

# 04/24/2025 Board of Directors Meeting

## Written Public Comment Submissions

### Submissions

<b><i>Katrina Hoch</i></b> .....	2
<b><i>Martin Westerman</i></b> .....	3
<b><i>Rachel Ann Hodson</i></b> .....	4
<b><i>Gary Reifel</i></b> .....	5
<b><i>Bill Hirt</i></b> .....	6
<b><i>Robert M Williams</i></b> .....	8
<b><i>Marilyn Kennell</i></b> .....	8
<b><i>Brien Chow</i></b> .....	9
<b><i>Betty Lau</i></b> .....	12
<b><i>Jan Roberts</i></b> .....	14
<b><i>Joe Kunzler</i></b> .....	15
<b><i>MaryKate W. Ryan</i></b> .....	17
<b><i>Scott Belz on behalf of Merlone Geier Partners – The Commons at Federal Way</i></b> .....	17
<b><i>Unnamed Commenter</i></b> .....	18
<b><i>Comments received after the meeting’s comment deadline</i></b> .....	20
<b><i>Unnamed Commenter</i></b> .....	20

## *Katrina Hoch*

Hi. Sorry for the delay. I am pasting my comment below.

I would like for it to be considered at the 4/24 board meeting if there has not been an opportunity to consider it before that.

April 9, 2025

Dear Seattle Board of Directors,

I am a Seattle resident and transit rider. I live in Greenwood, and I anticipate making use of the planned Ballard to West Seattle Lightrail line, to access various parts of the city, to transfer lines to get to the airport, and to transfer to Amtrak for travel to Portland and other cities. I am writing to you specifically about the planning for the Chinatown-International District (CID) station on this new line. I wish to express my very strong support for choosing a station location that is co-located with the existing King Street-Union Station and CID-Lightrail stations with easy pedestrian access to transfers, and that takes into account the concerns of Chinatown residents and preserves this vital cultural center and historic district in our city.

As more people move to the region, our city is choked with traffic, and this decreases all residents' quality of life, increases commute times, harms economic vitality, and degrades air quality. The climate impacts of car travel are undeniable. To reduce all these drawbacks of heavy car traffic, we need to build transit that people will actually use for all their needs. If a multi-block walk is required to change lines, many people will opt to drive or take a taxi or Uber/Lyft instead of using transit. We already have the beginnings of a transit hub at King Street-Union Station and I believe we need to build off of this. It seems to me to be ridiculous to build new CID (north and south) stations that require a 10-15 minute walk to access this hub. I sincerely hope that all members of the Sound Transit Board are transit riders themselves. If any of you are not, I would recommend spending one week taking transit to work and everywhere else that you go. Try to envision what walking for 10-15 minutes when transferring lines does to your day. This is worse if you have mobility challenges or small children or are carrying a suitcase.

I would also like to voice my strong support for choosing a station location option that preserves the historic district of Chinatown. This is a vital cultural center in the city, serving as a place where Chinese-American residents and residents with limited English feel comfortable. At the same time, it provides a destination for shopping, food, and cultural attractions for residents from all over the city, and tourists from all over the world. It is the last Chinatown in the Pacific Northwest. I hope that Sound Transit will work closely with community members and organizations, to ensure that impact on Chinatown residents, businesses and historic areas is minimal. This is important for equity for Chinatown and its residents, and will also benefit all of Seattle by preserving this important cultural part of our city.

Currently I believe that the 4th avenue station option fulfills these criteria best. If another option is considered, such as a variation of the 5th avenue alternative, I believe it must meet these criteria.

Thanks for your consideration,

Katrina Hoch

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Katrina Hoch, PhD, MS, RD

## *Martin Westerman*

Greetings Board Members,

There is a cheaper, lower carbon, faster-build, high-capacity transit (HCT) system that cities worldwide have integrated into their bus, BRT and light rail transit systems. It can be designed to carry more passengers per day, safely & dependably than WSLE (e.g., 24,000-Ankara vs. 5400-WS-SODO).

Contrary to what USDOT light rail opponent turned ST CEO light rail booster Peter Rogoff (and your former chair and now CEO Dow Constantine) told you and the ST region's citizens, a HCT gondola system CAN be integrated into Sound Transit's bus and light rail system. As you know, Sound Transit, and WA state and federal statutes all define gondolas as an HCT mode, suitable as connectors to light rail main lines.

The data proves our point. Gondola systems are competitive vs. light rail and BRT on bases of price, build time, minimal disruption, destruction and carbon footprint during construction, passenger throughput, safety, dependability and O&M cost. Here are examples and a video:

- LaPaz: 36 stations, 19 mile distance, up to 90,000 passengers /day
- Mexico City: 13 stations, 12.3 miles, 45,000 passengers /day
- Medellin: 19 stations, 9 miles, apx. 45,000 passengers /day.
- Ankara: 4 stations, 2 mile distance, apx. 24,000 passengers /day
- Haifa: 6 stations, 2.5 mile distance, 20,000 passengers /day,

Your constituents in 2016 voted to fund better transit through the ST3 package — including \$1.7 billion for a West Seattle-downtown light rail line. Your DEIS and FEIS show light rail will not increase ridership, improve rider experience, or reduce congestion vs. today's Metro bus services. It is your responsibility to inform the public that there are better options available that can deliver what they voted for, years sooner, for 75% less cost.

All the best,

Martin Westerman and Transit Colleagues

[The Surprising Success of Gondola Transit Systems](#)  
[youtu.be](#)

## *Rachel Ann Hodson*

Dear Councilmember Nehring and Sound Transit Board,  
I'm writing to share my personal experience as a daily commuter from Marysville who uses the Lynnwood light rail station. The current system and future planning do not meet the needs of people like me, and I wanted to explain why in detail below. I hope you'll take the time to read it, because these decisions have real effects on working families in Snohomish County.

By the time the light rail finally reaches Everett, it will already be obsolete. People are commuting from Mount Vernon now, and soon they'll be coming from Bellingham. But the system seems designed only for people who already live close to Seattle, not for those of us who've been pushed further north by unaffordable housing.

Right now, Lynnwood Station is full by 8 a.m. almost every day. The parking capacity is already too small for the demand — and the fact that you didn't install digital space indicators in the garage is beyond frustrating. Digital space signs are standard in even the most basic parking structures, and they save commuters huge amounts of time and gas. Instead, drivers waste 10-15 minutes circling around looking for spots that don't exist, only to miss their trains and arrive late. This is a basic feature that should have been included from the start. It's not futuristic — it's common sense.

Planners also seem to expect people to take local feeder buses or bike or walk to the station, as if that's a realistic daily solution. Have you ever stood at a bus stop alone, in the dark and pouring rain at 6 a.m.? Or tried to bike to a station and show up to work soaking wet? This is Washington. It's dark and rainy more than half the year. Telling people to walk or bike, especially for women, parents, and students, shows how disconnected this planning is from the realities of safety, weather, and human lives.

For me, using public transit would turn a normal day into a 14-hour grind: drive to a bus stop, take a bus to the train, ride the train to Seattle, then reverse it — all in the dark, the rain, and without any guarantee of personal security. Or I could just drive and pay for parking downtown and save at least 3 hours. That's the reality for thousands of us, not the "ideal commute" imagined in these plans.

Transit planning should match how people actually live — not how you hope they do.

I urge you to rethink your assumptions about parking, feeder bus safety and frequency, and the lived realities of working people in Snohomish County. And at the very least, start installing digital parking space indicators in garages like Lynnwood immediately. There is no excuse for not including them in the original design, and no good reason not to correct it now.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Rachel Ann Hodson

*Gary Reifel*

Hi ST3+ Dow,

Interested in a meeting to understand current design and station thinking.

Given the shift at the federal level, and build dollars that are unlikely to follow I hope you are strongly considering the long tunnel, no Avalon station design.

This design reduces build expense, and years of construction roadway impacts to Avalon Blvd/35th and the WSEA bridge. You'll also cut the impact to single family homes and businesses in half. It will also decrease commute times from the junction station to/from Downtown. No downside to this design, let's do it!!

Gary Reifel

*Bill Hirt*

Attention: System Expansion Committee,

This post from my blog <http://stopeastlinknow.blogspot.comconcludes> the video of the April 10th System Expansion Committee agenda response exposes why they shouldn't increase funding for West Seattle and Ballard portions of ST3 with Resolution No. R2025-10,

Bill Hirt

Bellevue

The meeting agenda included increasing the budget to advance West Seattle extension from Preliminary Engineering to Final Design Phase from \$270,340,862 to \$331,740,863 and the adopted 2025 budget from \$94,926,236 to \$99,998,561. The Ballard Link budget was increased from \$806,619,999 to \$814,019,999 and the adopted 2025 budget from \$96,298,561 to 99,998,561.

The money funded Project Management Support Services (PMSS) and Engineering Design Support (Eds) for light rail from West Seattle across 2<sup>nd</sup> Duwamish Waterway to SODO and from Ballard through 2<sup>nd</sup> tunnel also to SODO. They were Sound Transit's attempts to reduce the eventual cost of both extensions and were unanimously approved by the System Expansion Committee.

While the funding for Eds to reduce the costs seemed normal, it wasn't clear why the PMSS. However, no one on the committee questioned why the costs had increased nearly \$49 million from the 2025 Sound Transit "Adopted Budget and Financial Plan" they 'd just adopted in March.

One PMSS function could have been reviewing the justification for implementing the light rail extensions from Ballard and West Seattle to SODO. While they had been included in Prop 1 approval, the ST3 costs had increased from \$54 billion in 2016 to \$150 billion, surely merited some review.

The 2024 debut of the Starter Line and Lynnwood extension demonstrated another ST3 problem: access to light rail trains doesn't assure ridership. 70,000 residents live within a mile of Starter Line stations and 80,000 within a mile of the Lynnwood Link stations. Yet, in March only 1238 average inbound and outbound riders rode Starter Line and 6643 riders used Lynnwood stations for access to light rail. Most of the Lynnwood boarders were former bus riders whose routes were terminated at one of the stations.

Thus, any PMSS spending should consider whether riders added by light rail from Ballard to SODO or Alaska Junction in West Seattle to SODO would

justify the cost of boring a second tunnel or second Duwamish Waterway bridge. Especially since both areas already have excellent service from RapidRide, or other King or Snohomish County bus routes. Bus routes have the advantage of having far more stops for access on the route into Seattle with far more convenient stops in the city.

The bottom line is the increasing cost of Ballard and West Seattle light rail to SODO and the lack of Lynnwood Link and Starter Line riders justify the need for a PMSS study of those ST3 projects that could really cut costs. The April 10th System Expansion Committee approval of Resolution No. R2025-10 without it typifies their incompetence.

*Robert M Williams*

***Note: The attachment referenced below can be found at the end of this document.***

Thank you attached please find the in person public comment I will make tomorrow.

Best Regards,

**Robert M Williams**

Regional Manager - Planning and Community Development



**Rainier Valley Community Development Fund**

6951 Martin Luther King Jr. Way South | Suite 225 | Seattle, WA 98118

Direct: 206.722.4001 | Cell: 206.276.0403

[www.rvcdf.org](http://www.rvcdf.org)

**Rainier Valley Community Development Fund acknowledges that we are on the traditional land of the first people of Seattle, the Duwamish People past and present and honor with gratitude the land itself and the Duwamish Tribe.**

*Marilyn Kennell*

**West Seattle community requests a seat at the table. We ask board to grant Rethink the Link, Smarter Transit, and our regional transit experts 20 minutes to present our research on West Seattle Link Extension light rail - with time allotted a follow-up discussion.**

**Marilyn Kennell**

**West Seattle**



## *Brien Chow*

**Sound Transit Board Meeting Public Comment by Brien Chow, April 25, 2024, Union Station, 1:30 p.m.**

I'm Brien Chow, co-founder of Transit Equity for All.

**On April 16, the 43<sup>rd</sup> and the 11<sup>th</sup> Legislative Districts** joined the 37<sup>th</sup> and the 36<sup>th</sup>...

adopting a Resolution to support the 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue South Union Station Transit Hub ...

because it connects the Region while delivering environmental and economic justice to the Chinatown International District.

**The 43<sup>rd</sup> includes...**

**Laurelhurst, South U-District, Southeast Fremont, Montlake, Wallingford, Broadway, South Lake Union, Capitol Hill, Broadmoor, Madison Park, Belltown, Denny Blaine Park, Eastlake, Northwest Lake Washington Boulevard, Alaskan Way, Denny Park, part of Denny Way, and the Downtown core.**

**The 11<sup>th</sup> includes...**

**S. Beacon Hill, S. Rainier Beach, Tukwila, Allentown, Duwamish, Southcenter... Renton... La Rosa Meadows, The Landing, Benson Hill, Fairwood, May Creek, Kenndale, the Highlands Hilltop, and Whitman Court.**

**Total: 4 Legislative Districts... over 50 neighborhoods in 3 cities.**

**That's a supermajority, compared to Dow Constantine and Bruce Harrell.**

I have copies of each Resolution... for you to read and know why the 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue S. Transit Hub and Midtown Madison stations are the best choices...

Thank you.

Brien Chow, Co-Founder Transit Equity for All

***SEE FOLLOWING***

**Written Public Comment by Brien Chow at Sound Transit Board Meeting, Thursday, 4/24/25 at Union Station**

I'm Brien Chow, Co-Founder Transit Equity for All and Chong Wa Benevolent Association for the state of Washington.

**Summary: Advocating for the 4th Avenue Station**

## Introduction

The Sound Transit Board (STB) faces a critical decision in choosing the optimal location for a new light rail station. The 4th Avenue station presents a compelling case, aligning with the *Purpose of Light Rail from the 2022 Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS)* and addressing the region's long-term mobility needs.

This summary outlines the strongest facts to convince you the STB to build the 4th Avenue station, emphasizing compliance with state legislation, promoting equity, securing funding, and maintaining public trust and accountability.

### 1. Compliance with State Legislation

#### Washington State Growth Management Act (Revised Code of Washington 36.70A.108):

- **Mandate:** The act requires long-term regional mobility and multi-modal connectivity for the region's citizens, including transit-dependent residents, low-income people, and communities of color.
- **Alignment:** The 4th Avenue station directly supports these goals by providing a central hub that enhances connectivity and accessibility for diverse communities.

### 2. Promoting Equity and Inclusion

#### Focus on Communities:

- **Transit-Dependent Residents:** The 4th Avenue station would serve all transit-dependent residents, low-income people, and communities of color, aligning with the DEIS goals.
- **Equitable Access:** Asian American and African American workers commute by public transit at nearly four times the rate of white workers. The 4th Avenue station ensures equitable access to transit for these communities.

### 3. Securing Funding

#### Risk of Losing Funding:

- **Compliance:** Adhering to the DEIS and Growth Management Act is crucial for securing state and federal funding. Non-compliance could jeopardize these funds, undermining the project's financial viability.
- **Grants and Programs:** Many grants, and funding programs require adherence to specific guidelines and objectives, including those related to equity and regional connectivity. The 4th Avenue station meets these criteria.

### 4. Public Trust and Accountability

#### Commitment to Community:

- **Public Support:** Building the 4th Avenue station demonstrates a commitment to public trust and accountability. It shows that the STB is dedicated to fulfilling its promises to the community, which is essential for maintaining public support and justifying continued investment in the project.
- **Community Impact:** Positive stories and testimonials from residents who would benefit from the 4th Avenue station highlight its importance for daily commutes and community life.

### 5. Strategic Vision

### **Holistic Approach:**

- **Cohesive Transit System:** Ensuring that the project meets the outlined purpose and need supports a strategic vision for a cohesive and efficient transit system. The 4th Avenue station aligns with this holistic approach, solving regional transit problems and promoting connectivity.

- **Avoiding Disruption:**

*The South and North of CID stations creates a "broken spine" in the regional line, disrupting the continuity and efficiency of the transit system.*

The 4th Avenue station avoids these issues, providing a seamless transit experience.

### **Conclusion**

The Sound Transit Board must prioritize the 4th Avenue station to ensure the project's success, secure necessary funding, and maintain public trust and accountability. This station aligns with the *Purpose of Light Rail from the 2022 DEIS*, promoting equity, enhancing regional connectivity, and supporting a strategic vision for a cohesive transit system. Ignoring these priorities could lead to significant risks, including loss of funding, legal challenges, public backlash, and project delays.

***By choosing the 4th Avenue station, the STB will demonstrate its commitment to solving regional transit problems, promoting equity, and fulfilling its promises to "your community." This decision is vital for the project's credibility and the overall benefit of the "region's residents."***

## Betty Lau

### **Sound Transit Board Meeting Public Comment by Betty Lau, April 24, 2025, 1:30 p.m., Union Station**

Hello, I'm Betty Lau, Transit Equity for All and board member of the Chong Wa Benevolent Association.

Here is little known information for you to consider as you think about "connecting the spine" from Sound Transit consultant firms:

from Consultant VMS Report on N&S and BNSF. Note this report was not brought to the board's or the public's attention as a staff report. Instead, we get an "independent consultant's report" against 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue without consideration of the HNTB and VMS findings on N&S, which now have new names.

From HNTB (Jan. 2023):

- Dearborn St. Station (S of CID) is only an entrance. The platform is actually farther south, at 6<sup>th</sup> and Royal Brougham. [Therefore calling it Dearborn Station is misleading.]
- Out of direction travel and longer trip times, both walking to stations and riding light rail, with extra transfers

From Values Management Strategies (Jan. 2023) about BNSF:

"To the maximum extent possible Sound Transit should try to work through all of BNSF restrictions before the project is solicited and reasonable workable solutions should be adopted which have high probability of success. All parties must clearly understand the BNSF requirements from the beginning. If possible, Sound Transit may consider negotiating with BNSF for them to assign a full-time responsible person to this project (at ST's expense) to help expedite and streamline communication and approvals. Developing and maintaining a good working relationship with the BNSF will be important to advance the project and avoid delays."

Other VMS Comments:

- N of CID (new Midtown James St.) is 2<sup>nd</sup> best  
"Reducing the connectivity between modes to save schedule for a project of this magnitude and duration would need to be carefully considered."

- “The North of CID alternative provides the second-best connectivity and is in the central core of downtown which provides good access to businesses. This alternative does place the station in a very constrained space for construction as well. Making construction difficult and risky given the surrounding structures.”
- “The South of CID alternative does not provide good connectivity between the light rail lines, to the heavy rail corridor, or to a major employment center. It is unclear what the advantage of this location is from a utility standpoint.”

Therefore, S of CID (Dearborn St. Station – with platform at 6<sup>th</sup> and Royal Brougham) doesn’t connect to anything.

VMS continues: “North of CID cut and cover will directly impact 3 buildings which must be demolished:

1. The King County Administrative Building
2. The Crouley Building (currently occupied by the Salvation Army Jefferson Day Care)
3. The Corrections Department – Work Release Building [note: Reynolds Hotel owned by people of color, the Imai Family]

It will indirectly, but significantly, impact 2 other buildings: Seattle City Hall and the King County Chinook Building.

The ownership of these buildings may make this option politically unacceptable.”

Information never before revealed in prior impact charts on Further Studies of 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue:

#### **4th Shallow Refined Draft Conceptual Construction Schedule**

- “The schedule seems to indicate that the parking garages on the east side of 4th Ave. (PMI and Sound Transit) would be closed from July 2025 through November 2030, a period of 5 ½ years. Who is going to pay for lost revenue for PMI? Where are the ST vehicles and other POVs that have been provided parking in the ST garage going to be housed during this period?”

It sure looks like protecting one’s own interests.

And finally:

- Full Street Closures:

- James Street between 3rd and 4th avenues (4 years) (potential)
- Jefferson Street east of 4th Ave and west of Chinook building (6 years)
- Partial Street Closures:
  - East curb lane on 4th Ave between Terrace and James streets (6 years)
  - James Street at the intersection of James Street and 4th Ave (1.5 years)
  - Property acquisitions, displacements, and environmental concerns:
  - Adversely affects four historic properties: KC Administration Building, 420 4th Ave, Hotel Reynolds, and Macrae Parking Garage
  - Potential closure of KC Courthouse south tunnel access
- Full Street Closures: • 6th Avenue S between Seattle Blvd S and Royal Brougham Way S (5-6 years)

*Jan Roberts*

Seattle community requests a seat at the table. We ask board to grant Rethink the Link, Smarter Transit, and our regional transit experts 20 minutes to present our research on West Seattle Link Extension light rail - with time allotted a follow-up discussion.

Jan Roberts  
West Seattle

## Joe Kunzler

Hi there Sound Transit Board and board Admin;

Mr. Go Sound Transit here. Say listen I'd like to cut a ribbon for RedmondLink with some special people please. This is the first round of ST3, and I helped muscle that in. I've also helped defend both Sound Transit AND Redmond from Tsimmerman, and still am.

OK, the dream team:

- Redmond President Kritzer, the hero who's brought a golden age to Redmond that is healing the region and a little bit, the world.  
I think a certain Donny could learn something. I know I have.
- Redmond VP Forsythe, who's been the best backup Redmond could ever have
- Redmond ST Boardmember Birney, so we can heal and to recognize her contributions to fighting Tsimmerman/anti-Semitism
- Dow Constantine for blatantly obvious reasons
- Claudia Badassuchi who has done so, so much for Sound Transit
- Heidi Wills, who gave a life of public service defending public transit, and her last political act led the charge to stop Tim Eyman
- As many rank & file Sound Transit employees - and Board Admin staff count - as you can cram into cutting that ribbon - I give a DAMN for the modern day miracle workers!

I'm just asking for one ribbon please. I think it's only right it's RedmondLink - the beginning of ST3 service, not just hot air which I'm VERY capable of delivering. Remember: The "Go Sound Transit" cheer started in hearings to get ST3 approved. :-)

Took me several days to find the words to inquire kindly, I'm not exactly a "me" person. Meanwhile, I have several community crises to tend to and my family. But I want MY championship moment with the team that is going to END the hate we have all had to suffer through, a hate I got introduced to when ST3 needed final passage...

ESPECIALLY as:

a) I was not able to attend the ST3 Victory Party as I had a Skagit Transit Community Advisory Committee at the time, and wanted to be Chair. I was passed over and arguably robbed as that person hired was an employee at the time and eventually became ineligible. So this is a way to make it right :-)

b) This is only right 100% IN MY HUMBLE OPINION AND AS A LOYAL WINGMAN for President Kritzer, also the first Jewish President of Redmond. A President whose term will again 100% my opinion be defined by climate action, community building, and, yes, waging the Tsimmerman Wars with equal parts clarity, cunning and decency. With a "city business" defense that can and does end hate speech in public meetings.

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I will add here that with our Sound Transit 12s humble help, we can foresee in June a conclusion when Tsimerman gets the mental health care, not just he but we the Sound Transit region needs. Tsimerman is currently facing a June competency hearing as per King County District Court **3A853551-BEDBVUCNKCX**.

I want to be clear to the Sound Transit Board, but especially Boardmembers Badassuchi, Strauss and Zailhay plus CEO Constantine: I am NOT advocating Tsimerman get mental health help for Tsimerman, I am waging and inviting every Sound Transit 12 to join my own little ST3.5 campaign so Tsimerman never again terrorizes the Eastside, Sound Transit Board, the Seattle Port Commissioners or any other public servant. Also to stop the 2,000 pound rolling black Mercedes grenade aimed at every single pedestrian, but especially the Sound Transit 12s. Enough is enough.

I'm sure the King County District Court would like to hear from YOU, too. That's my ask. It's going to take ALL OF US. This President of Redmond and her colleagues did their job... the Board Administration team continues to do their job... so we can do OURS.

Why and what is our job? I quote to you Mallory McMorrow from Hate Won't Win;

"We're all taught that bullies just want attention and the best thing to do is leave them alone. But if that were true, none of this would be happening right now: the attacks on trans kids and gay kids; the riling up over critical race theory and the lie that graduate-level racial theories had infiltrated every lesson in every school, to whitewash history and not acknowledge that racism exists; the demonization of immigrants and the disabled and the backsliding of women's rights. We wouldn't see rampant demonization of each other—our neighbors—not as people with different political views but as enemies to be destroyed. ... What if this kept happening not because we refused to give bullies attention, but because we had refused to stop them? Michelle Obama famously told us, "When they go low, we go high." Too many people mistook her words to mean that when they go low, we stay silent. It was time to break the silence."

On that note, I wish you a good and productive meeting today. I hope for peace through moral strength. I hope this President of Redmond knows I got her back. She's got my Jewish relative's back, Redmond's collective backs, and the Sound Transit 12s' backs. Thanks for hearing me out.

GO SOUND TRANSIT;  
Joe A. Kunzler



*MaryKate W. Ryan*

Dear Sound Transit Board,

In 2022, the comment period for the West Seattle Ballard Link Extension DEIS was extended to 90 days to recognize the complexity of this project but also the challenges of engaging some sectors of Seattle's communities.

**Today, we are asking the Board to advocate for *at least* a 90-day comment period for the forthcoming Ballard Link Extension DEIS.** Additionally, we ask that translated materials be provided at the outset of this comment period, along with resources for language access throughout the process.

Thank you for your time,

MaryKate W. Ryan (all pronouns)

Preservation Planner

historicsouthdowntown.org

603.219.4081

*Mailing address change:*

*Hing Hay Coworks, 409 Maynard Ave S*

*PMB 103\*, Seattle, WA 98104*

*\*Note address change as of Jan 2025*

*Scott Belz on behalf of Merlone Geier Partners – The Commons  
at Federal Way*

***Note: The attachment referenced below can be found at the end of this document.***

Hi,

Please find attached our public comment for the ST Board Meeting today related to the OMF South Project.

Thanks,

Scott Belz

Development Associate

**MerloneGeier**  
**Partners**

4365 Executive Drive  
Suite 1400  
San Diego, CA 92121

**Tel:** 858 / 259 / 9909 ext 322

**Cell:** 949 / 701 / 6543

**Fax:** 858 / 259 / 8886

[www.MerloneGeier.com](http://www.MerloneGeier.com)

## Unnamed Commenter

Sound Transit Board Meeting Comments,

I'm writing to you today to ask that your decisions keep promises that Sound Transit 3 made to the region's voters in 2016. Sound Transit 3 was approved by nearly 70% of Seattle voters and 58% of King County voters, promised to expand the existing multimodal transit hub in the Chinatown/International District (CID) with a second Link station, and promised to add a new Midtown station, serving First Hill. It is vital that the Sound Transit Board follow through on the voter-approved plan. A late-breaking alternative proposal intends to squander the potential of a world-class transit hub near Union Station and — once again — skip First Hill entirely. Do not let it succeed.

So much transit connectivity is contingent on having the Ballard-to-Tacoma line connect directly with the existing CID Station along with the Sounder, Amtrak station, regional buses, and the streetcar line next door. With the 4th Avenue in CID alternative being built, CID is the most important hub in the Sound Transit 3 network, which is projected to carry 600,000 daily riders by the 2040s.

Sound Transit is building a second downtown Seattle light rail tunnel because the existing tunnel can't handle all the traffic that three light rail lines would entail. Adding the second tunnel also allows the agency to add a station at Midtown, on the edge of First Hill with a high quality connection via the RapidRide G Line set to open bus rapid transit service in 2024. This Midtown Station is projected to attract more than 15,000 daily riders which would be the most of any non-hub station in Sound Transit 3.

A coalition has emerged behind a "North of CID and South of CID" option that pairs a Pioneer Square / Jail Station with another station that is a five-minute walk south of Uwajimaya Asian Market. These stations are not in CID. The "South of CID" station might be better described as "Freeway Interchange Station" being hemmed in by I-90 to the south, I-5 to the east, and a highway-like section of 4th Avenue and a BNSF rail yard to the west. The opposition to 4th Avenue in CID argues that the Freeway Interchange Station and the Pioneer Square Jail Station would provide comparable transit service. But for future light rail riders, that is patently false.

Here's why transit would be worse under the "North of CID and South of CID" alternative:

1. Breaking the CID's direct light rail connection to the South End is a big deal. People in the South End would have a worse connection to the CID than they have now because their trains would no longer go to Chinatown Station, but instead to Jail Station or Freeway Interchange Station. Because Asian communities are increasingly spread out across the region, that connection is vital for the CID to play the role of the cultural hub of the community in a future that will be more transit-dependent and less auto-dependent. Likewise for people living in the CID a hub station provides a link to relatives and friends living elsewhere and to the airport. The lack of a high quality transfer at CID Station would mean significant delays in the 10-minute range for many trips (e.g. Rainier Beach to CID). Transportation departments would never tolerate such delays if planning car infrastructure.

2. A good anti-displacement strategy is key and will allow additional light rail to be additive rather than destructive to Chinatown and the CID community. The opposition to the transit hub in CID makes counterfactual assertions that "displacement" would be a non-issue having two lines in a neighborhood, plus another next door, yet three lines in a neighborhood equates to total neighborhood displacement. Most of the low-income residents in the CID already live in affordable housing that is rent-restricted and the neighborhood has special affordable housing development providers, and a special development review board that has the ability to greatly limit real estate speculation within the CID. Lots of housing is going in as is, but a large chunk of it is affordable.

3. Stopping cultural displacement in the CID is going to take multiple strategies and blocking a light rail station could backfire. Commercial rent control, affordable housing investments,

residential rent stabilization, and support for culturally-relevant small businesses and entrepreneurs seems key to an anti-gentrification strategy rather than hampering transit access. Good transit access and a bustling transit hub at the heart of the neighborhood is only going to help CID small businesses thrive. We urge the board to support a robust mitigation strategy and ensure small businesses and residents weather the disruption of station construction.

4. The duration of construction and engineering risk with 4th Avenue S is a tradeoff, but also provides an opportunity to upgrade all of the aging and deteriorating bridges and viaducts in the area in one fell swoop. For instance, the 2nd Avenue S Extension bridge is rated poor and is going to need to be replaced soon, which will impact the 4th Avenue S and S Jackson Street intersection since it's structurally integrated into it. Avoiding a station at 4th Avenue S does not avoid interruptions caused by such needed bridge rebuilds. Bundling these projects together minimizes overall construction impacts and also provides an opportunity to redesign the unsafe mini-surface highway that is 4th Avenue S.

5. Equitable transit-oriented development (eTOD) opportunities exist with the County Campus and County-leased Salvation Army site whether or not light rail is placed directly on them. The County campus is already next door to Pioneer Square Station. The County should use its campus to add mixed-income housing despite it being bad for light rail. The "South of CID" site is bad for housing since it's sandwiched against the enormous I-90/I-5 interchange with no walkshed to the west, south, or east. Buying this property at great cost would be great for the wealthy, well-connected developer who currently owns it, but is a bad move for the County and Sound Transit. It appears these two sites are proposed because they are convenient for the County to offload, not because they make sense for transit or provide new TOD opportunities that wouldn't already exist.

Over 4,000 individuals and organizations have already called for Sound Transit Board action to: build the 4th Avenue CID station, fulfilling its potential as the site of a truly world-class multi-modal transit hub; and build Midtown station (see: [change.org/moveforwardon4th](https://change.org/moveforwardon4th)). To our elected representatives on the Sound Transit Board, please build the 4th Avenue station in the CID that will best serve decades of transit riders from across the Puget Sound region, and please build the Midtown Station that will best connect First Hill and serve 15,000 daily riders.

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## *Comments received after the meeting's comment deadline*

### *Unnamed Commenter*

Hello,

Seattle has a metro system that is a fully functional transportation system and it's great! There is no reason to bring a train to West Seattle. There is no need to go forward with the West Seattle extension and spend billions to do so. Also it brings so much damage our neighborhood community and vital environmental systems like salmon in Longfellow creek.

- Negative Impact on Transit

Times and Ridership:

WSLE will degrade transit service, increasing travel times and requiring multiple transfers, which will negatively impact rider experience and reduce ridership efficiency.

- High Carbon Emissions from Construction:

The construction of WSLE will generate significant carbon emissions (140,952 metric tons), which will take decades to mitigate, making it environmentally unsustainable.

- Destruction of Forest and Habitat:

WSLE will eliminate acres of forest and habitat, causing irreparable environmental damage and exacerbating urban heat islands, particularly affecting low-income and minority communities.

- Economic and Social Setbacks:

The project will set back economic development, equity, and community-building efforts in West Seattle and the Chinatown-International District for at least a decade.

- High Costs and Financial Burden:

The estimated cost of \$7+ billion for WSLE is exorbitant, making it one of the world's most expensive urban rail projects, with questionable financial sustainability.

- Displacement of Businesses and Residents:

WSLE will displace over 100 houses and apartments and at least 70 businesses, leading to job losses and further economic disruption in affected communities.

- Lack of Voter Awareness and Misinformation:

Many voters were unaware of the significant negative impacts of WSLE when they approved ST3 in 2016, including environmental damage and increased costs.

- Inefficiency Compared to Current Transit Modes:

Current bus and rapid transit services are more efficient, carrying more passengers with lower carbon footprints and fewer environmental impacts than the proposed light rail.

- Legal and Responsible No Build Option:

The Sound Transit Board has the authority to choose the No Build option, which is a legitimate and responsible choice under federal and state law and would avoid the negative impacts of WSLE.

- Better Alternatives Available:

Lower carbon, less expensive, and less destructive public transit options, such as bus lane expansions and electrification of the bus fleet, are available and could serve West Seattle riders more effectively than WSLE. Sent from my iPhone

Robert Williams - Regional Manager-Planning & Community Development  
Rainier Valley Community Development

Paul Pitkin – Director of Fund Development – Rainier Valley Community  
Development Fund

As I'm sure the board/committee members know, the Sound Transit has spent the last three decades connecting and transforming communities across the Puget Sound. Through the construction and expansion of the Light Rail, Sound Transit has furthered transit-oriented development, affordable housing, community spaces, and regional growth. The Link Light Rail system benefits the communities it connects greatly, but its extension also introduces certain impacts. Major construction projects, while they provide incredible opportunities for development, also inevitably disrupt local businesses, organizations, and residences.

The Light Rail system is the catalyst of our work at the Rainier Valley Community Development Fund (The Fund) in Southeast Seattle. The Fund was founded in the late 1990s in direct response to the Light Rail's expansion into Rainier Valley. The Fund has worked for over 25 years to provide mission-driven lending to small businesses and organizations in transit-affected corridors. Since 2000, we have worked with Sound Transit, the City of Seattle, and King County to provide mitigation and loan funding to those impacted by Light Rail extension projects. These partnerships have been crucial in providing necessary community support.

As the West Seattle and Ballard Link Extensions move forward, we would like to work with Sound Transit and The City of Seattle to be a resource. We would like to ensure a well-informed, engaged community, and offer our services to anyone impacted by these construction projects. As we move forward, we can provide you with more specifics and information about our background, and our experience in helping small businesses, organizations, and residences in the greater Seattle area. Thank you for your time.

April 24, 2025

VIA EMAIL

Board of Directors  
Sound Transit

RE: OMF South Project - Notification of Board Action

Dear Board Members,

MGP XI COMMONS FW, LLC ("MGP"), is the owner of The Commons at Federal Way, a fully operational mall in Federal Way, WA. We have been informed that two of the mall parcels, located at 2201 S Commons, 2300 S 324<sup>th</sup> St., Federal Way, WA 98003, have been identified as being directly impacted by the new OMF South project (Sound Transit ROW No.: OMF098, OMF099). We are writing to share our concerns regarding the project's potential effects on the property, our tenants, and overall operations.

The Commons at Federal Way is occupied by numerous tenants, many of whom have leasehold rights that include designated no-build zones within the parking areas. The proposed project encroaches on these areas, which could result in significant operational and financial disruptions for both our tenants and the center as a whole. We have communicated these property rights that must be taken into account in the planning and execution of the next phase of Sound Transits project that will impact our property.

Additionally, we would like to express our ongoing concerns based on our recent experience during Sound Transit's prior expansion work. The previous phase has caused prolonged disruption and was marked by delayed completion and limited communication. Upon the expiration of the temporary construction easement, the property was returned in unsatisfactory condition that did not meet the obligations or commitments made by Sound Transit - landscaping had not been restored, paving and striping were incomplete, and lighting issues remained unresolved. To date, these matters have yet to be fully addressed, further impacting center operations.

Given this context, we strongly urge Sound Transit to ensure that the OMF South project is managed with improved transparency, timeliness, and accountability to minimize disruption to the mall while at the same time using the up-front planning period to daylight any and all operational and leasehold control impacts that will result from the OMF South Project scope of work.

We appreciate your attention to these concerns and look forward to a more collaborative and responsive process as the project advances.

Thank you,



Scott Belz  
Merlone Geier Partners

Cc: Jamas Gwilliam, Merlone Geier Partners  
Charles Sullivan, Merlone Geier Partners