“there is considerable scientific evidence supporting multiple health impacts of community noise. Noise contributes to annoyance and affects well-being. It affects the human endocrine system and the inflammatory pathway and is linked to high blood pressure and cardiovascular disease. Noise affects sleep quality. There is also ample evidence that noise has impacts on children’s learning.”

5.3.2 The Noise Analysis Was Deeply Flawed

The public comment period has long ago lapsed for the SEPA checklist and its deeply flawed Noise and Vibration Technical Report but here are some reasons why its conclusion is invalid:

5.3.2.1 The Noise Analysis Was Done Before the Major Design Change to Shift the Roadway to the West

Sound Transit made a major design change in 2020, shifting the roadway to the west to avoid full property acquisitions on the East side of Bothell Way. A June 30, 2020 project update cited this change, pending Sound Transit Board approval.

The change dramatically increased the cost of the project in Lake Forest Park since the entire roadway had to be shifted to the west resulting in a nearly mile-long retaining wall up to 16 feet high and removal of hundreds of trees and shrubs.

The Noise and Vibration Report was dated March 2021, the same date as the SEPA Checklist. But it is more than curious that the report does not make a single reference to traffic noise reflected from the proposed retaining walls. The report’s noise modeling only has references to changes in the distance to the noise receiver and predicted bus noise impacts. Only short retaining walls were included prior to the west shift.

Professor Seto stated in a July 2023 letter to CORE:



“Vertical barriers (sound walls, retaining walls, etc.) can also reflect traffic noise, which can impact people on the opposite side of the street. Also, depending on the height of the wall, and the housing and other environments behind it, a portion of sound may diffract over the top of a barrier and affect people living behind the barrier. The impact of these reflections and diffractions can be quantified. Accepted traffic noise models, such as the Federal Highway Administration’s Traffic Noise Model 30.0, allow for accounting of the impacts of single barrier reflections in traffic noise assessment analyses.”

He goes on to say:

“Roadway development that removes vegetation can also adversely affect noise levels. Numerous studies have found that natural vegetation, if sufficiently tall, wide, and dense, can reduce road traffic noise.”

Page 24 of the SEPA report cites as data sources “Project design files in electronic format (CAD files) that were used to construct the noise models used in this analysis” though it doesn’t indicate which design files and version. The reference on page 54 - “In Segment 2, construction would occur on the east side of SR 522 from NE 145th Street to just before the start of Segment 3.” seems to indicate that the west-shift with its major construction of nearly a mile-long high retaining wall was not considered.

Further evidence that the west-shift is not encompassed by the report is at the bottom of page 54 where it says that construction would be closer to residents on the east than the west – “Residences in this project segment would be as close to the project construction as those described under Segment 1, with the closest residences identified at multifamily residences at 35th Avenue NE and NE 155th Place, and at single-family residences along both sides of SR 522 from NE 155th Street to NE 170th Street. These residences vary from as close as 10 to 15 feet from sidewalk construction to more than 50 feet from project construction in areas with minimal improvements. Construction of the BRT station at NE 165th Street would occur as close as 10 to 15 feet to a residence on the east side of Bothell Way, and 20 to 30 feet from residences on the west side of SR 522.”

There is a reference on page 53 “The use of pile-driving to install support piles or sheet piles may be required for construction of the three park-and-ride garages or the retaining walls proposed in Segments 1, 2 and 4, as described in Tables A-1 through A-4 of the SEPA Checklist” that could suggest that the report encompasses the west-shift since the March 2021 SEPA Checklist (Page 24) – “Six retaining (cut) walls of various lengths would be constructed on the west side of SR 522 between the NE 153rd Street Station Platform and where 41st Avenue NE meets SR 522. Three of these would be long walls (approximately 1,000 to 1,500 feet long).” Though it’s not clear if the noise report is referring to the same version of the SEPA Checklist, and the height of wall is not stated in the SEPA Checklist.

The most compelling evidence is on page 32 of the report that states that all monitoring was performed between October 6 and October 8, 2019. This is at least six months prior to the first official reference to the west shift where the nearly mile-long and tall retaining walls were introduced to the project.



5.3.2.2 The use of the transit noise model was inappropriate for the Lake Forest Park segment of this project.

Sound Transit used a transit noise analysis for our Lake Forest Park segment instead of the more substantive “Type 1” analysis that would have evaluated major project highway changes (such as the tall retaining walls) that may increase existing traffic levels. Such “multimodal” projects more aptly characterize the Sound Transit design which will substantially alter the existing highway. Instead, the analysis mainly covered only the bus traffic.

From page 26 – “This project is a bus transit project and would not add any new general-purpose through lanes; therefore, FTA methods were used for this noise and vibration analysis. Noise sources due to project operation would include: (1) bus operations, (2) traffic noise generated by vehicles using the park-and-ride garages, and (3) traffic noise generated by vehicles utilizing roadway improvement components of the project, such as new turn lanes.”

From page 27 – “Project noise: The analysis determined the noise levels that would be caused by the proposed project. In this case, the change in noise level would be related to the projected operational noise from the new BRT system, which was determined based on bus headways (buses per hour), speeds and transit station locations.”

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA), in their September 2018 publication Transit Noise and Vibration Impact Assessment (TNVIA), recommends using the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) regulations for traffic noise analysis on projects where the highway noise sources dominate at all times. In Washington state, this would be the WSDOT regulations.

Despite having to move the entire highway to the west and erect a nearly mile-line high retaining wall, Sound Transit was able to avoid the more comprehensive WSDOT/FHWA requirements because the project is not funded by state or federal sources. They claim that this is not a “multi-modal project” since only transit improvements are planned. It seems they are legally within their rights to avoid state and federal requirements for noise analysis, but there will clearly be a major change to the highway.

5.3.2.3. Noise monitoring was done in the wrong locations and some affected properties will have severe noise levels

Noise monitoring locations selected didn’t reflect properties moved closer to the highway due to the west shift.

Based on FTA noise impact criteria from the Transit Noise and Vibration Impact Assessment (TNVIA), any increase in post-project noise levels for locations with existing noise exposure of 67dB or higher results in a severe impact (see table 4-5 on Page 28 of TNVIA). Concerning impact criteria, it says “The criteria are defined with the expectation that communities already exposed to high levels of noise can only tolerate a small increase.” Further stating “If it is not practical to avoid severe impacts by changing the location of the project, mitigation measures must be considered.”

The table in Appendix E of the Noise and Vibration Technical Report summarizes existing noise levels. Of the 67 analyzed Lake Forest Park properties in that table, 44 have existing noise levels putting them in the severe category and 23 have existing noise levels higher than 70db which was characterized in the report as “unacceptable for residential land use”. In addition, Appendix E appears incomplete, not including the homes on the west side of the roadway that should have been analyzed since they will result in the most significant noise impact from the project since vehicles will be closer than in the existing conditions.

Appendix E shows that 11 of the 44 properties in the severe category will have noise increases. Mitigation appears to be required for those properties.



SOUND TRANSIT SR 522/145TH BRT IMPACTS AND ALTERNATIVES IN LAKE FOREST PARK

Here are some recent sound level recordings along Bothell Way today, near where ST specified existing (in 2019) levels of 77dB LAeq. Those levels are all in the severe category for traffic noise, but our recordings were even higher. All recordings were done with the NIOSH sound level app as averages of one-minute recordings.

Table 2 - Sound Level Measurements Done by CORE

Date	Time	Location	LAeq	Max
12/12/23	4:16PM	Outside private residence 16298 Bothell Way (165th intersection)	79.6	84.3
12/12/23	3:56PM	15848 Bothell Way NE residence, on street side of sound wall	83.9	100.0
12/12/23	3:53PM	15848 Bothell Way NE residence, behind and below private sound wall	70.6	76.7
12/23/23	3:48PM	Private residence at 15548 Bothell Way	82.9	88.9
12/23/23	3:43PM	Shannon Heights Apartments, 3820 NE 155th	80.0	84.0
12/12/23	3:40PM	15500 Bothell Way	78.6	84.3
12/12/23	3:32PM	Sheridan Market, outside front door	77.6	80.9

Definitions:

LAeq = average or equivalent sound level

Max = maximum dB during the one-minute recording

A group of residents on the east side of Bothell Way erected a sound wall between the highway and their residences many years ago. It appears that Sound Transit will remove that wall and they will experience at least a 20dB increase in noise levels at their residences. Here again, Sound Transit may have legally avoided mitigation with their limited analysis, but there is no doubt some residents will endure an even higher level of traffic noise.

CORE sent a letter¹³ to the Lake Forest Park leadership on February 26, 2023 covering these shortcomings of the SEPA Noise and Vibration Report.

5.3.2.4. The Addition of 220 Daily Bus Trips Will Increase Noise on Bothell Way

There will be a substantial increase in bus traffic on Bothell Way since the project will add 220 daily bus trips. The majority will be new battery electric buses (BEB) which are much quieter than diesel buses, but only when idling and on initial acceleration. The SEPA report admits that “At cruising speeds of 35 mph or higher, BEBs produce noise levels that approach the noise levels of a diesel or hybrid bus due to the wind noise and tire roadway friction.” In his July 2023 letter to CORE, Professor Seto says:

“The noise from a moving bus is considerably louder than that of a typical passenger vehicle.... Shifting to hybrid and electric buses only slightly alleviates traffic-related noise. The figure below illustrates how tire-pavement noise is the major component of overall traffic noise. There is considerable current work and real-world demonstration projects examining the impact of pavement types that help reduce tire-pavement noise that may inform the design of new roadway development projects, particularly those involving heavier-vehicle bus and truck traffic”.



5.4 Traffic/Parking/Safety

The purpose of Transportation Technical Memorandum of the SEPA is stated as “to document the traffic operations, present the results of project traffic analyses, and document the project’s effects on all modes of travel.” Sound Transit has elected to postpone the 300-stall parking garage in Town Center until 2044, though it's a core component of their SEPA traffic analysis to support commuter parking. What about the parking demand that led to the inclusion of a 300 - stall facility? Now that the garage is postponed, where will those cars park? It would seem that either:

1. ridership will suffer since riders will avoid BRT – OR
2. more riders will park at Town Center and in the neighborhood – OR
3. there was no need for the parking garage in the first place.

Even if a small fraction of riders are in the second category above, parking pressures should have been better analyzed in the SEPA.

Many narrow residential streets will not allow emergency vehicles to pass if cars are parked carelessly on both sides of the street.

The project will also alter traffic features along Bothell Way. The two-way left turn lane from 153rd to 165th will be eliminated, preventing left turns at 38th and 39th and, making those who live along Bothell Way turn right into and out of their properties and forcing a huge increase in turn traffic at 165th. An increase in side street traffic will reduce pedestrian safety in areas without sidewalks.

There are 41, mainly residential driveways on the east side of Bothell Way. Drivers exiting these driveways, sometimes in blind corners, will have safety issues with large buses traveling in the near BAT lane.

5.5 Construction (Pollution, Safety)

Sound Transit did not consider the additional environmental impact of the expected two-year construction phase. An example is the release of CO₂. The shift to the west meant 90,000 tons of dirt and debris must be moved in and out of Lake Forest Park, 64% of the total for all of Stride-3. This could require as many as 4,500 industrial dump truck loads, making 9,000 round trips. An industrial dump truck releases 7 and 10 pounds of CO₂ per mile. Nine thousand 20-mile round trips could equate to as much as 1,500,000 pounds of incremental CO₂ released into the atmosphere, compounded by the loss of up to 400 trees large trees.

Table 3 - Dirt and Topsoil Removal by City

City	Total Cubic Yard of dirt and topsoil moved (tons)	% by City
Seattle	8,440	6%
Shoreline	2,200	2%
LFP	90,000	64%
Kenmore	13,200	9%
Bothell	26,000	19%
Total	139,840	100%



6. Costs vs. Benefits

6.1 Weighing the Benefits of the Design

The 166-page SEPA Addendum H: Transportation Technical Memorandum emphasizes the overarching aims of Stride-3, highlighting a suite of capital investments to enhance bus transit speed and reliability along the corridor. This suite includes the implementation of business access and transit (BAT) lanes, transit queue bypass lanes, signal upgrades along with transit signal priority (TSP), modifications to existing signal timing, consolidation of bus stops, and Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) station enhancements.

Sound Transit has stated that the benefits of bus rapid transit stem from three guiding principles: speed, reliability, and increased ridership.

It is a matter of “transit principle.” According to Julie Timm, former Sound Transit CEO, “BRT, to be functional, requires a significant number of BAT lanes. The more you reduce or change that, the more you degrade it into Rapid Ride Buses, which is not the voters' mandate.” As stated earlier, there was no mention of BAT lanes in the 2016 voter material. The facts are that the proposed 1.3-mile northbound lane has no significant impact on increasing BAT lane coverage. Recall that there is already a dedicated BAT lane in the southbound direction.

- Overall, for Strides 1, 2, and 3, BAT lane coverage (counting HOV lanes on I-405 as BAT lanes) would increase just 2%, from 80% to 82%.
- Across Stride-3, adding the Lake Forest Park 1.3-mile northbound dedicated bus lane would increase BAT lane coverage across the 9 miles (16 miles in both directions) by just 7%, from 47% to 54%.

6.1.1 Bus Speed Improvements

Sound Transit states that bus travel times will improve in Lake Forest Park by an average of 2.3 minutes. In Lake Forest Park these improvements are only in the Northbound direction. Bus travel times are not projected to improve southbound through Lake Forest Park because a dedicated bus lane is already in place that serves transit riders who, in the morning, are headed to the new South Shoreline Light Rail Station at 148th NE and NE 5th Ave.

The following information is based on Sound Transit data. Sound Transit frequently uses these data in presentations, notably the PPT presentation made by the staff to the Sound Transit Board, arguing not to honor the City of Lake Forest Park’s request for a 90-day pause to study alternatives. It compares “build” vs. “no build” travel times for sections along the route projected for the year 2042.

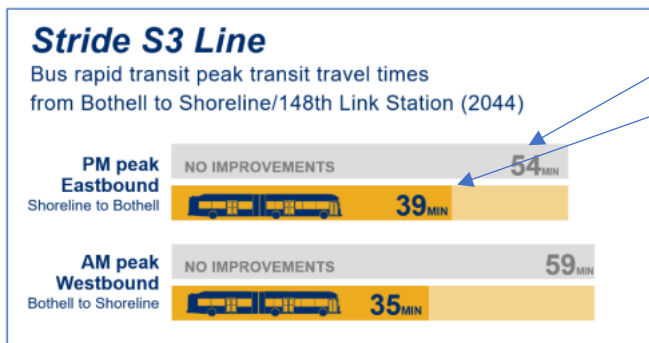
Figure 5 below shows an excerpt of the spreadsheet:



SOUND TRANSIT SR 522/145TH BRT IMPACTS AND ALTERNATIVES IN LAKE FOREST PARK

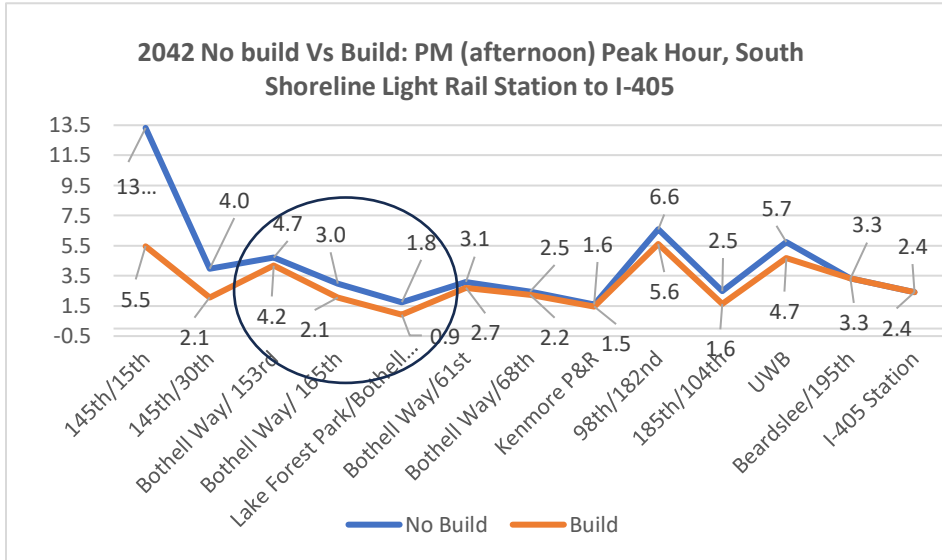
Figure 5 - Sound Transit Projected Bus Travel Times for 2042 in Minutes

Segment of Route	No Build	Build
5th/148th to 145th/15th	13.3	5.5
145th/15th to 145th/30th	4.0	2.1
145th/30th to Bothell Way/153rd	4.7	4.2
Bothell Way/153rd to Bothell Way/165th	3.0	2.1
Bothell Way/ 165th to Bothell Way/170th	1.8	0.9
Bothell Way/170th to Bothell Way/61st	3.1	2.7
Bothell Way/61st to Bothell Way/68th	2.5	2.2
Bothell Way/68th to Kenmore P&R	1.6	1.5
Kenmore P&R to 98th/182nd	6.6	5.6
98th/182nd to 185th/104th	2.5	1.6
185th/104th to UWB	5.7	4.7
UWB to Beardslee/195th	3.3	3.3
Beardslee/195th to 1-405 Station	2.4	2.4
Total	54.4	38.8



SOUND TRANSIT SR 522/145TH BRT IMPACTS AND ALTERNATIVES IN LAKE FOREST PARK

Figure 6 - Bus Time Saved by Segment PM Peak



As expected, Figure 6 shows virtually no time saved in the build scenario for AM peak hour since a dedicated BAT lane already exists.

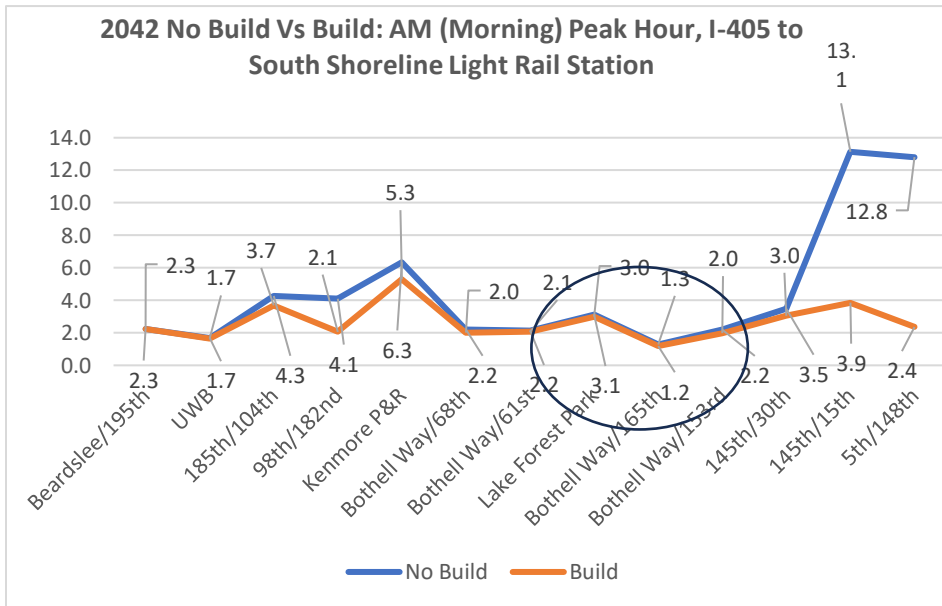


Table 4 shows the time saved at the end of each segment together with the percentage of time saved across the entire route. It shows that 62% of the total 15.7 minutes are saved in a 28-block stretch from the South Shoreline Light Rail Station to the NE 15th Ave bus stop on 145th NE without an extended dedicated bus lane.

It shows clearly that most of the time saved between build and no/build states occurs outside of Lake Forest Park, particularly along 145th where a dedicated BAT lane is not planned.



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Table 4 - PM Peak Hour Eastbound Build/No Build Times With Percent Time Saved

PM Peak Hours Eastbound: South Shoreline Light Rail Station to I-405 Station				
Year: 2042	No Build	Build	Time Saved	% of all Time
148th and 5th Ave	-	-	-	-
145th/15th	13.3	5.5	-7.9	50%
145th/30th	4.0	2.1	-1.9	12%
Bothell Way/ 153rd	4.7	4.2	-0.5	3%
Bothell Way/ 165th	3.0	2.1	-0.9	6%
Lake Forest Park/Bothell Way	1.8	0.9	-0.8	5%
Bothell Way/61st	3.1	2.7	-0.4	3%
Bothell Way/68th	2.5	2.2	-0.2	1%
Kenmore P&R	1.6	1.5	-0.1	1%
98th/182nd	6.6	5.6	-1.0	6%
185th/104th	2.5	1.6	-0.8	5%
UWB	5.7	4.7	-1.1	7%
Beardslee/195th	3.3	3.3	0.0	0%
I-405 Station	2.4	2.4	0.0	0%
Total Time	54.4	38.8	-15.7	100%

% of all time Saved: 62%
Total minutes saved: 9.8

- Sound Transit delivers this impressive timesaving without a dedicated bus lane, using instead:
 - A roundabout at the intersection of 145th NE and NE 5th Ave just to the east of I-5
 - A 1000-foot “q-jump”; 500 feet on either side of NE 15th Ave on 145th NE)
 - Signalized lights.
- The data also shows a marginal increase in general-purpose traffic speed transiting Lake Forest Park in 2042 vs. 2024 of less than 30 seconds during the weekday, evening peak hours returning home on the bus from the South Shoreline Light Rail Station.

Sound Transit says, “Planned improvements in the current design are expected to improve speed and reliability significantly” and, “the SR 522/145th BRT project is designed to improve Stride (bus) speed and reliability by targeting peak congestion areas and traffic queues.” Speed (MPH) is helpful for drawing comparisons as it considers both time and distance and creates an apples-to-apples comparison of the impact of improving bus speed on 145th vs. Bothell Way.

It is important to understand that the “dedicated BAT lane” through Lake Forest Park is not a bus-only lane. Any car that needs to make a right-hand turn going northbound may use the lane. Between 145th and Bothell Way and Town Center, 44 streets, driveways, and turnoffs are on the east side of Bothell Way. These streets and turnoffs are the only way for 500 homes, condominiums, townhomes, and businesses to enter and exit Bothell Way.

Sound Transit’s data shows “build” Vs “no-build” scenarios, by showing the impact on bus speed (MPH) to normalize data and make comparisons easier. Based on the plans for 145th, which include a roundabout at 145th and 5th Ave NE, an 1100-foot queue jump, half on each side of 145th and 15th Ave NE, and the dedicated northbound bus lane in Lake Forest Park. The table below shows how fast the bus would travel in each segment, comparing the “build” vs. “no-build” scenario in 2042 in MPH.



SOUND TRANSIT SR 522/145TH BRT IMPACTS AND ALTERNATIVES IN LAKE FOREST PARK

Table 5 - Build/No Build Speeds

Year: 2042	MPH No Build	MPH Build	% Increase in MPH
145th average MPH	5.2	11.9	129%
Bothell Way/LFP Average MPH	10.2	13.4	32%

Furthermore, the impacts greatly vary by roadway section, as the table below shows.

Table 6 - Build/No Build Speeds for 145th and LFP

	Year 2042	MPH No Build	MPH Build	% Increase in MPH Build Vs No-Build
145th	From S. Shoreline Light Rail station to 145th and 15th Ave	3.6	8.8	143%
	From 145th and 15th to 145th and 30th	10.6	20.3	92%
	Total 145th	5.2	11.9	129%
Bothell Way/LFP	145th & 30th to Bothell Way& 153rd	7.6	8.6	13%
	153rd to 165th	12.0	17.5	45%
	165th to Town Center	13.7	26.0	90%
	All Bothell Way	10.2	13.4	32%

Several things are important. The data Sound Transit uses projects commuters will transit Lake Forest Park an average of 2.3 minutes faster during the afternoon, weekday, and peak hour commute. That prediction includes a section on 145th from 30th Ave NE through the stoplight at 145th and Bothell Way. This data strongly suggests the following:

- The reason that the bus speed increases by only 13% between 145th and 30th NE and 153rd and Bothell Way has a great deal to do with the intersection of 145th and Bothell Way. This means some of the 2.3 minutes are in that section before heading northbound on Bothell Way, where the dedicated bus lane begins. SEPA documents a stoplight delay of 78 seconds at that intersection. Excluding that, **it reduces Lake Forest Park time saved to 61 seconds!**
- Bothell Way from 165th to Town Center shows the bus traveling at an average of 26 MPH, almost double the speed in the “no-build ” scenario. Half of the 0.6 miles of this section already has a dedicated bus lane.

It is important to note that BRT is designed to work together with light rail to deliver passengers to their destinations. Consequently, most trips will be two-seat rides on both a bus and light rail car. Two minutes of saving will quickly disappear when adding time to get to/from the light rail station and waiting for the light rail or bus. The July 2023 S3 FAQ ¹⁴acknowledges that when comparing the old ST 522 Express to the new two-seat ride “We know that the change requires an adjustment from our riders. For many people, the change does add about 10 minutes to the trip”.



SOUND TRANSIT SR 522/145TH BRT IMPACTS AND ALTERNATIVES IN LAKE FOREST PARK

Another common destination, UW Seattle Campus, will face similarly longer travel times since the Metro 372 will not extend to Lake Forest Park, requiring a two-seat ride (and without delivering riders directly to buildings on campus).

6.1.2 Bus Reliability

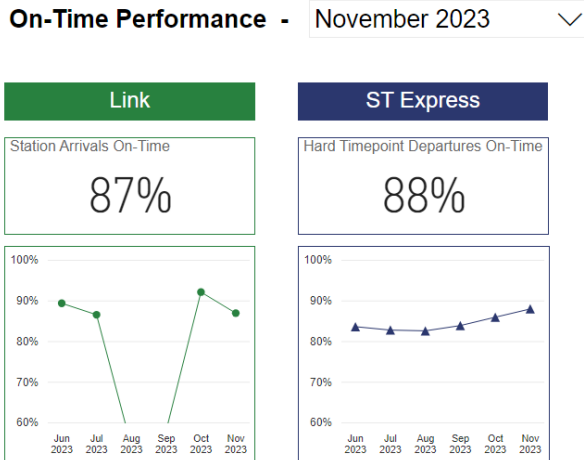
Reliability lies in the transit industry's well-established principle of keeping to a schedule. Many factors contribute to reliability, not the least of which is traffic congestion and its counterpart, inconsistent travel speeds. Other factors include early or late starts, inconsistent dwell and transfer times, operations and fleet maintenance, number of bus stops, and fare payment systems.

- Sound Transit sets riders' expectations about reliability, promising on their reporting website: *"You should expect consistent, reliable service that departs and arrives on time, allowing you to rely on Sound Transit to get you where you're going."*
- Sound Transit's reporting system for ST Express Buses ([Sound Transit Bus Reliability](#)) reports an 88% on-time performance. It is hard to imagine that adding a 1.5-mile dedicated northbound bus lane through Lake Forest Park could improve much on that metric.

Since the Stride 3 plan is to use the BRT to get passengers to light rail to continue their journey (e.g. to downtown Seattle), nearly all rides will be two-seat. Reliability must then also include the light rail part of the journey.

The figure below is from the Sound Transit Performance Tracker. Notice the precipitous dip (below the chart axis) for Link performance in August and September. This was before maintenance issues seriously impacted on-time performance at the beginning of 2024.

Figure 7 – Snapshot of November 2023 Sound Transit Performance Tracker



6.1.3 Ridership

522 Bus Boardings are far from Sound Transit's projections of 9,000 average daily boardings, far from the current average daily bus boardings of 1,900.

Nobody can accurately predict the future. For many years, Sound Transit has forecast 9,000 average daily bus boardings for the 522 bus. Sound Transit data show ridership on the 522 remains 65% to 75% lower than 2019, four years after COVID-19. (It is currently at 1,900 average daily boardings.) To grow from the current 1,900 average daily boardings to

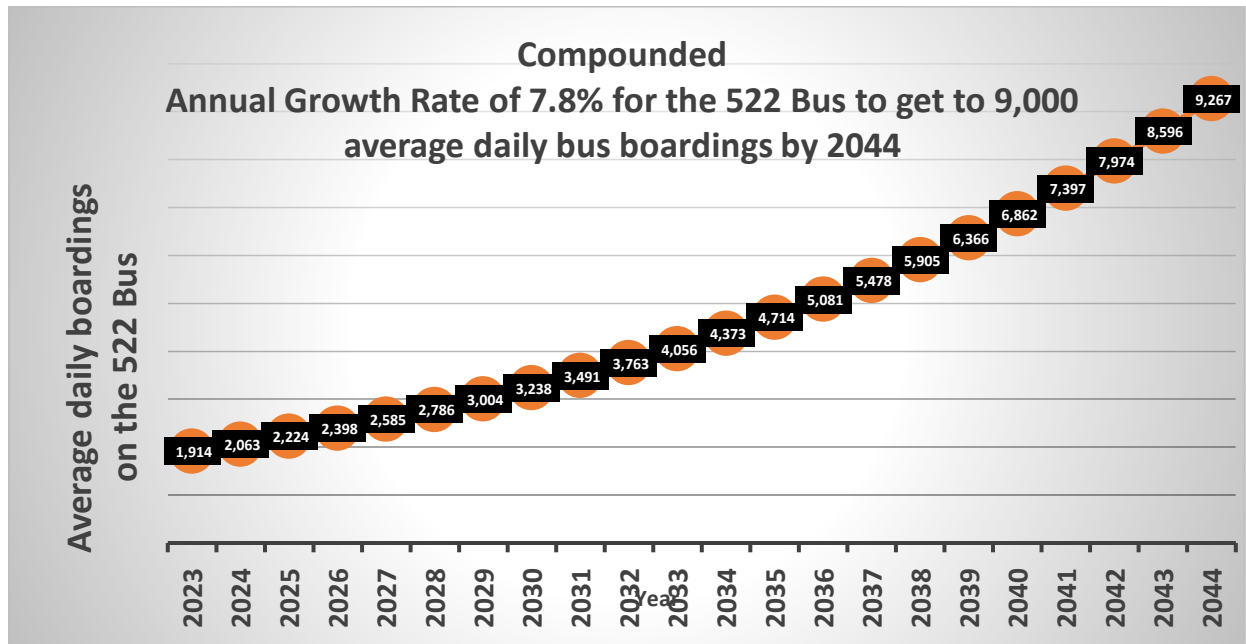


SOUND TRANSIT SR 522/145TH BRT IMPACTS AND ALTERNATIVES IN LAKE FOREST PARK

9,000 in 2044 requires a compounded annual growth rate of almost 8% over the next 20 years to reach the goal of 9,000 average daily bus boardings (a 380% increase in average daily bus boardings).

The Puget Sound Regional Council forecasts “population growth of 1.1 percent per year and employment growth of 1.3 percent per year. At these growth rates, the region could experience up to 21 percent trip growth by 2042.”

Figure 8 - Required Growth to Achieve 522 Targets



And nearly 30% of average bus boardings occur on weekends, not weekdays. The average number of bus boardings per weekend day is virtually identical to the average daily bus boardings during the weekdays.

This means in 2044, there will be 6,000 average daily boardings during the weekdays, which includes boardings in both directions. It’s a reasonable assumption the average number of daily buses boarding in one direction would equal the number of boardings going the other direction, meaning a maximum of 3,000 bus riders could be boarding the 522 buses on the weekday headed east toward Bothell. Not all of these would be boarding the bus during the afternoon, weekday, peak hours.

6.2 The Enormous Cost Far Outweighs the Benefits

Once the decision was made to shift the road to the west, construction complexity, costs, and environmental damage drastically increased. Lake Forest Park costs far more than sections of Stride-3 roadway in Seattle/Shoreline, Kenmore, and Bothell.

- A 2.3-minute faster transit through Lake Forest Park during the weekday afternoon peak hours (4–6 p.m.) impacts a maximum of 12 buses. Assuming they are double articulated with a capacity of 150 riders, this investment benefits just 1,200 riders.
- In 2019, Sound Transit estimated the project's cost by City. Lake Forest Park will account for 55% of all Stride-3 capital costs of construction and property acquisition costs, and 67% of all Stride-3 property acquisition and permit costs (see Figures 5 and 6 below).



SOUND TRANSIT SR 522/145TH BRT IMPACTS AND ALTERNATIVES IN LAKE FOREST PARK

- Despite comprising only 13% of the BRT route, the 1.3-mile Lake Forest Park segment will make up 55% of the cost (see Table 7 below).

Table 7 - Capital Costs (2019 Sound Transit Report Adjusted to 2024 Dollars)

Capital Costs 2018 Dollars Inflation Adjusted to 2024	Shoreline/ Seattle	Lake Forest Park	Kenmore	Bothell	Total
Property Acquisition and Permits	\$47,803,584	\$102,636,240	\$0	\$2,529,680	\$152,969,504
Construction and Construction Management	\$66,876,880	\$164,183,600	\$14,711,440	\$90,393,080	\$336,165,000
Total	\$114,680,464	\$266,819,840	\$14,711,440	\$92,922,760	\$489,134,504
Percent	23%	55%	3%	19%	100%

Figure 9 - Share of Property Acquisition and Permit Costs

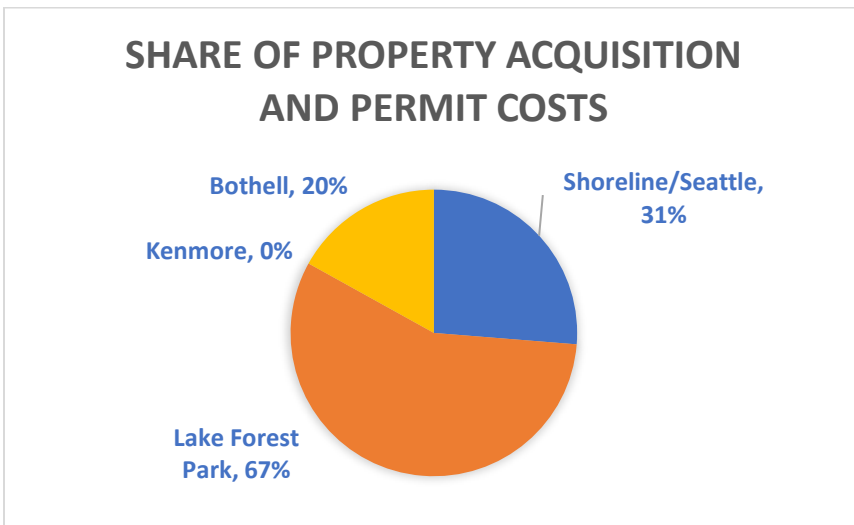
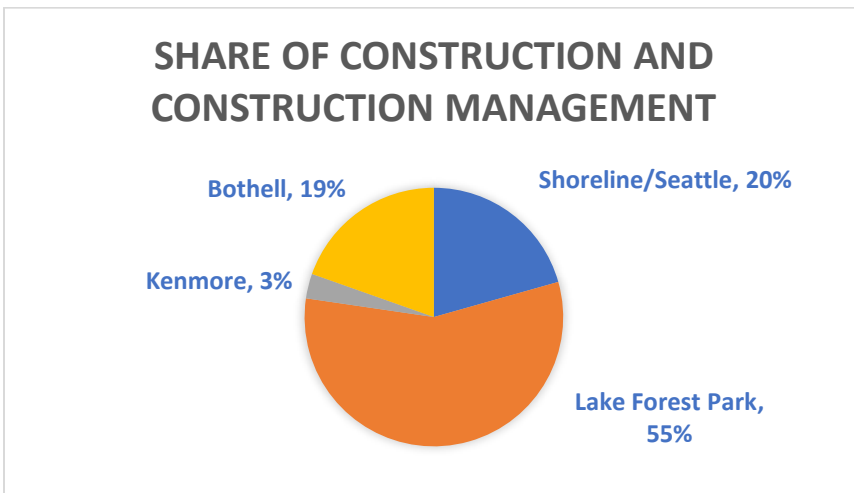


Figure 10 - Share of Construction and Construction Management Costs



Put into context, the cost to build a mile of roadway in Lake Forest Park is magnitudes greater than in Shoreline/Seattle, Kenmore of Bothell. Reducing the bus transit in Lake Forest Park by one-minute costs 3.7 times the average and building a mile of road costs 2.8 times the average.

Table 8 - Cost Per Mile Comparison

City	Cost to Save a Minute of Transit Time by City and Overall	Index Cost Per Minute Saved	Cost to Build a Mile of Roadway	Index of Cost per Mile of Roadway
Seattle/Shoreline	\$9,579,970	0.4	\$62,258,667	1.3
Lake Forest Park	\$94,331,176	3.7	\$135,800,000	2.8
Kenmore	\$7,060,846	0.3	\$3,523,529	0.1
Bothell	\$39,452,555	1.6	\$44,511,765	0.9
Overall Cost	\$25,425,131	1.0	\$48,575,366	1.0

ST-3, which in 2016 was to cost \$58 billion and has ballooned to an estimated \$148 billion today, should have the Sound Transit Board of Directors and Staff constantly looking for opportunities to save money while delivering value to transit riders.

7. The Sensible Alternative to a Dedicated BAT Lane

Since October 2022, the City of Lake Forest Park, CORE, and the Lake Forest Park Stewardship Foundation have tried to engage and convince Sound Transit to examine an alternative approach to a northbound dedicated bus lane (BAT).

The obvious alternative would be to use queue bypass lanes, which are roadway lanes that enable buses to bypass traffic congestion or a traffic queue. This is the basic roadway design used on 145th Street to significant effect.

7.1 Sound Transit’s Argument That a Dedicated BAT Lane is Needed in Lake Forest Park

Sound Transit CEO Timm and Stride-3 staff met with CORE and the Stewardship Foundation in October 2023. They presented a PowerPoint document using screenshots from Google Maps to explain why the BAT lane is the only viable option for Stride-3 through Lake Forest Park. There is no need for a BAT lane running in the other direction because there already is one. Their argument was supported by an accompanying technical memo “Understanding Sound Transit’s Stride 3 Design Approach”. The PowerPoint and technical memo are not available on Sound Transit’s web site, but they did report on the Google Maps data in their September “Platform” blog ¹⁵citing:

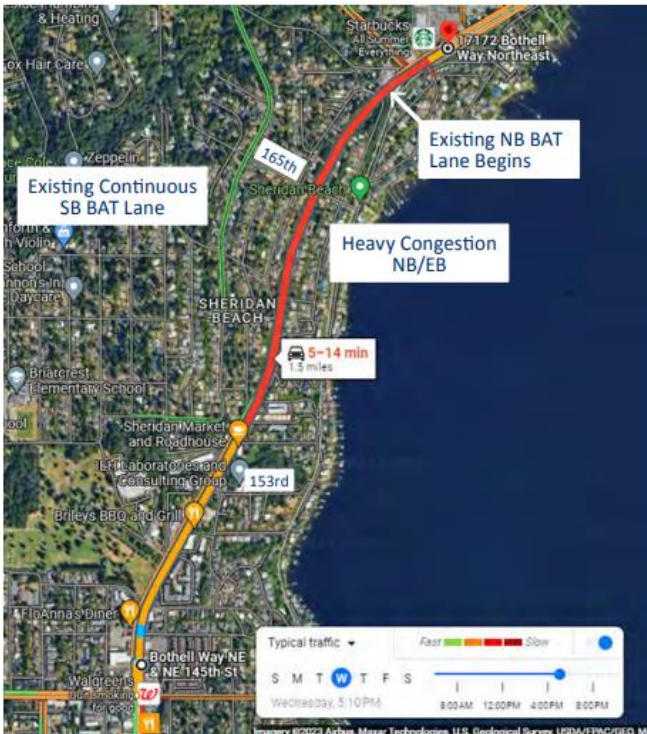
The simple answer is that traffic congestion along SR 522 forms a ‘queue’ of traffic that runs virtually the entire length of Lake Forest Park. So to bypass this congestion, there needs to be a queue bypass lane (a roadway lane that allows buses to bypass traffic) that is equally long. And in Lake Forest Park’s case that means BAT lanes.



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...Just pull up Google maps around morning commute and evening commute and you will see a heavy red line running through Lake Forest Park.

Figure 11 - Excerpt from Sound Transit PowerPoint of Google Maps Screenshot



MAP 2 – Existing PM peak traffic conditions, SR 522

They assert that the “outbound PM afternoon commute sees even greater congestion [than its AM counterpart] represented in red, extending approximately 1.5 miles from near NE 145th Street to Town Center.”

- “Because of this, a person traveling northbound along this stretch of roadway at 5:10 p.m. on a typical weekday will see a travel time of 5–14 minutes.”
- “A BAT lane connecting intersections is necessary to provide the transit priority lanes that would allow buses to bypass the full extent of congestion and maintain reliable travel times both now and into the future when traffic congestion may increase further.”
- “A BAT lane will allow buses to bypass congestion from NE 145th Street to 41st Ave NE, resulting in travel times that are 2–9 minutes faster on average than what riders experience today.”
- “The travel times provided by Google Maps are independent and reproducible.”

7.2 Sound Transit’s Google Maps Argument is Wrong

The screenshot used by Sound Transit in Figure 7 does look like heavy congestion during the afternoon peak but though Sound Transit makes assurances the data are reproducible, CORE data analysts could not reproduce this level of heavy congestion.

Google Maps can be used for “live” traffic or “typical” traffic.

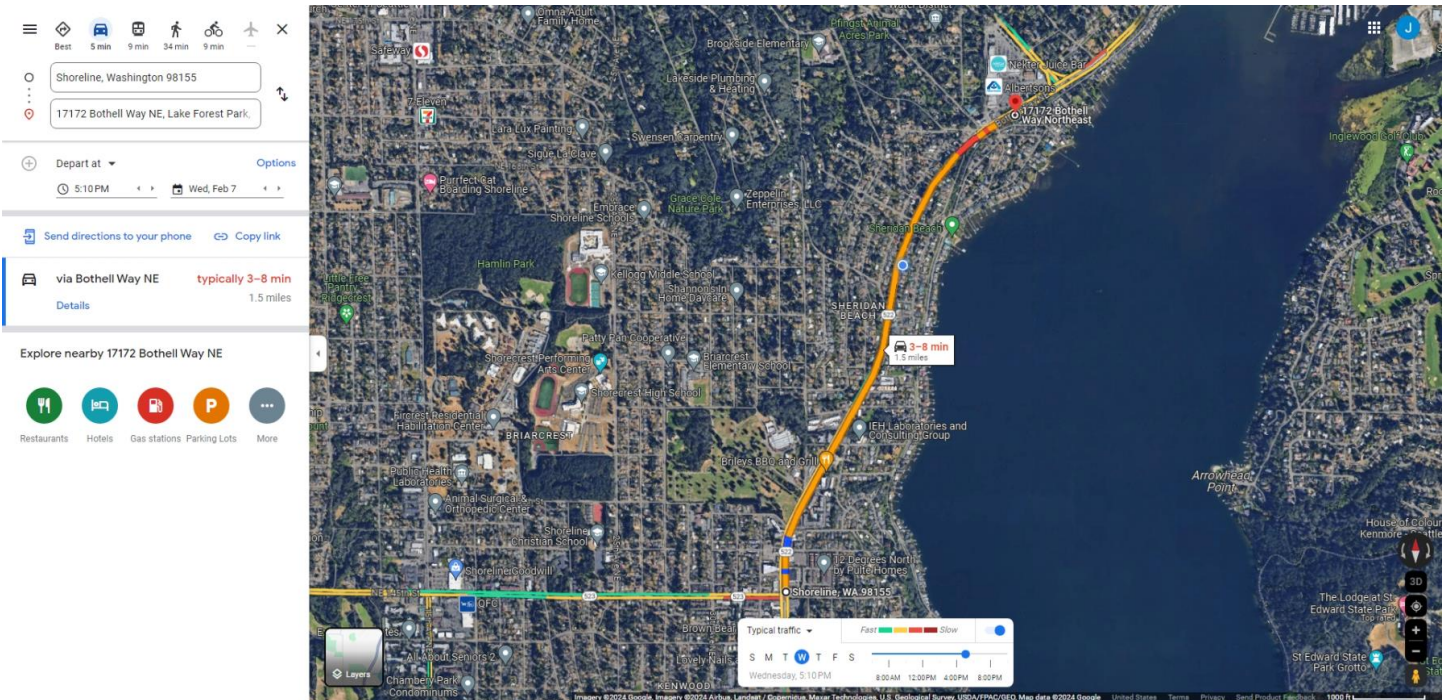


SOUND TRANSIT SR 522/145TH BRT IMPACTS AND ALTERNATIVES IN LAKE FOREST PARK

When CORE started to dig deeper and found that although anyone can use Google Maps, it is much more difficult to get to the underlying data and definitions. We couldn't find a definition of "typical" from Google, but reports indicate that it is taken from averages of historical data. Typical times almost certainly include pre-Covid traffic data when congestion was more severe. Also note that typical travel time is expressed as a range, but the color of the line represents the worst-case scenario.

Here is what we got when trying to replicate "typical" Sound Transit's Google traffic screenshot using Wednesday 5:10 PM typical traffic with the 1.5-mile route. Even though it incorrectly includes .2 miles where there is already a dedicated BAT lane beyond 41st, it's still much shorter time than Sound Transit has in their screenshot (3-8 minutes vs. 5-14 minutes):

Figure 12 - Typical Wednesday 5:10PM Traffic as Derived by CORE

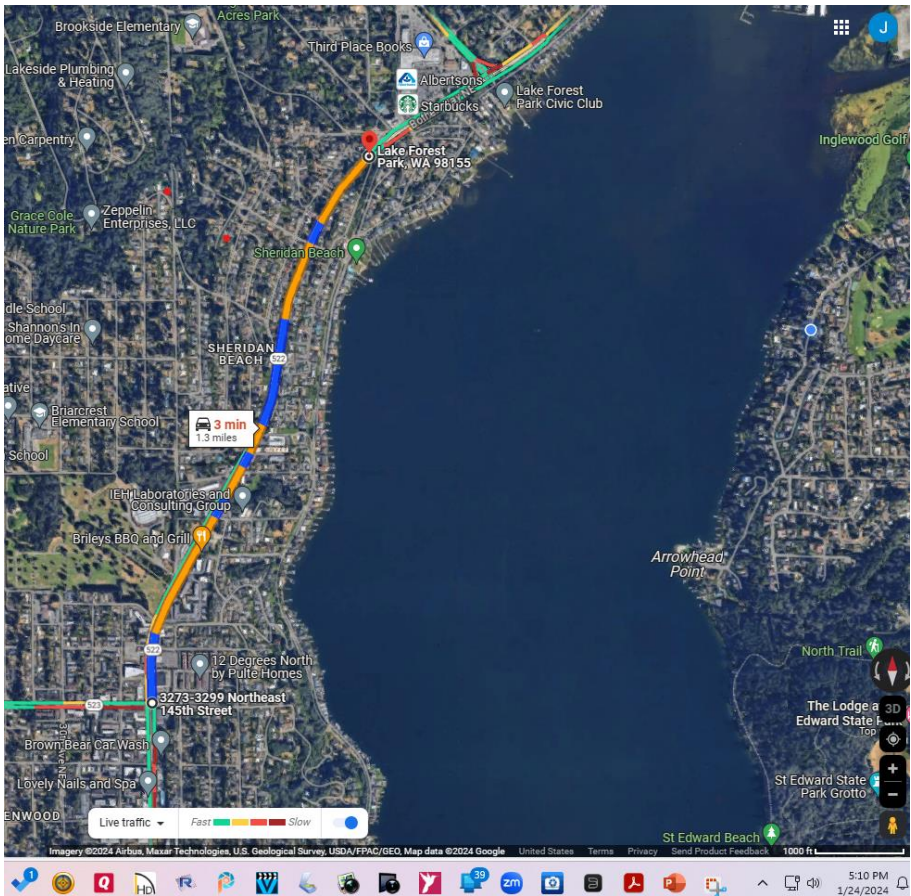


A screenshot of "live" traffic on Wednesday, Jan. 24, 2024, at 5:10PM appears below. Note that the travel time is listed as **three minutes**, whereas the "typical" used for the same day and time by Sound Transit is listed as 5-14 minutes.



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Figure 13- Live Traffic From Google Maps



The above screenshots were captured just using the Google Maps interface. To get a more accurate representation of when, how much, and exactly where congestion occurs along our Lake Forest Park segment, CORE contracted with a company that specializes in providing detailed extracts of Google traffic data. That way, we could analyze a mountain of actual prior traffic data without selecting each day/time/route individually. In doing so, we could tell not only how long it takes to travel parts of the route, but also the likelihood of the worst-case scenario (aka the “heavy red line”). Using the accumulated historical Google data, CORE attempted to reproduce the screenshots in the Sound Transit presentation, looking at “typical data for Wednesday, at 5:10 p.m.” every Wednesday over five years. We were unable to reproduce it. The most extended delay we found was 12 minutes, which rarely occurred. Google may use the word “typical,” but “typical” does not mean frequent or all the time. Google Maps data also demonstrates that weekday traffic is lighter on Monday and Wednesday.

Using these data provided another benefit: the ability to analyze the probability of maximum congestion within small segments of the route to understand more discretely the probability of a lengthy delay occurring and where delays are most likely during the weekday afternoon return trip from the South Shoreline Light Rail Station. We did not do a westbound version of the extract because a dedicated bus lane is already running in that direction. Our extract specification was:



SOUND TRANSIT SR 522/145TH BRT IMPACTS AND ALTERNATIVES IN LAKE FOREST PARK

- Extract data for NE 145th Ave, specifically:
 - From NE 145th Ave and 5th Ave NE to the intersection of Bothell Way NE.
 - Subsets of 145th, specifically:
 - NE 145th and 5th Ave NE to NE 145th and 17th Ave NE (the bus stop).
 - NE 145th and 17th Ave NE (the bus stop) to NE 145th and 30th Ave NE (the next bus stop).
- Extract data from the Intersection of NE 145th 30th Ave NE to Bothell Way NE and 41st Ave NE, where the bus lane begins just before Lake Forest Park Town Center.
 - Subsets of this section, specifically:
 - NE 145th and 30th Ave NE to Bothell Way NE and 153rd NE
 - From Bothell Way NE and 165th NE
 - From Bothell Way NE and 165th to 41st Ave NE.
- The extracts we pulled provided data daily, in 10-minute periods, through each month studied. The data included the minimum, median, average, and maximum time observed for each increment and an extract for March 2019.
- They also tie sectioning off sections of the roadway, much like Sound Transit’s data set comparing build Vs no-build times between bus stops.

The data shows that two sections of the roadway in Lake Forest Park (in yellow below), from NE 145th to 153rd NE and from Bothell Way NE and 165th to 41st Ave NE, have the greatest probability of a delay. Building q-bypass lanes in these two sections would address the most likely sections to face extended delays. **This, indeed, illustrates the viability of the bus queue jump alternative.**

The longer transit time is on the 1.6-mile stretch of 145th between 7 and 12 minutes, vs. the 1.3-mile stretch of 522 between 145th and Bothell Way to 41st, which is between 4 and 8 minutes.

Table 9 - Maximum Traffic Time by Road Sections

4 p.m. to 6 p.m.	March, 2023				
Univariate Analysis of Maximum Traffic Time by Road Sections	Median Minutes	Average Minutes	Minimum Minutes	Maximum Minutes	Probability of Occurrence of Max Minutes
I5&145th to 145th&17th	4	4.12	3.00	6.00	4%
145th&17th to Bothell Way	6	5.60	4.00	7.00	8%
All of 145Th	9	9.30	7.00	12.00	15%
145th&Bothell Way to 153rd LFP	3	2.61	2.00	3.00	61%
Bothell & 153rd LFP to 165th LFP	3	2.89	2.00	5.00	2%
165th LFP to 41st	2	1.59	1.00	2.00	54%
All of Bothell WAY LFP	5	5.12	4.00	8.00	10%

These insights, matched with the right engineering solutions, will provide a design that will optimize bus transit time while minimizing disruptions to our community's aesthetics, environment, and quality of life. Whether these solutions involve shorter dedicated BAT Lanes or longer queue-pass lanes doesn't matter.

Using extended queue-pass lanes or shorter BAT lanes on the two sections in yellow and leaving the 12 blocks between 153rd and 165th as is, but with signalized lights would have profound implications. There would be no need to shift the



roadway west; no need to cut down hundreds of trees and haul nearly 100,000 tons of dirt and debris; no need to build extensive, noise-generating, and graffiti-attracting retaining walls; no need to do nine full home condemnations; require far fewer partial property takes and temporary easements; and cost hundreds of millions of dollars less than the current plan.

This lack of a data-driven solution to increasing bus transit speed through Lake Forest Park should not be allowed to continue. Alternative designs should have been studied years ago. Prioritized, targeted engineering solutions based on probabilistic traffic congestion analysis means everyone wins: Sound Transit, Lake Forest Park, transit riders, and taxpayers.

8. Endnotes

¹ <https://kingcounty.gov/~media/depts/elections/how-to-vote/voters-pamphlet/2016/11/201611-local-edition.ashx?la=en>

² 2016 King County General Election Voters Guide, pp. 28-29;47-50. 2016 Vote ST3 Mailer, pp. 2,3

³ https://www.change.org/p/stop-the-deforestation-of-lake-forest-park-from-impacts-from-stride-s3-sr-522-ne-145-brt?utm_source=share_petition&utm_medium=custom_url&recruited_by_id=24efbb60-3e75-11ed-bbf5-c95a6f062c0b

⁴ <http://tinyurl.com/yc7etamn>

⁵ <https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/transportation/lake-forest-park-neighbors-denounce-bus-lane-plan-that-removes-trees/>

⁶ Dec. 2015 map showing full northbound BAT lane in Lake Forest Park -

https://www.soundtransit.org/sites/default/files/ST3_145th_SR522BRT_11252015_11x17.pdf

⁷ 2018 May June Open House Summary Full BAT Lane LFP pg. H4

⁸ June 2020 ST West Shift FAQ Release - <https://www.soundtransit.org/sites/default/files/documents/sr522-brt-west-side-faq>

⁹ See LFP 2008 Legacy 100 Year Vision

(https://www.cityofflp.gov/DocumentCenter/View/362/LFP_LegacyProjectReport_May08_FINAL_PRINT?bidId=) and 2015

Comprehensive Plan Update (https://www.cityofflp.gov/DocumentCenter/View/2578/LFP_Comprehensive-Plan_2015_Vol1?bidId=)

¹⁰ <https://www.soundtransit.org/sites/default/files/documents/StrideBRT-tree-factsheet.pdf>

¹¹ <https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/seattles-growth-is-heating-up-the-region-literally-see-where/>

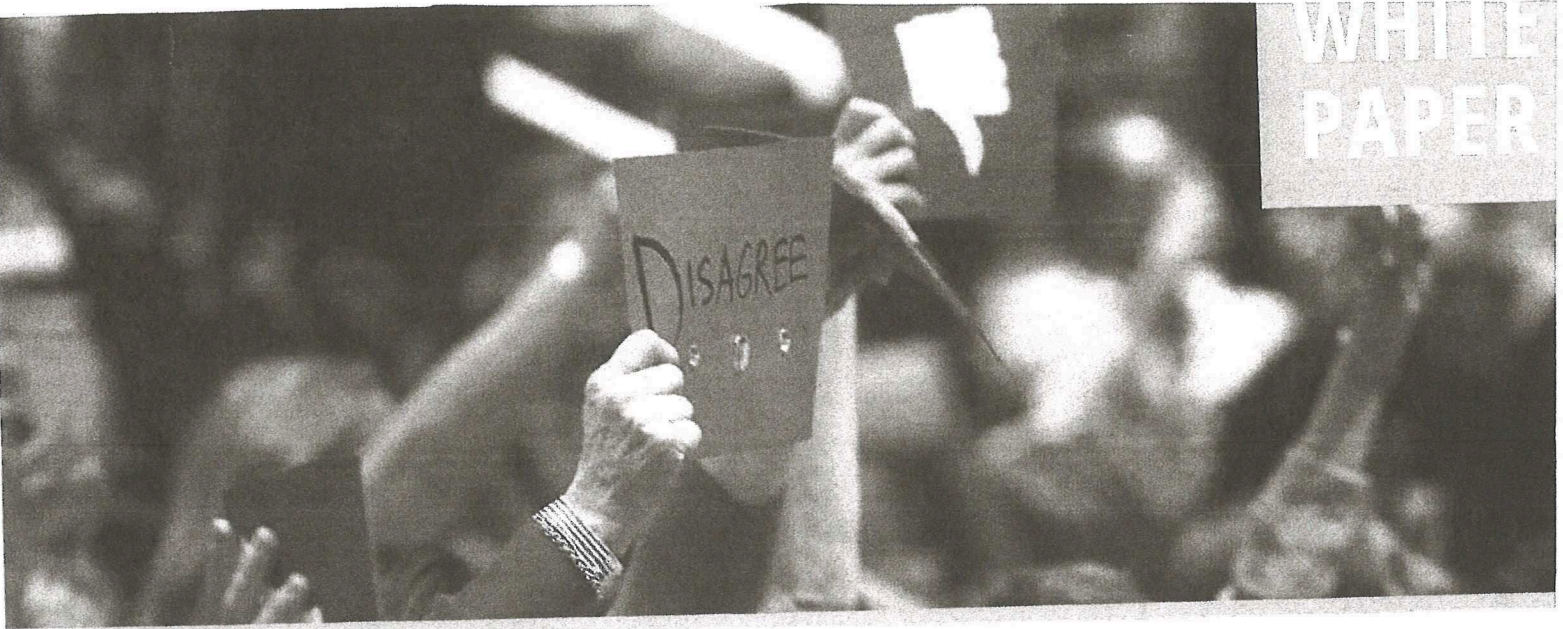
¹² Analysis performed with iTree ECO - [i-Tree Eco \(itreetools.org\)](http://itreetools.org)

¹³ <http://tinyurl.com/ms5yrh6a>

¹⁴ <https://www.soundtransit.org/sites/default/files/documents/stride-program-faq-july-2023.pdf>

¹⁵ <https://www.soundtransit.org/blog/platform/stride-s3-bat-lane-ga>

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