

02/12/2026 System Expansion Committee
Meeting Written Public Comment
Submissions

Submissions

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Jeff Chapman

Dear Sound Transit Board of Directors,

I am writing to express my strong opposition to the proposal to eliminate the **Avalon Station** from the West Seattle Link Extension.

As a resident of this neighborhood, my decision to live here was based directly on the light rail plans approved by voters in ST3. I chose my home specifically to take advantage of the future Avalon Station, investing in this community with the expectation that Sound Transit would follow through on its commitment to high-frequency, walkable transit for this dense corridor.

Eliminating this station would be a "bait and switch" for the hundreds of residents like me who have moved to the Avalon/35th Ave area precisely because it was designated as a transit hub. Specifically, I ask you to consider the following:

- **Existing Density:** Unlike other "future" stations, Avalon is already surrounded by high-density housing. Removing the station ignores the thousands of residents who are already here and ready to ride.
- **Transit-Oriented Development (TOD):** The city has already encouraged growth in this triangle between Fauntleroy and 35th. Cutting the station now undermines the urban planning goals that have been in motion for years.
- **Equity and Reliability:** Expecting residents to walk to the Alaska Junction or Delridge stations—often uphill and across busy intersections—significantly reduces the utility of the light rail for those of us in the middle of the peninsula.

I understand the project faces significant cost pressures, but cutting a station in a high-density residential area is a short-sighted solution that compromises the long-term success of the entire West Seattle line.

I urge the Board to maintain the Avalon Station in the final design and honor the commitment made to the voters and residents who have built their lives around this future infrastructure.

Sincerely,

Jeff Chapman

4117 36th ave SW

Bill Hirt

Dear Sound Transit System Expansion Committee,
I recommend you consider the below post from my blog
<http://stopeastlinknow.blogspot.com>

Bill Hirt

The video of the February 5th Sound Transit Executive Council followed by that of the Rider Experience and Operations Committee continues to portray the results of a board made up of well-meaning elected officials who have no idea what constitutes effective public transit.

The executive council "For Recommendation to the Board" portion of the meeting dealt with the 2026-2030 Sustainability Plan. Their action plan to "Strengthen fleet decarbonation" was to "Sunset purchases of fossil fuel-powered revenue fleet vehicles by 2030 and achieve GFG-neutral Link light rail service" and "Update Climate Resilience plan for the existing system". The presentation concluded with the executive council approving Motion No. M2026-06 directing CEO to implement decarbonization goals and fleet management commitments

All the concern about the need to reduce Sound Transit CO2 emissions seemingly ignored the benefit of reducing emissions by reducing the emissions from cars.. The WSDOT 8:00 a.m. average travel times for the 26.86-mile Everett to Bellevue took 63 minutes and the 24.13 miles from Federal Way to Bellevue took 61 minutes. Reducing those travel times for fossil-fueled cars would reduce their emissions. Reducing travel times and congestion requires reducing the number of cars on the road. Thus, adding a bus route, even fossil-fueled, could reduce cars and emissions far more than any Sound Transit fleet reductions.

The "Reports to the Committee" portion dealt with the Enterprise Initiative, Economic Development, and 2026 Executive Committee Work Plan. All detailing plans to spend millions attempting to reduce the costs of implementing ST3 extensions. As usual, the executive committee unanimously approved them, ignoring the possibility of saving billions by simply terminating them instead.

The Rider Experience and Operations Committee meeting raised questions involving the following motion.

Motion No. M2026-07: Authorizing the chief executive officer to execute a contract modification with Insight Public Sector, Inc. to provide additional Microsoft software, support, and related maintenance services in the amount of \$8,400,000, for a new total authorized contract amount not to exceed \$18,255,000 plus applicable taxes.

Why was the committee allowed to authorize spending more than \$18 million rather than just recommend the spending to the board? Last year the board passed Motion No. M2025 approving Multiple Award Task Order Contracts (MATOC) with 22 companies for up to seven years and \$1,000 million. It stipulated orders exceeding \$10 million required Executive Committee or Board approval. Why was Insight Public Sector Inc, a Business management consultant in Chantilly, Virginia, approved to spend up to more than \$18 million this year by the Rider Experience and Operations Committee?

The bottom line is the new Sound Transit Board attempts to reduce carbon emissions and their Enterprise Initiative attempts to reduce costs for ST3 extensions continue to reflect their failure to recognize what's needed to reduce emission and area's transit system cost and congestion.D

Brien Chow

Written Public Comment by Brien Chow at Sound Transit Board Meeting, February 12, 2026, Union Station, 1:30 p.m.

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

The Case for Generational Fiscal Responsibility

To: Sound Transit Board of Directors; CEO Dow Constantine; Washington State Legislators

Summary

Sound Transit faces an estimated **\$34–35 billion funding gap**, largely driven by the technical and financial risks associated with the proposed **Second Downtown Seattle Transit Tunnel (DSTT2)**.^[1]

In response, **SB 6148 (2026)** proposes authorizing Sound Transit to issue **75-year bonds**.^[2]

This report concludes:

- **75-year bonds** are not a funding solution — they are a debt extension strategy.
- **Deferring DSTT2** eliminates the structural driver of the funding gap.

A Single Tunnel optimization strategy (interlining) protects fiscal integrity, accessibility, and equity.

1. The Hidden Costs of 75-Year Bonds (SB 6148)

SB 6148 authorizes bond maturities up to 75 years — a historic departure from standard 30–40-year infrastructure financing practices.^[2]

Infographic Comparison: 40-Year vs 75-Year Bonds

REGIONAL TRANSIT BOND TERM COMPARISON

	40-Year Bonds	75-Year Bonds (SB 6148)
 Debt Duration	One generation	Two generations
 Interest Paid	Baseline long-term cost	Potentially 2–3x higher cumulative interest ¹
 Interest per \$1 Built	~\$1–\$2 per \$1 principal ²	~\$3–\$4 per \$1 principal ²
 Asset Lifecycle Alignment	Aligns with 35–40 year rehab cycle	Debt outlasts asset lifecycle
 State Grant Eligibility	Eligible for RMG funds	Ineligible if >40-year bonds issued ³

 Fiscal Flexibility	Preserves future bonding capacity	Locks capacity for decades
 Intergenerational Impact	Costs borne by primary users	Costs shifted to taxpayers in 2075–2100
 Risk Profile	Moderate interest exposure	High cumulative interest + long-term rate risk

Illustrative Cost Magnitude Example*

If Sound Transit borrowed \$10 billion:

Scenario	Estimated Total Repayment (Illustrative)
40-Year Term	\$18–\$22 billion
75-Year Term	\$30–\$40+ billion

*Illustrative modeling for magnitude comparison only. Actual repayment depends on rates, structure, and issuance timing.

Structural Takeaway

- **40-Year Bonds** → Pay for infrastructure within its functional lifespan.
- **75-Year Bonds** → Continue paying long after major reconstruction is required.

This represents an asset–debt misalignment risk.

2. Why Deferring the Second Tunnel Is the Structural Solution

The Second Downtown Seattle Transit Tunnel (DSTT2) is estimated at approximately \$30–\$35 billion, making it the primary driver of the funding gap.[1]

Board feasibility materials confirm that interlining alternatives could save up to \$4.5 billion in near-term capital costs.[4]

A. Fiscal Relief Through Deferral

Deferring DSTT2:

- Removes the need for extreme bond authority.
- Reduces near-term capital exposure.
- Stabilizes the capital program without cancelling expansion.

B. Single Tunnel Optimization (Interlining)

Interlining through the existing downtown tunnel:

- Delivers Ballard and West Seattle service sooner.

- Reduces construction risk.
- Avoids destructive “deep pit” impacts in the Chinatown–International District (CID).
- Lowers total capital cost exposure.[4]

The existing Chinatown Station remains:

- More accessible
- Less disruptive to CID
- More cost-aligned
- More equitable in design and delivery. [5]

3. Protecting Future Generations

Issuing 75-year bonds extends debt obligations into the 2090s.

This shifts today’s planning risks onto future taxpayers and reduces flexibility for:

- System modernization
- State/federal grant leverage
- Economic downturn response

Generational fiscal responsibility requires:

- Project phasing before debt extension
- Cost optimization before bond expansion
- Capacity alignment before system duplication

Deferring DSTT2 is disciplined sequencing — not cancellation.

Conclusion: A Fiduciary Test of Leadership

The policy choice before the Board and Legislature is structural:

- Extend debt to 75 years and compound long-term interest exposure
or
- Defer DSTT2, optimize the existing tunnel, and preserve fiscal sustainability

✓ **Transit expansion must be financially durable to remain equitable.**

✓ **The proposed 75-year bond authority represents more than a financing tool — it is a test of fiduciary responsibility.**

✓ **As fiduciaries of public funds, Board members are obligated to safeguard long-term public interest, ensure asset–debt alignment, and prevent avoidable intergenerational burdens.**

✓ **A 75-year bond extends obligations well beyond the functional life of major infrastructure components and shifts today’s planning risk onto taxpayers who have no representation in today’s decision.**

✓ **Fiduciary duty requires stewardship, not expediency.**

The choice is clear:

- **Safeguard fiscal integrity**
- **Protect future taxpayers**
- **Align debt with infrastructure lifespan**

**A 75-year bond tests fiduciary duty —
leadership means choosing stewardship over short-term relief.**

Brien Chow
Co-Founder Transit Equity for All
FOR MORE INFORMATION...
linktr.ee/TransitEquityforAll_MFo4th

References

- [1] The Urbanist. (January 21, 2026). *Sound Transit Seeks Hail Mary Financial Tool*. Analysis of projected \$34–35 billion funding gap and long-term financing implications.
- [2] Washington State Legislature. (2026). *SB 6148 – Concerning regional transit authority bonding authority*. Sponsored by Sen. Marko Liias.
- [3] Washington State Regional Mobility Grant Program statutes and eligibility provisions as referenced in SB 6148 (2026).
- [4] Sound Transit Board Records. (December 2025). *Second Downtown Tunnel Feasibility Assessment*. Interlining analysis and capital cost comparison.
- [5] Transit Equity for All (TEA). (2026). *Position Statement on 4th Avenue Shallow Alternative and CID Protection*. linktr.ee/TransitEquityforAll_MFo4th

Public Comment by Brien Chow, Sound Transit Board Meeting, Thursday, February 12, 2026, Union Station, 1:30 p.m.

Good afternoon. I'm Brien Chow, co-founder of Transit Equity for All and Chair of the Outreach Committee of the Chong Wa Benevolent Association.

Sound Transit faces a \$35 billion funding gap. The primary driver is the second downtown tunnel.

SB 6148 would authorize 75-year bonds. That's two generations of debt.

Depending on interest rates, taxpayers could pay three to four dollars in interest for every one dollar built — and still be paying in the 2090s.

It also makes Sound Transit ineligible for State Regional Mobility Grants if bonds exceed 40 years.

This is not a funding solution. It's a debt extension.

There is an alternative.

Defer the second tunnel. Interline through the existing tunnel. Your own feasibility work shows up to \$4.5 billion in savings.

It delivers service sooner and avoids deep stations that create accessibility fail-points in the CID.

It avoids displacing 800 clients receiving services in Pioneer Square. It avoids demolition of the Reynolds Hotel, which belongs to a family of color... And it avoids altering the King County courthouse and City Hall.

Don't borrow from the 2090s to fix 2020's!

Future taxpayers don't have a seat at this table — you do... Protect them.

Equity includes financial stewardship... Don't burden future riders with today's mistakes.

Defer the tunnel. Protect the region. Stop the 75-year debt.

Grant a 90-day comment period... Thank you.

Brien Chow

Co-Founder Transit Equity for All - FOR MORE
INFORMATION... linktr.ee/TransitEquityforAll_MFo4th

Betty Lau

Written Public Comment by Betty Lau for System Expansion Committee Meeting, Thursday, February 12, 2026, 1:30 p.m., Union Station

Hello, I'm Betty Lau, Citizens Accessibility Advisory Committee member (CAAC); co-founder of Transit Equity for All

Here are our CAAC conclusions:

1. **The single tunnel route works best for those with disabilities because of its future one seat ride from Tacoma to Everett.**
2. The 2nd tunnel, with its north and south of CID preferred alternatives don't work for those needing wheelchairs, walkers, canes or who have Parkinson's, and other similar conditions, the sight impaired or the neuro-divergent.
 1. With North and South of CID, please figure out how to get those with disability devices from SODO uphill to the new North of CID station and...
 2. Figure out how to get Eastside riders to points south and to the airport without long walks north or south.
3. Make language access part of Accessibility.
4. For continuous improvement for CAAC:

We want monthly meetings, restoration of chair and vice chair positions, and meetings using Roberts Rules of Order

5. Create comparison materials of alternatives in languages and in braille with tactile maps
6. Analyze and present to us findings on how each alternative will impact those with disabilities, non-English speakers, and the elderly

7. Again, we want::

- FIFA prep plans for those with disabilities, how we will get around
- North of CID station design that has been presented to others
- 2022 DEIS presentation in preparation for the new one
- Single Tunnel presentation & discussion

Finally, please treat us better! Collaboration, not Control! Thank you.

Comments received after the meeting's comment deadline

Katja Magus

To whom it may concern-

We would like to speak out in favor of continuing the plan to have light rail come to Issaquah. We bought our house and located our business in this area with the understanding that light rail would eventually connect Issaquah to Seattle and the great Puget Sound. Our healthcare office is located right next to the I-90 interchange in Issaquah and our home is 6 blocks from the Issaquah Transit Center. We are well placed to utilize the light rail when it arrives. Our oldest son (age 22) is on the Issaquah Transit Board and it sounds like they have great plans for increasing housing density and services around the future light rail area and making a welcoming area for all travelers who come through Issaquah.

On a personal note- because of our financial situation (it is too expensive to pay for both tuition and housing), our three sons (ages 22, 20 and 18) have commuted from Issaquah to various colleges and other programs in Seattle for the last 5 years and we expect this will continue with our next college student. The typical bus route from Issaquah to Queen Anne (Seattle Pacific University) takes 1.5 HOURS EACH WAY. The time is slightly reduced if you are headed to the University of Washington since there is a direct bus with no transfers. It is important to remember the quality of life improvement for people who could eventually take the train to work or school from outlying areas. My sons knew other students who came from as far as Snoqualmie and north bend to the Issaquah transit center to then take the same bus into Seattle as my kids. Those commutes were over 2 hours long each way

We have to imagine that housing prices for both families and students will remain high in Seattle and this will necessitate students and workers commuting from outlying areas. My guess is that this will only get worse over time. The train will provide equity for kids and families and workers that need to live further out in order to afford to live. They deserve to spend time with friends and family rather than on the bus. Please feel free to contact me for further questions or comments.

Dr. Katja Magus
Alpine Acupuncture
Issaquah resident and mom of three

Marcie Rubardt

Greetings.

I am concerned that the light rail plans through the center of our city core is being dismantled due to funding re-allocation to serve wealthier neighborhoods. WE need to maintain the basic spine of this system, using rapid buses to supplement. We do NOT need to take funds allocated for the basic system and move them towards special interest construction.

Please stay true to the original plan!

Marcie Rubardt
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