

03/12/2026 System Expansion Committee
Meeting Written Public Comment
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Lisa Bogardus on behalf of the Seattle Building Trades

Note: The letter corresponding to this comment can be found at the end of this document.

Good Morning,

Please find the attached letter from Lisa Bogardus on behalf of the Seattle Building Trades regarding support for the Sound Transit West Seattle expansion.

Thank you,

Brooke McClinton
Office Manager

Seattle Building Trades Council
14675 Interurban Ave S, Ste 101
Tukwila, WA 98168
206-441-0550

Maya Widyasari

Dear Chair and Members of the Sound Transit Board,

I am an Issaquah resident writing to ask that you keep the Issaquah light rail extension fully funded and moving forward.

For more than a decade, our community has planned for this connection. Light rail to Issaquah would provide reliable access to jobs in Bellevue and Seattle, reduce congestion on I-90, and give the region a dependable alternative to driving to and from Issaquah. It would also support our region's climate goals and improve affordability by reducing the need for multiple car ownership.

Issaquah is growing, and strong regional transit connections are essential to keeping residents connected to jobs, schools, and services without adding more traffic to our already busy roads. I respectfully urge the Board to honor the commitments made to voters and ensure Issaquah remains part of the region's light rail future.

Thank you,

Maya Widyasari

Issaquah Resident

Tiffany Malich

To whom it may concern:

It is crucial that we receive light rail in Issaquah after years of waiting. It is inconceivable that the idea of not extending light rail to Issaquah is being floated. The fact that Sound Transit has allowed such poor management of the project that the 90 link extension through Mercer Island has been delayed so long is not a sufficient reason to extinguish light rail to Issaquah. The roads are so congested at peak travel times it takes up to an hour to get to the park and ride or freeway. We need relief and will fight hard to get it!

A concerned citizen

Tiffany Malich

Unnamed Commenter

Do not extend light rail to Issaquah. It is a waste of taxpayer money.

Elizabeth Grant

The citizens of Issaquah voted for the ST3 taxes and have paid our taxes for a decade based on the plan of a light rail station in Issaquah. You must keep to that plan or refund our taxes!!

Elizabeth Grant

340 1st Ave NE, Issaquah 98027

Issaquah resident since 2014

Christina Stempson

I am writing to express my deep concern that the Sound Transit line might be eliminated. I've lived in Issaquah for 20 years and have been awaiting the line with anticipation. This line is crucial to keeping traffic down and connecting us to the Seattle area. Please work to ensure this line is completed as was voted for many years ago.

Thank you!

Christina Stempson

Ken Brunell

Ken Brunell
11606 208th Place SE
Issaquah, WA 98027
March 1, 2026

Dear Members of the Sound Transit Board,

I am writing as a longtime Issaquah resident and taxpayer who has been faithfully contributing to the Sound Transit 3 levy since voters approved it in 2016. I am deeply concerned about recent reports that light rail to Issaquah may be eliminated or indefinitely delayed as part of Sound Transit's affordability discussions.

First, I want to acknowledge the genuine difficulty of the budget challenges you are working through. Sound Transit's leadership is facing hard choices, and I appreciate the seriousness and care you are bringing to this process. That said, I urge you strongly not to solve this crisis on the backs of East King County communities like Issaquah.

For nearly a decade, Issaquah residents and businesses have paid ST3 taxes — every year, without fail — based on an explicit promise: that light rail would come to our community. That promise was made to voters, and it was the foundation on which we extended our trust and our tax dollars to Sound Transit. To now eliminate or indefinitely delay the Bellevue-to-Issaquah rail line would be a serious breach of that commitment.

The Issaquah light rail connection is not just a local amenity — it is a critical piece of regional infrastructure. It would connect our growing community to the broader Puget Sound transit network, reduce congestion on I-90, improve air quality, and provide equitable mobility options for thousands of East King County residents who currently have no viable alternative to driving.

I live and work in this community. I chose to support ST3 because I believe in the vision of a connected, sustainable region. I still believe in that vision. But I need to know that Sound Transit believes in it too — and that Issaquah will not be left behind while our tax dollars are redirected to serve other parts of the region.

I respectfully urge the Board to:

- Keep the Issaquah light rail station moving forward, without indefinite delay or elimination.
- Work collaboratively with the City of Issaquah and East King County communities to find creative, cost-conscious solutions that honor our region's commitments.
- Ensure that the affordability discussion results in equitable outcomes across all subarea communities — not just those with the loudest voices.

Issaquah is ready to be a partner in this process. We simply ask that you remain a partner to us.

Thank you sincerely for your service to our region and for considering my comments.

Respectfully,

Ken Brunell

Issaquah, WA 98027

kenbrunell@gmail.com

Karthik Kashinath

Dear Sound Transit Board Members,

My name is Karthik Kashinath, and I'm writing as a resident of Issaquah, a climate scientist, and Vice Chair of the City of Issaquah's Equity Board (though I do not speak for Issaquah or the Equity Board on this matter).

I want to express appreciation for the difficult financial decisions before you. I also want to underscore that the Bellevue–Issaquah light rail connection was a voter-approved commitment that our community continues to fund and strongly supports.

From both an equity and climate perspective, this segment matters. Expanding reliable, high-capacity transit improves equitable access to jobs and services while reducing transportation-related emissions—one of the largest contributors to our region's carbon footprint. Connecting Issaquah to the broader Eastside and regional rail network is a meaningful step toward a more sustainable and inclusive future.

I respectfully urge you to keep the Issaquah connection moving forward.

Thank you for your leadership and service.

Sincerely,
Karthik Kashinath
Issaquah, WA

Kit McCormick

We need it! Big, big population in Issaquah and all the thousands who have moved into Snoqualmie Valley. Extend it!

--

Kit McCormick (Snoqualmie resident)

Master Builders Association of King and Snohomish Counties

Note: The letter corresponding to this comment can be found at the end of this document.

Dear Sound Transit Board Members,

Please find the attached letter from the Master Builders Association of King and Snohomish Counties expressing our strong support for advancing the Issaquah–Bellevue light rail connection as originally planned. As outlined in the letter, this project is a critical investment in East King County’s future housing capacity, transportation access, and long-term sustainable growth.

We appreciate your consideration as you evaluate the next steps for this important regional project.

Sincerely,

Matt



Matt Haight | King County Government Affairs Manager
Master Builders Association of King and Snohomish Counties
p 425.460.8201 c 425.466.6311
335 116th Ave. SE, Bellevue, WA 98004

mbaks.com

Everyone deserves a place to call home.



Lora Morn

Please continue to plan on expanding light rail to Issequah. We have many in our family who can't drive due to disability and/or age. This would be a huge help for us to get around.

Thanks

Lora Morn

North Bend and Seattle

Shannon Rebersak

Hello,

I am a resident of Issaquah and I am writing in support of building the light rail. It would be unfair to taxpayers to delay or eliminate this project.

Personally, I commute daily from Issaquah to downtown Seattle for work, and having light rail access would be very beneficial for commute times and comfort with commuting. The bus routes are nice and should be maintained, but with population growth, there is no logical reason not to invest in additional public transit options.

Thank you,
Shannon Rebersak (she/her)

Steve Raymond

Dear Members of the Sound Transit Board,

My name is Steve Raymond, and I have been a resident of Issaquah since 2008. I am writing to express my strong support for the voter-approved light rail connection to Issaquah and to urge the Board to ensure that this project remains part of the region's transportation plan.

The Eastside continues to experience steady population and employment growth, and I-90 remains the primary transportation corridor connecting Issaquah and East King County with the rest of the region. Anyone who regularly travels this corridor knows how quickly it reaches capacity during peak hours. As our population continues to grow, the limitations of relying almost entirely on I-90 will only become more pronounced.

The planned light rail connection from Bellevue to Issaquah represents a critical long-term investment that will provide a reliable alternative to highway travel. By giving residents another way to move between Eastside communities and regional job centers, the project will help alleviate congestion on I-90, improve regional mobility, and support sustainable growth in East King County.

Issaquah residents and businesses have been contributing ST3 taxes since 2016 with the clear understanding that this investment would bring light rail to our community. Reconsidering or eliminating the project after years of local financial commitment risks undermining public trust and shifting resources away from the communities that have been paying for this infrastructure.

I recognize that the Board is facing difficult affordability challenges, and I appreciate the work being done to address rising costs across the system. However, solutions to these challenges should not come at the expense of projects that are essential to the long-term mobility of East King County.

Light rail to Issaquah is not simply a local project. It is a key piece of the regional transportation network that will support economic growth, reduce congestion, and provide residents with meaningful alternatives to driving.

Thank you for your continued leadership and for considering the voices of residents who rely on thoughtful long-term transportation planning. I respectfully urge the Board to preserve the voter-approved light rail connection to Issaquah.

Sincerely,

Steve Raymond

Issaquah Resident (since 2008)

Heather Pihl

Dear Sound Transit Board members,

So that members of the public such as myself will have sufficient time to review the DEIS for the Ballard Link Extension, please ensure that **90** days are allowed, instead of only 60.

Long overdue: Please correct the name of the light rail station in the CID to Chinatown-International District Station.

Thank you for your attention to these issues.

Sincerely,

Heather Pihl

Resident, Uptown

Robin Beukers

Dear Chair and Members of the Sound Transit Board:

I am an Issaquah resident writing to express my support for keeping the planned light rail extension to Issaquah in the regional system.

I understand that Sound Transit is facing real budget and affordability challenges, and I appreciate the work underway to address them responsibly. At the same time, I want to be clear that light rail to Issaquah is important to me, my family and friends, our broader community, and beyond.

For more than a decade, Issaquah and our region have been planning for this connection. Light rail would provide a much-needed connection and reliable access to jobs, education, and services to folks throughout the region, while reducing traffic and giving people a meaningful alternative to driving. As Issaquah continues to grow, this connection will only become more important.

I respectfully urge the Board to keep Issaquah's light rail station moving forward and to work with the City of Issaquah as a committed partner in delivering this project.

Thank you for your leadership and consideration.

Robin Beukers MBA CPA CMA CIA (retired)

Unnamed Commenter

I am 70 and would like the quick access to the light rail! I always wanted to take classes at UW as a senior citizen, and light rail would make it a great time and money saver should I follow through. Also to get downtown for arts and culture would be more accessible to me too. Safety underground verses the cold wet streets in the dark would be beneficial as well! Zoom zoom!

Thank you!!

Sent from my iPhone

Peter Rojas

To whom it may concern:

I have been charged a very high tag tax with the understanding that it would fund light rail from Issaquah to Bellevue and Seattle by 2047.

While we are still 21 years away i woul appreciate a speeded timeline so i can get to ride the train before my passing;)

Without the light rail we are forced to take bus services without a quick change to SODO which requires a car to drive to work.

If you're cutting the project I would expect a full tag tax refund indexed to inflation plus interest. And possibly carbon credits for the added pollution.

Thank you for your consideration.

Peter Rojas

Ron Worman

No transit to Issaquah

Ron Worman

The Sage Group

The Great Conversation

(<https://the-great-conversation.com>)

Ron@The-Sage-Group.com

Brien Chow

Written Sound Transit Public Comment by Brien Chow, System Expansion Committee Meeting, Th., 3/12/26, 12:30 p.m., Union Station

Equity, Fiscal Responsibility, and the “Jackson Hub” Alternative

I’m Brien Chow, co-founder of Transit Equity for All and Chair of the Out-reach Committee of Chong Wa Benevolent Association.

For over 100 years, major infrastructure projects have divided and damaged the Chinatown–International District. Highways, stadiums, and public facilities were placed here because planners assumed this community had the least political power to resist.

That pattern cannot continue with the Ballard Link Extension.

Today, *the Sound Transit Board has a choice:*

Continuing the damaging history of infrastructure decisions imposed on communities of color,
or

Demonstrate that equity and fiscal responsibility can guide this project.

*One viable path forward is the **Jackson Hub Alternative.***

The Jackson Hub Alternative

Instead of constructing a second Westlake-to-SODO tunnel, Sound Transit should defer the redundant second downtown tunnel and upgrade the existing CID station into a **unified regional transfer hub.**

This approach transforms the existing station into the central connection point for the region’s light rail network.

Every major line could connect at one location.

That means a rider could transfer between the 1, 2, and 3 **Link Lines** without walking blocks between separate stations, meaning...

The **Chinatown-International District** would again function as the...
true center of the regional transit network.

No missing Link!

A \$4–\$4.5 billion Fiscal Lever

Sound Transit’s own financial discussions acknowledge that the second downtown tunnel is one of the most expensive elements of the project.

Deferring that tunnel could save **approximately \$4 billion to \$4.5 billion.**

No other single measure under consideration comes close to generating that level of financial relief.

Those savings could stabilize the entire ST3 program and ensure the system is completed rather than delayed or scaled back.

Fiscal responsibility and equity do not have to compete...

In this case, they align.

Better Ridership, Better Transit

The current *“North and South CID Station”* proposal *weakens the network.*

Splitting the station into two peripheral locations forces riders to make longer transfers and creates confusing travel patterns that discourage ridership, especially with out-of-direction travel (HNTB, 2023).

A *unified hub* at the existing station maximizes connectivity between:

- Sounder commuter rail
- Amtrak intercity rail
- Regional bus service
- Link Light Rail lines

Simple systems attract riders...

Fragmented systems do not.

The Equity Test

The Board already demonstrated flexibility when it passed **Motion M2023-109** to study an additional alternative in South Lake Union.

South Lake Union received additional studies because staff believed that the board deserved as much information as possible before making a final decision and that the neighborhood deserved full consideration of best outcomes and even an equity analysis.

The **Chinatown International District** deserves the same attention and consideration.

If additional alternatives can be studied for a wealthy corporate district...

refusing to study a viable alternative for a historic immigrant community...

raises serious questions about procedural equity.

Infrastructure planning that repeatedly burdens communities of color while protecting wealthier neighborhoods

is not just poor planning...

It is systemic inequity.

Correcting the Station Name:

Aligning with City Law and Community Identity

The existing station name must also be corrected to reflect the official name of the neighborhood: **Chinatown International District**.

Today the station operated by Sound Transit is called **International District/Chinatown Station**, which reverses the legally recognized name of the neighborhood. The *City of Seattle* has already established the correct geographic name as **Chinatown International District** through Seattle City Ordinance 119297 and official planning documents.

Sound Transit's own naming policies include geographic locations.

Correcting the station name is not a cosmetic change...

It is about respect, accuracy, and alignment...

with the law of the city the transit system serves.

The neighborhood's name reflects the history of the community and its cultural identity. Names carry meaning, and using the correct name acknowledges the generations of Asian American residents who built and sustained this historic neighborhood. Community leaders and planners have long emphasized that the proper name... **Chinatown International District**... should be consistently used in government signage, maps, and public infrastructure.

Even regional media have pointed out that the current inverted station name does not match the actual neighborhood name and should be corrected to reflect the community's identity.

The mismatch has resulted in confusion by those using apps to find the CID, but face using a station with the backwards name, not to mention the even greater confusion faced by those with disabilities, especially the neurodivergent and sight impaired.

A recent example shows how naming decisions reflect whose identity is prioritized in public infrastructure. Sound Transit renamed **University Street Station** to **Symphony Station** to better represent a nearby cultural institution and improve clarity for riders.

If Sound Transit can update a station name to honor a downtown landmark, it should also correct the name serving the **Chinatown International District** so that it accurately reflects the community's legally recognized name and identity.

When the names of major institutions are quickly respected while the identity of a historic immigrant neighborhood is repeatedly overlooked, communities understandably view that pattern as a form of **systemic inequity** in public decision-making.

Seattle leaders have also publicly raised this issue. During a briefing to Sound Transit, *Seattle Council Member Bob Kettle* made clear that the station name should be brought into alignment with the city ordinance that defines the neighborhood name as **Chinatown International District**.

Watch the clip:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/194INhK-APCBqX_LLjXHy2luMDvub35rT/view

*Councilmember Kettle's message to the Sound Transit panel was straightforward: **the station name should reflect the official name established by the City of Seattle.***

Correcting the station name to **Chinatown International District Station** would:

- Align Sound Transit infrastructure with the City of Seattle's official ordinance and planning documents
- Respect the cultural identity of one of the region's most historic immigrant communities
- Reduce confusion for riders, visitors, and tourists navigating the transit system
- Demonstrate Sound Transit's commitment to equity and accurate placemaking

Why This Matters for the Transit System

The existing station—located at the junction of regional rail connections and served by multiple lines of the Link Light Rail—is already one of the most important transit nodes in the region.

Ensuring the station carries the correct neighborhood name reinforces the identity of the **Chinatown International District** as a regional destination and cultural center, not simply a transfer point.

Correcting the name now—while station signage, maps, and platform design updates are already underway—also avoids higher costs and confusion later.

If names matter downtown, they must matter...

in the Chinatown International District too.

Conclusion

The decision before the Sound Transit Board is not simply where to place a station... It is whether regional transit investments will repair on-going historic planning harms or repeat them in the **Chinatown International District**.

If Sound Transit can reconsider plans and order studies to increase information and improve outcomes in South Lake Union, it must apply the same standard to the Chinatown International District!

One well-resourced community received flexibility and additional studies, *while a historic immigrant neighborhood is asked to accept disruption and bypass without the same level of analysis*. That is how **systemic inequity** in infrastructure planning continues.

Deferring the second downtown tunnel and strengthening the existing CID station as a *unified Jackson Hub* could save billions while restoring the **Chinatown International District** as the center of the region's transit network, as promised to voters in 2016.

At the same time, correcting the station name to **Chinatown International District Station** aligns Sound Transit with city law and respects the identity of this historic community.

The **Chinatown International District** should not be treated as a construction zone that transit simply passes by.

It should be recognized as the heart of a connected regional transit system and a destination that deserves equitable planning and uplifting.

As a federally funded project, this decision must comply with the *Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VI)* and the *National Environmental Policy Act* by fully studying alternatives and ensuring that impacts on the **Chinatown International District** are not disproportionate.

One hub, one community, one correct name:

Chinatown–International District Station.

Brien Chow

Co-Founder Transit Equity for All

FOR MORE INFORMATION... linktr.ee/TransitEquityforAll **MFo4th**

References

- Sound Transit Board Motion M2023-109 (December 2023).
- City of Seattle Office of Planning and Community Development Chinatown International District neighborhood planning documents.
- Ordinance No. 119297 states that the Seattle Comprehensive Plan is amended to:
 - Add the Chinatown/International District Neighborhood Plan to the City's planning documents
 - Amend the Comprehensive Plan's Land Use Element and appendices, and
 - Adopt goals, policies, and implementation actions for that district as part of the City's long-range planning framework.

Key Federal Equity and Environmental Justice Laws

1. Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964

Civil Rights Act of 1964 — Title VI

Title VI prohibits discrimination based on **race, color, or national origin** in programs receiving federal financial assistance.

Transit agencies must ensure that their decisions do not create **disproportionate adverse impacts on minority communities**.

For transportation projects, Title VI requires agencies to:

- Evaluate whether project alternatives disproportionately affect minority communities
- Provide meaningful public participation opportunities
- Document on how decisions avoid or mitigate inequitable impacts

This law applies directly to Sound Transit because the agency receives federal transportation funding.

Source

U.S. Department of Transportation. *Title VI and Environmental Justice in Transportation Planning*.

2. National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)

National Environmental Policy Act

NEPA requires federal agencies and federally funded projects to evaluate **environmental and community impacts** before decisions are made.

Key requirements include:

- Studying a **reasonable range of alternatives**
- Analyzing impacts on communities and historic districts
- Providing transparency and public input

If alternatives that could reduce harm to a community are not studied, the environmental review process can be challenged.

For projects like the **Ballard Link Extension**, NEPA governs the **Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)** process.

Source

Council on Environmental Quality. *NEPA Regulations and Environmental Impact Statement Requirements*.

3. Federal Transit Administration Environmental Justice Guidance

Federal Transit Administration Environmental Justice Circular (FTA Circular 4703.1)

The Federal Transit Administration requires transit agencies to evaluate whether projects create:

- **Disproportionately high and adverse effects on minority populations**
- **Displacement of businesses or residents**
- **Barriers to access for transit-dependent communities**

Transit agencies must also demonstrate that:

- Less harmful alternatives were considered
- Communities were meaningfully engaged
- Impacts were minimized where possible

This policy is especially relevant when infrastructure affects **historic minority neighborhoods** like the **Chinatown International District**.

Source

Federal Transit Administration. *Environmental Justice Policy Guidance for Federal Transit Projects*.

Betty Lau

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

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

It's been three years since an earlier board voted to make North and South of CID the preferred alternatives. South of CID has been re-branded Dearborn Street, even though the station platform is at 6th and Royal Brougham (HNTB, 2023). North of CID has been rebranded Midtown, even though it's in South Downtown.

These two stations bypass the CID even though the published Purpose and Need for light rail is to provide accessibility, connectivity and opportunities to nearby communities of color! (2022 DEIS)

One would expect these preferred alternatives to be superior to the voter approved and community chosen 4th Avenue Transit Hub at Union Station. But they are not.

Challenges exist in making North and South of CID fulfill promises of racial, social and economic justice for the bypassed CID.

Areas for improvement in meaningful community engagement:

Collaborate with the CID Vision Advisory Group.

Collaborate with the Citizens Accessibility Advisory Committee.

Language access: provide materials in the top 7 languages and make them available throughout the Region

Analyze the alternatives in terms of economic and social impacts as set forth by NEPA.

Provide a 90-day comment period.

Thank you.

Brian Aske

Sound Transit System Expansion Committee,

I lead a concrete specialty contracting business in the PNW and my company has some experience working on Sound Transit Expansion projects. I also volunteer as chair of the National Progressive Design-Build Committee for the Design-Build Institute of America (DBIA), a non-profit organization that defines, teaches, and promotes best practices in design-build project delivery for owners and practitioners.

I strongly support Sound Transit leveraging Progressive Design-Build (PDB) as a delivery method to address the agency's need for completing future expansion projects on a limited budget while needing to balance fund availability with decisions on scope and quality. These projects are too important to fail, and Sound Transit needs to better leverage the information and expertise that its builders can provide by integrating them with designers from the onset of the project before the start of design. Based on the dynamics I see, this is Sound Transit's best path forward.

I also strongly encourage Sound Transit, for the success of these projects and the local provider industry, to fully and carefully implement DBIA's Best Practices for Progressive Design-Build and leverage the local expertise of builders and designers that have been successfully executing PDB for the University of Washington, Washington State University and other public agencies who lead the successful delivery of capital projects through PDB in Washington. The PDB delivery method has been leveraged now successfully in the state for at least ten years and Washington leads the country in well executed, successful PDB.

Thank you for your consideration of this important decision,
Brian Aske

Brian Aske, FDBIA
President



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John Niles

Board decisions are pending on how much expansion of the Link Light Rail network is affordable. The timing and scope of expansion decisions need to be influenced by the failure of the original 17 light rail spine stations approved by voters in 1996 to yet achieve the 2010 ridership goal to average routinely a total of 105,000 daily boardings, despite recently adding new stations all the way north to Lynnwood and south to Federal Way.

--

John S. Niles

Co-founder, Smarter Transit

President, Global Telematics | globaltelematics.com | [linkedin.com/in/globaltelematics/](https://www.linkedin.com/in/globaltelematics/)

Executive Research Director, CATES -- Center for Advanced Transportation and Energy Solutions

Research Associate, Mineta Transportation Institute, San José State University

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New 2nd edition book I co-authored: *The End of Driving: Automated Cars, Sharing vs Owning, and the Future of Mobility*

Free preview of book at <https://www.sciencedirect.com/book/monograph/9780443223921/the-end-of-driving>

Order at <https://www.amazon.com/End-Driving-Transportation-Planning-Automated/dp/0443223920>

Comments received after the meeting's comment deadline

Edwin Mendez Rodriguez

Dear Chair and Members of the Sound Transit Board,

As a resident of Issaquah, I am writing to strongly advocate for the continued funding and development of the ST3 light rail extension to our city.

I recognize the significant budgetary constraints and affordability hurdles currently facing Sound Transit, and I value the board's efforts to manage these challenges with fiscal responsibility. However, I believe it is vital to maintain the commitment to the Issaquah line. For over ten years, our community has integrated this connection into its long-term vision. This project is not just about transit; it is about providing my family, friends, and neighbors with dependable access to regional employment, education, and essential services.

As our population grows, the need for a high-capacity alternative to highway congestion becomes increasingly urgent. Delivering this link will provide a meaningful substitute for driving and support the sustainable development of our region.

I respectfully ask the Board to prioritize the Issaquah light rail station and to continue collaborating with the City of Issaquah to ensure this project stays on track. Thank you for your time and for your dedication to our regional transit system.

Sincerely,

Edwin Mendez Rodriguez

Issaquah Resident

Gwyn Pohl Drake

Hi,

I am an Issaquah resident of 8 years and native Seattle-ite of over 30 years. It's amazing to see the progress the region has made by putting in lightrail over the decades. There were times when it felt like the system would never come to fruition. The only way to continue this progress and plan for our growing community and the environment is to keep the voter approved Isasquah lightrail that we've been paying towards in our taxes.

Gwyn Pohl Drake

Martin Westerman

Greetings Board Members,

I praise light rail where it works: for connecting residential areas with centers of employment, commerce and entertainment. But the landscape has changed from when you planned West Seattle & Ballard light rail (WSBLE) 15 years ago.

So it's a mystery to us how you can continue to support building two terribly damaging light rail stubs (WSLE & BLE). Did any of you read the DEIS and FEIS your staff produced? WSBLE will not solve any of the problems it's intended to address — attracting riders, reducing traffic congestion and pollution, or providing a strong benefit to cost ratio.

Sound Transit's original sin is taking immature plans and designs to the ballot — to paraphrase Eric Goldwyn, NYU Marron Institute of Urban Management program manager. Then, as full study, design & construction work reveal complications and exploding costs, leaders act surprised and blame voters for backing them into a corner.

You are not backed into a corner. Voters in 2016 did not approve 600% cost overruns, 15 year delivery delays, or "irreparable" damage to their environment and communities. You do not have to deliver that. You do not have to deliver a \$19 billion WSBLE when voters approved a \$4.7 billion WSBLE. You brought an immature light rail plan and design to voters, and your subsequent DEIS and FEIS studies say they are not feasible to deliver.

Before she became Seattle mayor and joined this board, Ms. Wilson noted that light rail has opened a large corridor in Seattle, but it has ongoing equity and rider experience issues in its conceptualization and planning. Ongoing problems the DEIS and FEIS also note are environmental damage, poor mitigation planning and community disruption. You have also heard this from residents and businesses in the International District, SODO and West Seattle, and from organizations such as Transit Equity For All, West Seattle SkyLink, Seattle Green Spaces Coalition, Rethink The Link, Washington Policy Center, Smarter Transit and others.

The light rail spine, from Angle Lake to U District, has never achieved overall ridership goals set in 1996 (105,000 boardings per day). The DEIS and FEIS state that when WSLE opens, possibly in 2042-45, it will carry no more passengers between West Seattle and Downtown than Metro buses carry today. Even PSRC's 2050 transportation forecast sees light rail carrying just 3% of all regional trips in the Snohomish-Kitsap-King-Pierce county area despite a 20% build-out, and buses carrying 5% (that number may be 5% and 10% respectively in the Seattle area).

It is time to impose ridership and cost-benefit metrics on this agency to show taxpayers they are getting their money's worth from Sound Transit. Your agency is at least \$35 billion in debt. Contrary to what Transportation Choices Coalition tells you, money does not grow on trees. You are spending taxpayer money, and we do not want it wasted.

So, how can you spend \$7-\$9 billion better to improve regional transit, instead of by building a four-mile WSLE rail stub? And how can you spend \$10-\$12 billion better on improving transit than by building a Ballard rail stub? **How can you stop supporting cost overruns, delivery delays and irreparable damage, and start improving regional transit now?**

We look forward to your "taking the right track."

Martin Westerman (& colleagues) /

SEATTLE/KING COUNTY BUILDING & CONSTRUCTION TRADES COUNCIL

Chartered by Building and Construction Trades Dept • AFL-CIO
14675 Interurban Ave. S., Suite 101
Tukwila, WA 98168



SAM HEM, President

Members of the System Expansion Committee
Sound Transit
401 South Jackson Street
Seattle, WA 98104-2826

MONTY ANDERSON, Executive Secretary

March 12, 2026

Subject: Support for Continued Progress on Sound Transit Expansion to West Seattle

Dear Members of the Committee:

Thank you for your continued thoughtful progress on expansion of Sound Transit's capital projects and services throughout the region. On behalf of over 20,000 construction workers and their families across the region and the 19 affiliate unions in the Seattle-King County Building Trades, I am writing to encourage plans, design and decisions that build on Sound Transit's momentum toward the development of a truly world-class regional transit system, including expansion to West Seattle. We are eager to continue to support the Board with bold and strategically aggressive plans and long-term implementation of a successful program.

Sound Transit is not just connecting communities – it is building economic opportunity for countless working families, and the West Seattle expansion is a critical step in this vision. We appreciate the Sound Transit Board's approval of funding for the design work on the West Seattle expansion in 2025, and the Sound Transit team's creative and diligent work on this project. The decision to proceed with the West Seattle design has led to important cost savings analysis and the potential for smart design modifications that add up to dozens of properties avoided, less impact to neighborhoods and approximately \$2.6 billion in savings for the West Seattle project.

It is critical that the next phase of the West Seattle design work is funded, so that we can continue momentum, unlock thousands of good jobs and deliver this transformative light rail project. A delay of the West Seattle expansion past June 2026 risks job loss, loss of a consistently trained and ready workforce, difficulties with project delivery, project timeline delays and in turn, dramatic cost increases. Approving the next phase of West Seattle design will enable Sound Transit to retain the highly skilled workforce needed to complete this work, putting us closer to groundbreakings and completion of this generational legacy infrastructure project.

The economic opportunity vision of Sound Transit's light rail is achieved by improving transit access for working families across the region—and by creating thousands of good Union jobs to build and operate expanded light rail. Importantly, in partnership with Sound Transit, we are training the future generation of workers from local communities, particularly through apprenticeships which provide a pathway out of poverty. However, if the next steps on West Seattle are delayed, we risk losing critical momentum that puts this economic opportunity promise in jeopardy.

Thank you for your consideration.

In Solidarity,

Lisa Bogardus
Assistant Executive Secretary
Seattle Building & Construction Trades Council

WEST SEATTLE LIGHT RAIL - **AT ANY PRICE?**

In 2016, voters approved \$1.7 billion for a West Seattle-Downtown light rail line. Since then, cost estimates for the West Seattle Link Extension to SODO have soared to \$7 billion, with an additional \$2 billion required for the SODO-Downtown connection. This brings the total cost for the WSLE light rail project to \$9 billion—making it the most expensive new urban rail system per mile in the world.

The **cost** to West Seattle is high.

- West Seattle residents will lose their direct, no-transfer bus ride to downtown Seattle; instead, the new light rail will only go as far as SODO, requiring two transfers to reach downtown.
- The project will displace 70 businesses and eliminate 500 local jobs in West Seattle.
- Families in West Seattle will lose access to a 6,200-member health club, two music schools, a daycare center serving 157 children, and swimming lessons for 1,300 kids. Many low-income families lack the time, money, or transportation to reach distant venues.
- Thirteen neighborhood food sources will be lost, **creating a "food desert" between Delridge and Alaska Junction** that will disproportionately impact lower-income families. Some have already shuttered under the treat of eminent domain.
- The region will lose vital urban tree canopy as Sound Transit clears acres of trees in the West Duwamish Greenbelt and along Longfellow Creek which **will worsen the Delridge "heat island"**—and cause permanent and irreparable damage to the environment and habitats for herons, beavers, native salmon, foxes, eagles

Currently, West Seattle buses transport 27,000 riders per day directly to downtown—no transfers required. In contrast, the WSLE is expected to reach only SODO by 2032, serving fewer than 5,400 riders daily. Even when the WSLE is fully completed (2042–2050), Sound Transit forecasts it will carry 27,000 riders per day but require 2–3 transfers.

We are transit riders who support light rail—where it works. Given these figures, why invest in the WSLE when it does not serve most transit-dependent people in the south end? Improving existing bus service in West Seattle is more equitable and could save \$7 billion.

We urge the board to complete the "Spine" while rethinking Sound Transit 3, then prioritize projects with a higher mobility-to-dollar ratio than WSLE.

rethinkthelink.org

The Enterprise Initiative Retreat - Recommendations for board members to consider

- The "enterprise initiative" should start by acknowledging major shifts in travel patterns and regional population distribution.
- Light rail extensions that were *marginal* in the original plan are now *unjustifiable* given much higher costs and lower demand.
- Better city planning alone can't solve the fundamental mismatch between light rail and many regional corridors; alternative solutions are needed.
- Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) can provide much greater coverage across Sound Transit's 983 square mile taxing district at far lower cost - and many years sooner.
- Social and geographic equity should drive transit planning, ensuring that all communities have access, not just select corridors.



March 2, 2026

Dow Constantine, CEO
Sound Transit Board
401 S. Jackson Street
Seattle, WA 98104

Re: Support for Advancing the Issaquah–Bellevue Light Rail Connection

Dear Mr. Constantine and Members of the Sound Transit Board,

On behalf of the Master Builders Association of King and Snohomish Counties (MBAKS), I am writing to express our strong support for Sound Transit’s continued commitment to delivering high-capacity light rail service from Issaquah to Bellevue as originally envisioned in ST3.

As the region’s largest residential construction trade association, representing more than 2,400 members involved in homebuilding and housing supply, MBAKS views the Issaquah light rail extension not only as a transportation investment, but as a foundational land-use and housing investment that will shape East King County’s ability to welcome future residents, improve housing affordability, and support sustainable community growth.

Light Rail as a Catalyst for Housing Supply and Smart Growth

East King County has experienced substantial growth over the past two decades, and Issaquah continues to be one of the region’s most important job, service, and housing centers. As noted in regional planning frameworks such as PSRC’s Vision 2040, the Central Issaquah Regional Growth Center is expressly designed to accommodate housing and employment growth while reducing vehicle miles traveled and transportation emissions. Light rail is essential to realizing that vision.

Transit-oriented development (TOD) is among the most powerful tools cities have to increase housing supply; particularly in walkable, mixed-use neighborhoods where demand is highest. The Issaquah–Bellevue line would anchor new opportunities for multifamily housing, missing-middle housing, and mixed-income developments that align with Issaquah’s long-term plans and regional growth expectations. Continued investment in high-capacity transit strengthens the feasibility of these housing projects by making transit-rich neighborhoods more attractive, more livable, and more sustainable.

Relieving Pressure on the Housing Market

As demand for housing in East King County continues to rise, homebuilders need the certainty of reliable regional transportation investments to plan and finance long-term projects. Light rail infrastructure gives cities and developers the predictability required for zoning updates, infrastructure expansions, and





redevelopment of aging commercial or low-intensity land uses into vibrant, transit-oriented housing districts.

The Issaquah–Bellevue line will allow more residents to live closer to where they work, reducing household transportation costs, lowering congestion along the I-90 corridor, and reducing emissions across the region. With thousands of future homes planned in Issaquah and nearby communities, light rail ensures those homes are supported by the transit capacity necessary to create complete communities where families can thrive.

Addressing East King County’s Transit Desert and Supporting Workforce Access

Many East King County communities: particularly those along the I-90 corridor, remain underserved by frequent, reliable transit. Extending light rail to Issaquah directly addresses this gap and provides new opportunities for workers, including those in the construction, trades, hospitality, healthcare, and education sectors, to access jobs throughout Bellevue, Redmond, Seattle, and the broader Eastside. A stronger transit network expands the labor pool available for construction and homebuilding, supporting both housing delivery and regional economic growth.

A Forward-Looking Investment for a Growing Region

MBAKS appreciates Sound Transit’s careful analysis of long-term capital program needs. However, we believe the Issaquah–Bellevue connection remains essential for achieving the region’s objectives around housing, sustainability, and equitable access to opportunity. Scaling back or delaying this project would hinder Issaquah’s capacity to meet growth targets and deprive the Eastside of a once-in-a-generation chance to reshape growth around sustainable, high-capacity transit.

We respectfully encourage Sound Transit to maintain its commitment to the Issaquah light rail extension and advance this project as originally planned.

Thank you for your consideration,

Sincerely,

Matt Haight

King County Government Affairs Manager

Master Builders Association of King and Snohomish Counties

CC: Mark Mullet, Mayor City of Issaquah

Issaquah City Council