

02/25/2025 Executive Committee Meeting
Written Public Comment Submissions

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Rachel Smith

The letter mentioned in this comment is included at the end of this document.

Dear Sound Transit Board of Directors,

On behalf of the Seattle Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce, Downtown Seattle Association, Commute Seattle, and Transportation Choices Coalition, attached is a letter outlining the key leadership qualities and attributes that we believe are important for Sound Transit's next CEO.

We appreciate the Board's dedication to this process and the weight of this decision. We stand ready to support you in any way we can to ensure a successful outcome that benefits all stakeholders.

Sincerely,

Rachel

Rachel Smith

President and CEO

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Visit our [website](#) for events, business news, advocacy information and jobs, plus - text SEATTLE to 52886 - and never miss an important update from the Chamber.

Stephen Fesler

Dear Boardmembers:

The other week, I provided public comment regarding selection of the new Sound Transit CEO. In that comment, I asked that this board select someone who will be able to balance the various priorities of this agency, keeping top of mind operations and rider experience, not just structural issues and capital expansion. Sound Transit isn't just a construction company after all. But I also noted that this board should not select any current or former boardmember as CEO because doing so would be an extreme violation of basic good governance ethics and necessitate that the state legislature to both dissolve and remove such an appointed CEO. I stand by all of those comments, but I want to speak more directly now that it is publicly known that Mr. Constantine has put his name in for CEO consideration and has made it to the short list. As many of you well know, Mr. Constantine has abused his power as a boardmember over the years. Mr. Constantine has acted improperly and self-servingly behind the scenes and some of his public actions have also been highly inappropriate. The idea that such a person would hold the position of CEO is disturbing.

Ten of 18 boardmembers hold positions on this board precisely because Mr. Constantine appointed them. None of you who were appointed by Mr. Constantine can ethically make a positive appointment and make favourable decisions to such appointment of Mr. Constantine. You are duty bound to rescue yourselves.

Regardless of what individual boardmembers may think an appointment of Mr. Constantine as CEO may do for agency-board relations, the internal result will not be positive. Mr. Constantine has broken trust and will cause further pain and disorder within an institution already reeling from upheaval.

I'm not sure how closely this board follows public commentary around it, but it is absolutely brutal stuff right now. I'd point you just to recent reddit commentary for a flavour.

<https://www.reddit.com/r/Seattle/s/avDr4ZLImQ>

And it's not exactly surprising why: in the last couple years, this board has increasingly damaged public trust by its often questionable and even apparent corrupt actions, all while projects have become excessively delayed and costs have exploded astronomically, often precisely because of board decisions. The very notion that this board could now take the most apparent and clear ethically corrupt action to impose Mr. Constantine as CEO is breathtaking.

I'm not sure you could dream up a more comically corrupt storyline than trying to appoint Mr. Constantine and that's why this is so incredibly dangerous.

Outside of Sound Transit, I would just note that Mr. Constantine has poorly managed his own transit agency, King County Metro. He's let the agency flounder and fall into managed decline (and that might be an overly generous assessment at that), leaving it far worse off than when he started, and he is poised to send it on a funding crisis misadventure of his own making.

In short, this board has no business in considering Mr. Constantine any further. And if it does, this board is imperiling not just the existence of this board but quite frankly this entire agency and the projects voters were promised.

Don't destroy Sound Transit for the sake of one person.

Kind regards,

Stephen A. Fesler

Kyle Comanor

Dear Sound Transit Board Members,

I am deeply alarmed that current board member Constantine has reached the finalist stage of the interview process for the next CEO of Sound Transit. This reeks of backroom deals and cronyism. As I learned in countless trainings in my two decades of public service, the appearance of corruption IS corruption. It's surely too late for you to disqualify this problematic applicant, but you still have the opportunity to correct this lapse. Do so by hiring an outside applicant with no conflicts of interest. Seattle Subway put it best in their letter linked below. Please read it or reread it as the case may be. Your agency needs credibility to function.

Respectfully,
Kyle Comanor
Seattle, WA

<https://www.seattlesubway.org/pressrelease20250217.pdf>

February 24, 2025

Dear Sound Transit Board of Directors,

Sound Transit is at a pivotal moment in delivering its voter-approved Sound Transit 2 and 3 projects. As you undertake the critical task of selecting the agency's next leader, the **Seattle Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce, Downtown Seattle Association, Commute Seattle, and Transportation Choices Coalition** would like to share key leadership qualities and attributes that we believe are important for Sound Transit's next CEO.

Our organizations have long been strong advocates for Sound Transit, and we encourage the Board to ensure that **the CEO selection process is transparent, inclusive, and incorporates meaningful stakeholder input**. It is imperative that the next CEO not only advances Sound Transit's mission but also strengthens relationships with the communities and partners that the agency serves. The next Sound Transit CEO must possess the leadership qualities and experience necessary to:

Foster a Strong Agency Culture

- Champion transparency and meaningful public engagement to build trust and confidence in decision-making and project delivery.
- Embrace a culture of accountability and responsible stewardship of public resources. We emphasize the importance of continuing the agency reforms recommended by the Technical Advisory Group. These reforms are essential to improving efficiency, accountability, and transparency—elements that will be critical for the agency's next leader to champion as they guide Sound Transit into the future.
- Continue to implement the organizational changes and provide strong leadership to the executive team put in place by the interim CEO.
- Work collaboratively with the Board of Directors to facilitate consensus-building and timely decision-making.
- Cultivate a trust-based internal culture that supports employees, encourages innovation, and prioritizes the delivery of world-class transit solutions for the Puget Sound region.

Be an Exceptional Partner

- Build and sustain collaborative, inclusive relationships with key stakeholders, transit agencies, businesses, regional job centers, local governments, developers, labor groups, community organizations, and the riders served by Sound Transit.
- Strengthen agency coordination with interjurisdictional partners to ensure the timely and efficient delivery of Sound Transit's capital projects.

Navigate Challenges and Complexity

- Approach risk management proactively, balancing financial, legal, technical, and operational considerations with community needs and priorities.


- Effectively communicate with the Board and the public about risks, uncertainties, and opportunities while demonstrating a commitment to addressing them with clarity and transparency.
- Provide strategic leadership, thought partnership, and vision in approaching policy, communications, government relations, and problem solving
- Lead with resilience in times of crisis, ensuring transparency with employees, the public, and the Board while applying lessons learned to strengthen agency operations.

Deliver Results for the Region


- Prioritize customer service excellence, striving to make Sound Transit the most customer-focused transit agency in the nation while centering equity, safety, and accessibility in the rider experience.
- Secure and leverage federal, state, and local funding to advance Sound Transit's mission.
- Foster innovation and creativity while ensuring decisions are aligned with regional needs and long-term transportation goals.
- Advance transit-oriented development in collaboration with station-area housing stakeholders, transportation partners, and local communities to maximize the benefits of transit investments.

The selection of Sound Transit's next CEO is a defining moment for the agency and the region. We appreciate the Board's dedication to this process and the weight of this decision. We stand ready to support you in any way we can to ensure a successful outcome that benefits all stakeholders.

Sincerely,



Rachel Smith
President & CEO
Seattle Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce



Jon Scholes
President & CEO
Downtown Seattle Association



Alex Hudson
Executive Director
Commute Seattle



Kirk Hovenkotter
Executive Director
Transportation Choices Coalition