

10/23/2025 Board of Directors Meeting Written Public Comment Submissions

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Paul Sweum

Note: The attachment referenced in this comment can be found at the end of this document.

Please see my attached PDF as a comment letter for today's ST Board meeting at 1:30PM, regarding Resolution R2025-28

Thank you for your time and consideration.

"Be kind, for everyone you meet is fighting a battle you know nothing about." -Wendy Mass

Paul R. Sweum,
Designer & Fabricator

AZWAglassworks

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Joe A. Kunzler

22 October 2025

Hi there Sound Transit;

Joe Kunzler here. I want to get ahead of what I've seen in previous years well in advance. I'm asking that Sound Transit PLEASE refrain from asking for increased WSDOT grant eligibility next legislative session and resolve its ST3 financial gap in other ways.

Why? Because WSDOT grants are a key part of many local transit's budgets, such as Skagit Transit. For Skagit Transit, that's 29% of operations. If another hand was to go into the same sized piggy bank, it's a *cut* for the transits who depend on those funds.

For the Sound Transit pod, I submit that for Everett Transit and Pierce Transit this would be very problematic for those smaller transits, also with electorates reluctant to approve tax increases for local services - not just transit. I hope those Boardmembers for Everett and Pierce County *please* speak up.

No other transit has the revenue tools that Sound Transit has. No other transit went to voters with a specific pricetag in the Billions promised in 2016 to deliver services in future decades. No other transit in Washington State has the resources that Sound Transit has, but each transit - and yes, now Sound Transit also - has to worry about providing very expensive and very necessary paratransit services.

Just want to get ahead of this. Maybe have instead a proposal that *grows* the WSDOT transit grant jar and allows for the same revenue tools that Sound Transit has currently.

The fact that there has been minimal public records on how Sound Transit comes up with a legislative agenda is also concerning. But that's me and thank you for hearing me out.

Go Sound Transit;

Joe A. Kunzler
growlernoise@gmail.com

Joe Kunzler here, about to go to the ADL Symposium in a secret location so I decided to snap some photos of Westlake Station like she is today.

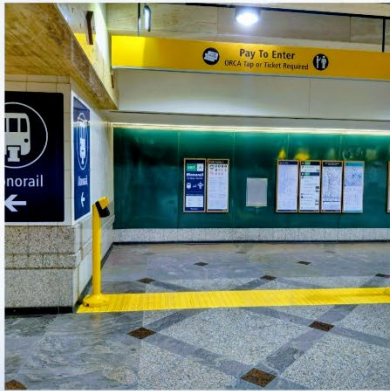
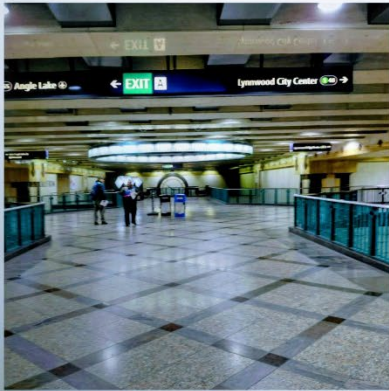
I deeply appreciate how the Station now is amply lit, has world class wayfinding and I was able to get to the Streetcar on time to go to the park pre Symposium. Westlake is now only needing flower pots and new elevators IMHO.

Also considering the ADL and allies are gathering in the area, the additional security and ambassadors are much appreciated.

Finally, I want you to know why I am going to the ADL Symposium today. I am in part to protect you, our Sound Transit from the kind of vicious antisemitism and other forms of hate we have seen in the Ruth Fisher Boardroom and in the region from a certain Alex . You are a beacon of light for me Sound Transit, a light that if dimmed will darken our state of Transit. As My President, Not Donald Trump says, "Never again means never again."

Go Sound Transit!

Joe Sends



Betty Lau

**Written Public Comment by Betty Lau, Sound Transit Board Meeting,
Thursday, 10/23/25, 1:30 p.m. at Union Station**

I'm Betty Lau, from the Chong Wa Benevolent Association and co-founder of Transit Equity for All.

The few supporters of North (Rebranded Midtown James St.) & South of CID (Rebranded Dearborn St with platform at 6th & Royal Brougham) segment, cite one reason: "We want the land for housing." But is that the purpose of light rail? Did we voters in 2016 vote for ST3 in order to increase the housing stock??

Here are the facts and the data for your fact/data based decision making:

- According to a 2023 study by Historic South Downtown, 200,000 sq. ft. of space is available for housing in existing CID buildings (historicsouthdowntown.org); more is available on the empty lots throughout the district. There is an especially large property on the NE corner of 10th and Dearborn that can be purchased for hundreds of units of housing.
- Land will be there regardless of whether light rail is built or not: we question the wisdom of building new neighborhoods when the one adjacent, the CID languishes from neglect and past and on-going harms.
- Most importantly, the Purpose and Need of light rail is not housing, but connectivity, accessibility, economic opportunities for small businesses through increase of foot traffic from visitors & tourists (WSBLE DEIS, April 2022):

The Purpose of the project is "Expand mobility for the corridor and the region's residents, which include transit-dependent residents, low-income people, and communities of color...The project is needed because: The region's residents and communities, including transit-dependent people, low-income

people, and communities of color, need long-term regional mobility and multi-modal connectivity as called for in the Washington State Growth Management Act (Revised Code of Washington 36.70A.108).” [from Sound Transit April 2022 WSBLE DEIS]

How can the Purpose and Need for the project be accomplished by bypassing the very communities of color Sound Transit is supposed to serve and uplift? How can the promises of prosperity made by Sound Transit to the CID be fulfilled with the Bypass Plan?

Community member Mark Langley recognizes the Bypass Plan for what it is:

"It is indefensible to put forth a plan that bypasses the same communities that have been historically marginalized and underserved. It reduces the potential for benefiting from residential development and tourism, and further sidelines those who most need transportation access. **It is a racist, classist [sic] plan; it is modern-day redlining**" (emphasis mine).

Re-think Link: Defer the tunnel; Reduce the deficit, Complete the spine!

Thank you.

Brien Chow

Sound Transit Board Meeting Public Comment

By Brien Chow — October 23, 2025, Union Station, 1:30 p.m.

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

Thank you, **Vice Chair Claudia Balducci** and **Deputy CEO Terri Mestas** for their leadership — for looking at the need for a second downtown tunnel.

Your work confirms that *deferring the 2nd tunnel is the smartest, most responsible way to keep ST3 on track and affordable*.

This isn't about delay — *it's about focus*.

By using the *existing tunnel*, we can create a connected *super hub* right at the *International District/Chinatown Station*

— the only place where *Link, East Link, Sounder, Amtrak, Metro, and the Streetcar* all come together

Deferring the 2nd tunnel *protects taxpayer dollars — and protects the CID and the Region*.

It spares the community from years of disruption and preserves one of Seattle's most historic neighborhoods.

By improving the *existing station*,

Sound Transit can deliver the *same, convenient transfers* the 4th Avenue Station promised — *without tearing up the CID to do it*.

This is how we *finish the spine from Tacoma to Everett* and make transit work for everyone.

This is not a retreat. It's a [course correction](#) — one that turns crisis into opportunity and puts Sound Transit back on track to deliver a world-class regional system.

Thank you.

Brien Chow
Co-Founder
Transit Equity for All

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

Key References & Evidence

Topic	Reference / Source	What It Supports
Risks & challenges of 4th Avenue option	"Sound Transit Study Bolsters Case Against CID Station at ... 4th Avenue"	A consultant hired by Sound Transit stated the 4th Avenue alternative is "not reasonably constructible," citing conflicts with BNSF railroad, high cost, schedule risk, and the need for wholesale viaduct replacement. (Urbanist)
CID / Chinatown-International District impacts & community concerns	"CID community members continue to push back against Sound Transit"	The CID community strongly opposes placement on 5th Avenue and raises concerns about displacement, construction disruption, and equity. (Northwest Asian Weekly)

Sound Transit / TEA mission & CID protection	Transit Equity for All (TEA) website	TEA's mission explicitly includes protecting the historic CID neighborhood while improving transit. (Move Forward on 4th!)
Feasibility of using a single tunnel / upgrading the existing tunnel	Seattle Transit Blog: "A single downtown tunnel is completely possible ..."	Argues that the existing downtown tunnel (with upgrades) can meet ST3 demands, and that the cost of upgrading is far lower than building a new tunnel. (Seattle Transit Blog)
Arguments against constructing a new second tunnel	"A win-win for the CID dilemma: Stick with current tunnel"	Notes that new tunnel proposals raise cost, complexity, and risk — and that the CID has already borne heavy burdens of past construction. (Seattle Transit Blog)
Options & alternatives for CID station placement	"Further Study—Results—Chinatown-International District Alternatives" (Sound Transit)	Describes the station alternatives studied, the history of proposals, and the special community/racial equity considerations in the CID area. (Sound Transit)
Construction impacts to Inscape building, displacement risk	"How light-rail construction in the CID could impact Inscape ..."	Sound Transit's own documents and local reporting note that the 4th Avenue option faces serious constraints, that construction could last 7+ years, and that displacement and impacts to local buildings/artists are real threats. (Cascade PBS)
ST3 and the downtown tunnel in voter-approved plan	Sound Transit / DSA "Sound Transit 3 Implementation"	Shows that the ST3 plan included a second downtown transit tunnel with multiple new stations as part of the approved regional investment. (Downtown Seattle Association)

Written Sound Transit Board Meeting Public Comment by Brien Chow, October 23, 2025, Union Station, 1:30 p.m.

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

“The Smarter Tunnel: How Balducci and Mestas Are Steering Sound Transit Back on Track”

Deferring the second downtown tunnel could save billions and create a super hub at the International District/Chinatown Station

Overview

Sound Transit's light rail expansion — once a \$7 billion promise — has ballooned into a **\$30 billion challenge**. Years of scope changes, inflation, and indecision threaten to derail the vision voters approved in 2016.

Now, two leaders — Vice Chair **Claudia Balducci** and Deputy CEO **Terri Mestas** — are charting a smarter path forward: **defer the costly second downtown tunnel**, strengthen the **existing system**, and build toward a **super hub at the International District/Chinatown (ID/Chinatown) Station** that connects every regional line, including the Eastside Link.

Why the Crisis Happened

- **Initial estimates were too rough.**
Early ST3 budgets weren't based on detailed engineering or soil data.

“It was a simplistic view of the alignment, not knowing field conditions, site conditions, all those things,”

Terri Mestas, Deputy CEO
Sound Transit for Megaproject Delivery

- **Inflation and delay hit hard.**
Pandemic-era construction costs surged over 70%. Each year of delay now adds hundreds of millions in cost escalation.
- **Complexity in Seattle's urban core.**
West Seattle and Ballard projects require extensive tunneling and bridges — driving up cost and risk compared to simpler extensions like Everett Link or Tacoma Dome Link.

Balducci's Course Correction

King County Councilmember and Sound Transit Board Vice Chair **Claudia Balducci** argues the agency must focus on **finishing the regional spine** before overextending into new megaprojects.

Her proposal, often called the **Balducci Plan**, calls for:

- ☒ **Deferring the new downtown tunnel (DSTT2)** — the most expensive segment of ST3.
- ☒ **Upgrading the existing tunnel** to add capacity and reliability.
- ☒ **Redirecting resources** to complete the spine — Tacoma to Everett to the Eastside.

"When you're staring down a \$30 billion shortfall, you have to ask: do we deliver only partial segments, or do we rethink what's essential — like the second tunnel?"

Claudia Balducci
King County Councilmember and
Sound Transit Board Vice Chair

This approach keeps projects moving, protects public trust, and ensures ST3 remains deliverable within real-world financial limits.

Mestas: Data, Not Politics

Since joining Sound Transit in 2024, **Terri Mestas** has pushed for engineering discipline and transparent analysis. She confirmed that the **second tunnel is under rigorous review**:

*"We're not gonna leave any stone unturned," Mestas said.
"We're using a rail simulation model to test reliability, resilience,
service headways, constructability, cost, and schedule —
running thousands of scenarios with and without a tunnel."*

Terri Mestas, Sound Transit's
Deputy CEO for Megaproject Delivery

This technical approach is central to the Balducci Plan: making decisions based on **data and affordability**, not legacy assumptions.

Why Deferring the Tunnel Makes Sense

1. **Saves billions** — the second tunnel alone could cost **\$4–5 billion**, with escalating risk.
2. **Accelerates delivery** — avoids years of new design and environmental review.
3. **Protects neighborhoods** — reduces disruption in the CID and downtown core.
4. **Builds a unified network** — consolidates all major lines at one hub.

The Super Hub at the ID/Chinatown Station

The **International District/Chinatown Station** is already the most connected transit node in the region.

By investing here instead of digging a new tunnel, Sound Transit can create a **true regional super hub** linking:

- North–South Link service (Everett–Tacoma)
- East Link service (Bellevue–Redmond–Seattle)
- Sounder commuter rail
- Amtrak intercity service
- King County Metro and Seattle Streetcar

A single transfer-friendly station at the heart of downtown would **unite the region’s rail system** — efficiently and affordably.

Leadership and Momentum

While some leaders, like **Seattle Mayor Bruce Harrell**, push to protect city projects, others — notably **Balducci and Mestas** — are focused on delivering what’s *possible and sustainable*.

“The most important thing we can do is keep projects moving,”

“We need partnership, stable funding, and to move fast.

Time is the biggest factor that impacts cost.”

Terri Mestas, Sound Transit's
Deputy CEO for Megaproject Delivery

Balducci agrees, saying:

“We are going to do what we promised voters. The system will come.

We just have to maintain focus and keep going — and we will find a way.”

Together, their leadership represents the **realignment Sound Transit needs** — a shift from overreach to results.

Conclusion: The Path to a Successful ST3

The **Balducci Plan**, supported by **Terri Mestas's analytical rigor**, provides the clear, practical strategy Sound Transit needs to finish what voters approved.

By deferring the second tunnel, the agency can:

- Deliver more track miles sooner,
- Create a connected, resilient system,
- Rebuild public confidence, and
- Anchor the network around the **ID/Chinatown Super Hub** — where all lines meet.

This is not a retreat. It's a [course correction](#) — one that turns crisis into opportunity and puts Sound Transit back on track to deliver a world-class regional system.

Brien Chow
Co-Founder
Transit Equity for All

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GO TO FOR INFORMATION... linktr.ee/TransitEquityforAll MFo4th

Sources

1. **Ryan Packer**, "How Ballard and West Seattle Light Rail Became a \$30 Billion Undertaking" — *The Urbanist*, October 10, 2025.
2. **Claudia Balducci**, Sound Transit Board Vice Chair — public comments and interviews, February 2023–October 2025.
3. **Terri Mestas**, Sound Transit Deputy CEO for Megaproject Delivery — statements from Sound Transit Board meetings, 2024–2025.
4. **Sound Transit Realignment Overview** (soundtransit.org/realignment) — Board documentation on cost and schedule realignment.
5. **KUOW**, "Nix the new tunnel? Sound Transit looks for big moves to save billions", February 23, 2023.
6. **KOMO News**, "Sound Transit board vice chair Claudia Balducci proposes scaling back second downtown tunnel to save billions", February 24, 2023.
7. **Sound Transit Capital Program Monthly Status Reports**, 2024–2025.

Scott Spear

I read on line and in newspapers articles about fare collection. Lots of hand wringing over collections, should turnstiles be installed, more ambassadors to check to see if passengers have paid fares etc. I suggest making the entire link light rail system free.

It looks like Link rail collected \$60m in revenue last year, hardly mentioned in the context of a \$20-30B shortfall. The \$60m doesn't come free, heck there is a 33 page document detailing annual fare collections.

I can't find costs associated with
ambassadors

orca cards

vending machines

card readers

computer systems

mgmt in charge of fare collection.

Let's just spitball a cost of \$20m.

So we are really talking about \$40m, again against a backdrop of \$20b.

I renew my tabs each year here in Tacoma, that despite zero miles of track in Pierce county. I know plenty of folks do not re-new tabs because there is no penalty. Because there is no enforcement, honest taxpayers like myself are overburdened. I'm sure someone in the State govt has worked up numbers on the cost of unpaid tabs...

It isn't unreasonable to say that number is in the millions of dollars, doesn't require turnstiles, ambassadors, etc.

I ask that your team consider what the future might look like w/o fare collection.
as they say, "is the juice worth the squeeze"

Scott Spear

University Place WA

Matthew Muller

Good morning. Please do not support any tax increase. This project has a spending issue. Not an income issue. The public is struggling under the burden of over taxing. Light rail fails to provide value. I did not vote to approve light rail in 2016. I continue to see it as a waste of tax payer resources. Please stop. If you cannot afford to continue with the revenue you currently have. Then you cannot do more. Stop this madness of just raise more taxes. More taxes are not the answer.

Thank you

Matthew Muller

James Pura

Hello,

I'm a Boeing employee who works up in Everett, and lives down in Madrona, just east of Capitol Hill. My work forces me to commute to the office every day, and I absolutely hate my commute.

I would love nothing more than to take the light rail to work every day, but unfortunately I can't because there's no bus that takes me from the end of the light rail line in Lynnwood to my work up in Everett.

And I'll be retired by the time the light rail construction progresses to the point of reaching Everett.

We are so, so close to a great interim solution, though -- because Route 513 goes door-to-door between Lynnwood's light rail station and the Seaway Transit Center (which is basically across the street from Boeing's front door -- perfect!). Unfortunately, it goes the exact opposite direction I need it to go in both the morning and afternoon. It's clear that it was set up for folks up north to get downtown in the morning, and then back home in the afternoon -- which is great, I hope folks use that very useful service -- but if you were to take this same bus and just make it bi-directional, people like me would be able to take public transportation to work, and I'd happily be one more car off the road.

For everyone reading this, thank you for your public service and for considering this service expansion. It would be greatly appreciated. If any of you would like to talk further or have any more questions for me, please feel free to reach out.

Sincerely,

James Pura

714.270.1759 cell

P.S. - I just attended the Community Oversight Panel meeting today, and met two fantastic public servants, Adam and Katie (cc'd) -- kudos to them for giving me this email address that I'm using today.

Also, Emily Yasukochi started this community oversight meeting today (great presentation, Emily!) and just said that this exact topic has been proposed and is currently up for discussion -- so please throw my hat in the ring for this, and fingers are crossed that this moves forward and gets implemented.

Paul R. Sweum

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October 23, 2025

SoundTransit Board of Directors

SoundTransit
401 S. Jackson St.
Seattle, WA 98104

Re: Proposed tax levy and strategizing added revenue for the ST budget gap

Sound Transit Board members and Staff:

I write my comments today as a King County resident for the majority of my adult life, with a background in city planning. I have communicated to you in recent years on a variety of matters involving agency projects.

I understand the need regarding the proposed tax levy from today's Resolution R2025-28, which I support. However, I'm hoping a broader conversation is/will take place to widen the analyses on how to bring in additional revenue sources. It's time to get creative.

Some added revenue suggestions to explore:

1. Statutory tax increase of 1%... this is already on the table, and I support it.
2. Green bonds, green bonds, green bonds... a robust issuance of green bonds will empower investors (like myself – I will try to purchasing them) to put their money where their mouth is. There are potential investors out there who look beyond just simply the investment aspect; they support green infrastructure, are mindful of the future benefits provided by transit systems seeing buildout, and will open their wallets to help the efforts along. Some of us see this as a way to leave a legacy after we're gone.
3. Exploring the issuance of 75-year State bonds.
4. Revisiting car rental taxation.
5. Exploring how to bolster more robust private/public partnerships... perhaps the agency needs to revisit its policies on private involvement without compromising the integrity of determinations through the public participation process (i.e. which we nearly saw negative effects from private sector influence with the proposed BLE tunnel reroute in 2024).

6. Gifts, donations, devises and bequests... communicate and/or advertise more aggressively the agency's availability to accept these funding instruments – from wills, living individuals, the business community, or other sources – within the powers granted by law. Create and/or enhance current legacy and incentives programs to bolster such efforts. Also, help to educate the public to better understand what options are at their disposal and a general idea for navigating related legalities to help make such efforts happen. It might be worth having a dedicated position on staff to focus on this; if you already do, then find ways of leveraging that staff effort to maximize effectiveness. Again, this seems like one of those things where if you find and line up the right individuals or scenarios, a potential windfall from unexpected funding sources may appear. This is also where the agency enhancing, repairing (when and wherever necessary) and maintaining its transparency and “good neighbor” approach with the public comes into play; this is about the long-yardage game of being a good partner with the public. When you do that, you cultivate more trust... and when you cultivate more trust, you open yourself to more opportunities like this.
7. Continuation of the pursuit of Federal sources... as you know; leveraging agency connections in D.C. for grants, low interest loans and other funding sources. It would be fantastic to aim some Federal funding sources at retiring debt from bonds and other borrowing. More from this end will return – and obviously you're not backing off the effort – since we all know how tides shift.
8. Expansion of the tax district... I realize this may be an unpopular idea and involves the State level, but I believe there's a valid argument that the current formula for the tax district boundary is way outdated – *egregiously outdated*. Options for expanding its footprint should be explored. I fail to understand how some of the cities and areas in the eastern portions of King, Snohomish and Pierce Counties don't pay into the pot of \$\$\$ when they will see current or future benefits from the buildout of ST projects. The collective populations of outlying areas in the current three counties bring relevant usage numbers to the systems you are building – and they impact them – as I speak to my personal habits and transit usage as a resident living outside of the ST tax district. Are you telling me there's no justification for Marysville and other cities in northern Snohomish County to be part of the tax district while benefiting from its projects? Expanding the tax district would also elevate voices that are needed from these areas into things such as the Citizens Advisory Committee and other participatory instruments.
9. As a last resort, exploring the relationship of rolling small portions of these ST3 projects into a future ST4 ballot measure. I.e. is it sensible to keep the plans for the WSLE Avalon Station on the books while deferring its construction costs to a future date? Is this a way to rethink or build Link extensions to places like south Tacoma, north of Ballard, to ferry terminals in Snohomish County, and into the Issaquah Highlands? Is this an opportunity to bring Thurston County into the agency footprint with an ST4 measure, linking faster and more reliable connectivity between the State Capitol and its neighboring urban areas to the north?

I'll leave additional possibilities to your camp with your brainstorming and discussions on funding strategy.

I feel confident the agency is strategizing on how to take action to close current and future funding gaps through its Enterprise Initiative – some ways which you are already exploring – but also other ways where you might see more of a success rate with added emphasis. I'm assuming today's simple tax levy is merely one piece of a larger strategy to bolster funding for carrying out the agency's mandated ST3 projects to their successful conclusion.

As always, thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully and with gratitude,

Paul R. Sweum

Paul R. Sweum