

07/24/2025 Board of Directors Meeting Written Public Comment Submissions

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Betty Lau

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

I am Betty Lau, co-founder of Transit Equity for All. And I mean ALL.

I watched a Candidates Forum on Disability Issues was held on July 14 at El Centro de la Raza (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HuDXut3yxbU>).

We want stations designed with accessibility in mind, not as an afterthought.

It should be obvious by now that the North and South of CID preferred alternatives aren't going to work for those with disabilities and seniors with age related conditions:

North of CID in the Downtown segment, the only option for Japantown, has 12-minute walks to other transit modes and major destinations, deep shafts on steep streets, out-of-direction travel, longer trip times, extra transfers (HNTB Jan. 2023); while South of CID doesn't connect to anything (VMS Nov. 7, 2023).

The 4th Avenue viaduct needs replacing. Doing so in conjunction with construction of the 4th Avenue station would be one and done.

Running the 1 Line to Seattle Paine Field and Boeing will take out the Latinx community on Casino Road.

Building North of CID will demolish the Japanese American family-owned Reynolds Hotel, serving mostly Indigenous people in a work release program.

Building the Fife route next to low-income Korean American senior housing introduces noise and track crossing dangers.

By-passing the CID with North and South of CID stations breaks the promise of increased foot traffic, tourism, opportunities and economic benefits.

Continuous harm to communities of color is not "continuous improvement."
Move Forward on 4th; Stay off 5th!

Thank you.

Brien Chow

ritten Sound Transit Board Meeting Public Comment by Brien Chow, July 24, 2025, Union Station, 1:30 p.m.

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

☒ **Why 4th Avenue Station Is the Only Smart, Future-Proof Transit Investment**

Backed by facts. Grounded in data. Built for people.

Seattle has a once-in-a-generation opportunity to create a truly **world-class regional transit hub**—but only if **Sound Transit chooses 4th Avenue Station**. This location isn’t just better; it’s the **only** location where everything and everyone connects.

New Cascade Line: The Game-Changer for Seattle Transit

FACT: Starting in **2026**, Amtrak’s new **Airo trains** will transform intercity travel across the Pacific Northwest.

Key Features:

- Service to **Portland, Vancouver BC, Bellingham, and Eugene**
 - **Faster, cleaner, and more frequent** trains
 - Over **800,000 passengers** already use King Street Station each year—numbers expected to grow dramatically
 - **King Street Station** remains the primary intercity rail hub
- **Located just 1 block from the proposed 4th Ave Station**









[!\[\]\(870f5d5e9c0d57485634be3ecf52f3ca_img.jpg\) \[Amtrak Airo Launch Announcement \(2023\)\]](#)

[!\[\]\(4fe57c3593bf1b21d272ae7ac8dfaf77_img.jpg\) \[Sound Transit DEIS, March 2022 – See Station Diagrams, ES-5 and Chapter 2\]](#)

4th Ave = Seattle’s Only True Multimodal Super Hub

No other location offers full integration with **every major transportation mode**:

Mode	4th Ave Station	North CID	South CID
Amtrak Cascades	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1 block away	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 5–6 blocks	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 0.5 miles + Elemental trek
Sounder Commuter Rail	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Direct access	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No connection	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Far + elevation change
Link Light Rail (1 Line)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Seamless transfer	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ⚠ Disjointed	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Requires multiple elevators

Ballard–Tacoma Future Line	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Planned hub	 Requires walking transfers	 No direct connection
Buses (Metro, BoltBus, Greyhound, FlixBus)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> On-site or 1 block	 Requires walk	 Indirect or limited access
ADA Access	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Street-level or single elevator	 Multi-elevator + longer distance	 Elemental trek, multiple elevators
Federal Grant Strength	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> High (multimodal priority)	 Moderate	 Weak/disconnected

Reference:

- Sound Transit DEIS – Station Diagrams and Accessibility Assessments
- PSRC Regional Transit Integration Study
- Google Maps walking distance and elevation data

North CID: A Failed Midtown Replacement

The original **Midtown Station** at **Madison Street** was selected for its proximity to:

- Dense residential and business districts
- Major hospitals (Virginia Mason, Swedish Medical Center, Harborview)
- Easy transfers between Link lines

But North CID Fails to Deliver:

- Located 0.4 miles south of Madison Street Midtown Station (closer to Pioneer Square)
- Long uphill walks and confusing transfers
- No connection to Sounder or Amtrak
- Difficult for elderly and disabled riders

Reference:

- Sound Transit Midtown Station planning documents
- First Hill Access Needs Studies
- ADA and walkability analysis from DEIS + field measurements

South CID: Expensive and Disconnected

The South CID proposal (Dearborn & 6th Ave S):

- Adds **\$500 million+** in extra construction costs
- Passenger platform located **outside the district** —0.5 miles from all major transit

- Requires **2–3 elevators** and indirect walking routes
- Destroys parts of **Chinatown’s historic fabric**
- Functions more like a **park-and-ride** than a community connector

Reference:

- Sound Transit Community Advisory Group (March 2023)
- The Urbanist: “South CID Option a Step Backward” (Feb 2023)
- Site topography + pedestrian infrastructure analysis

The Big Disconnect - “The Broken Spine”: A National Transit Planning Blunder

Seattle’s Link system was built around a **high-frequency “spine”** connecting the region north-to-south. Splitting it between two disjointed CID stations:

- Destroys seamless travel
- Forces long transfers for riders
- Reduces hospital and essential service access
- Undermines billions in ST2/ST3 investments
- Risks federal funding and future rider growth

National Case Studies:

- **BART San Jose extension** plagued by poor transfers
- **LA Metro** widely criticized for broken connections at Wilshire/Vermont

Urban planning experts agree disjointed transfers reduce ridership and harm accessibility.

Source: Transit Center, APTA studies, transportation grad-level planning texts

The Smart, Proven Solution: 4th Ave Station

The 4th Avenue option (CID-1a “Shallow”) is Sound Transit’s one opportunity to:

- Build a **fully integrated transit hub**
- Prioritize **ADA accessibility**
- Leverage **federal grant criteria** for multimodal investments
- Enhance—not disrupt—the historic Chinatown-International District
- Support **working families, seniors, persons with disabilities and travelers** across the region

*This is our **Grand Central moment**. Let’s not waste it.*

Bottom Line

Factor	4th Ave	North CID	South CID
Integration	☑ Complete hub	✗ Disjointed	✗ None
ADA Access	☑ Easy, flat	⚠ Multi-elevator	✗ Overlapping challenges
Cost	☑ Baseline	⚠ Moderate increase	✗ +\$500M
Location Strength	☑ 1 block from Amtrak	✗ 4–6 blocks	✗ Far + unsafe
Federal Grant Likelihood	☑ Strong	⚠ Weak	✗ Weak
Community Benefit	☑ Strengthens CID	✗ Ignores Midtown	✗ Damages Chinatown

Final Word: Don't Break the Spine

Sound Transit cannot afford a transit failure that will be studied for decades as... **what not to do.**

**“How Seattle broke its transit system on purpose...
and paid billions to do it.”**

Build the Legacy... Not the Mistake.

- ***Build the 4th Avenue Station***
 - ***Don't waste money on South CID***
 - ***Don't settle for a false Midtown in North CID***
 - ***Don't break the spine***

Move Forward on 4th! ...and Stay Off 5th!

Brien Chow
Co-Founder
Transit Equity for All

chowbw@gmail.com, 206-853-5883

GO TO FOR INFORMATION... linktr.ee/TransitEquityforAll [MFo4th](#)

Public Comment by Brien Chow at Sound Transit System Expansion Committee Meeting, Thursday, 7/24/25 at Union Station, 1:30 p.m.

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

Choose the 4th Avenue Station...the only option that works for all, with a 5-minute walk to other transit modes!

It unifies...

Amtrak's new Cascade Line... Sounder... Link light rail... and regional buses... with the highest ADA access and convenience.

North of CID is not Midtown...

being 4–6 blocks away from hospitals and key cultural centers.

And South of CID?

...isolated, disconnected, and adds \$500 million in costs.

North and South of CID... the Big Disconnect...

known as The Broken Spine.

An error future generations can't fix.

Don't create a transit failure that will be a case study in...

"what not to do."

Move Forward on 4th! ...and Stay Off 5th!

Thank you.

FOR MORE INFORMATION: linktr.ee/TransitEquityforAll MFo4th

MaryKate Ryan on behalf of Historic South Downtown

Note: This comment can be found at the end of the document.

Please see attached. Thank you.

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*

Kristina Sawyckyj

King County Council Members

My name is Kristina Sawyckyj, and I am a homeless veteran and long-term King County resident since 2014. I am also a power wheelchair user due to a spinal cord injury sustained during active duty. My mobility device is not a convenience—it is my lifeline. It weighs nearly 500 pounds and without it, I am immobile and highly vulnerable.

Over the years, I have endured multiple harrowing and unacceptable experiences involving Sound Transit services and emergency response agencies that have highlighted serious, repeated failures in accessibility, emergency preparedness, and disability inclusion. I am compelled to bring these incidents forward not only for myself, but to help prevent further trauma or endangerment for other individuals with disabilities.

1. Light Rail Incident (2016–2017) – MLK Strip

While riding the Link Light Rail, the train struck an individual between stations. All other riders were evacuated. However, I was left behind—stranded above the deceased individual for over **three hours** because neither Sound Transit nor Seattle Fire Department had any equipment or procedure to remove a wheelchair user between stations. I was finally released only after the train reversed back to Mt. Baker Station.

2. Sounder Train Breakdown – Abandonment Threat

During a Sounder train breakdown, a replacement train pulled up beside us. BNSF personnel informed me that Sound Transit had no bridge or boarding solution for me to cross between the trains. They were initially instructed to **leave me behind**, despite extreme weather and safety concerns. Thankfully, BNSF staff and fellow passengers risked their safety to lift me and my power wheelchair—again, weighing almost 500 lbs—onto the next train. This should never have happened.

3. Mountlake Terrace Station – Power Outage

I was dropped off at Mountlake Terrace Freeway Station during a power outage. The elevator was out of service, and I was stranded in an exposed area with **no shelter, freezing temperatures, and wind and rain**. Emergency phones and walkie-talkies failed to summon an appropriate response. Eventually, it was a **Community Transit** maintenance vehicle—not Metro, not Sound Transit, not the fire department—that found me and escalated the issue to dispatch. I was rescued after nearly **two hours in dangerous conditions**.

4. Ongoing Emergency Planning Failures

This is not just about my experience. **A wheelchair user was recently left on a light rail train again just two weeks ago**. I have repeatedly raised concerns in my role as a 10-year member of the Sound Transit Citizen Accessibility Advisory Committee (CAAC). I have also raised the issue of **no emergency evacuation plan for wheelchair users on the Light Rail portion of the 520 Bridge**.

There is no consistent or inclusive emergency response protocol for transit passengers with mobility disabilities. There are:

- **No strategic evacuation plans for major infrastructure segments.**
- **No backup or bridge equipment for safe transfers.**
- **No reunification policy or procedure for critical mobility devices.**
- **No interagency coordination protocols with emergency services.**

My power wheelchair cost over **\$47,000 in taxpayer funds** and is the only way I can navigate life. If an emergency requires my removal without it, **there is currently no guaranteed way for me to regain it**—leaving me functionally paralyzed and dependent on others.

My Requests:

1. **Immediate adoption of emergency evacuation protocols** that specifically address disabled passengers, including those using heavy or complex mobility devices.
2. **Procurement of emergency ramps, lift boards, and power equipment** for fire departments and transit personnel, especially for between-station evacuation and train-to-train transfers.

3. **Cross-agency training and agreements** between Sound Transit, Metro, Community Transit, Seattle Fire, South Snohomish Fire, and King County EMS for inclusive emergency procedures.
4. **A documented reunification policy** for wheelchair users separated from mobility devices during emergencies.
5. **Transparent public reporting** of all incidents involving stranded disabled riders and the corrective actions taken.

We cannot continue to build or operate public infrastructure that excludes those most dependent on it. Our system fails every time a wheelchair user is left behind, put in danger, or forced to rely on chance or the kindness of strangers for basic safety.

As a disabled veteran and longtime advocate for accessibility, I urge you to take immediate and concrete steps toward inclusive, trauma-informed transit and emergency response planning.

Sincerely,

Kristina Sawyckyj

Homeless Veteran | Power Wheelchair User | Disability Advocate

Sound Transit CAAC Member (10 years)

Slachxizaŋ malgakuŋ

Comments received after the meeting's comment deadline

Francis James Shea

Hello, I'm sending this email as a statement of support for the transit Equity For All group, which is lobbying to ensure that a planned future station should be located at the Fourth Avenue transit hub as opposed to Fifth Avenue. Voters approved the Fourth Avenue site in 2016 and they should be the ones to have the last say in this matter . There are a large number of elderly and invalid people living in CID Chinatown international District who naturally prefer the most convenient site related to their normal activities, which is clearly the Fourth Avenue site. As someone who is afflicted with Parkinson's Disease, I am well acquainted with some of the difficulties involved with public transportation. Each step can be challenging and even dangerous. Crossing a big street can be a challenge. The least we can do is to provide the most accommodating and convenient solution by selecting the site on Fourth Avenue. Thank you for your consideration.

Yours truly,

Francis James Shea



24 July 2025

Good afternoon, Sound Transit Board,

While we face a lot of uncertainty, at both the state and federal levels, **I am asking the Sound Transit Board and leadership to publicly commit to fighting for a 90 day comment period for the forthcoming updated Ballard Link Extension Draft Environmental Impact Statement.**

Federal law requires that a draft EIS be open for public comment for 45 days. In 2022, Sound Transit & FTA determined that for the largest transit expansion project in Seattle's history, it was appropriate to have comments open for 90 days. If you were on the Board then, do you recall how much time you and your staff put into understanding the project and its impacts?

I worked within only one segment of the project. It took me a month to read and understand just the implications of the CID segment on land use, environmental processes, social and economic impacts. Historic South Downtown spent another month doing outreach. Many people fear they must understand this technical document, which may be in a different language from the one they speak daily, to be allowed to share their questions and concerns.

We want adequate time to make sure our communities have a chance to be heard. We want time for our neighbors to be able to ask Sound Transit staff their questions, in their own language, and be answered. We want board members to be able to ask THEIR questions and receive thorough answers before we make a 100 year commitment to our transit system, so that it still works in two generations.

We are asking you to commit to fighting for a 90-day comment period, to tell FTA why we need it, and why it is important to the sustainability of the neighborhoods this transit project will serve.

Sincerely,

MaryKate Ryan, Preservation Planner

Historic South Downtown