

07/09/2026 System Expansion Committee
Meeting Written Public Comment
Submissions

Submissions

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Betty Lau

Written Public Comment by Betty Lau, Sound Transit System Expansion Committee Meeting, Thursday, July 9, 2026, 1:30 p.m., Union Station

I'm Betty Lau, co-founder of Transit Equity for All, board member of the Chong Wa Benevolent Association of Washington, and member of the Sound Transit Citizens Accessibility Advisory Committee.

During the men's world cup, light rail ridership smashed all records. World Cup fandom brought the promised economic boost to Pioneer Square, Downtown, and the Waterfront, except the CID.

The temporary economic boost generated by international soccer bypassed the CID, yet again. Some blame historic government neglect; some blame long-standing unresolved criminal activity; yet others blame planning that turned the CID into a transportation terminus for scooters, bikes, and ride shares rather than a desirable visitor destination.

The point is, if unintentional damage is that bad now, what will it be like with the *intentional* bypass created by the board's preferred option of split stations north and south of the CID?

Secondly, staff have stated that information about north and south of CID will not be released until the new DEIS is published. Additionally, CEO Dow has declared his desire for a shortened, 60-day public comment period instead of the 90 days we previously had.

These two actions, secrecy and a truncated public comment period means that the public will have 60 days to read, evaluate and comment on over 10,000 pages of DEIS. I estimate 10,000 pages because the 2022 DEIS is to be carried forward as part of the new DEIS.

60 days is not enough time, given the large numbers of non-English speakers, limited English proficient and people with visual and auditory disabilities in Snohomish, King and Pierce counties. We will need translations of key portions of the new combined DEIS in Chinese, Vietnamese, Spanish, east African languages, as well as braille, audio, tactile maps and other modes.

The 2022 DEIS rollout was insensitive to the needs of immigrants and the disabled in that only the Executive Summary was translated. The problem with that is it was a summary. It did not have even a bare modicum of detail needed for proper consideration and comment.

About 5,400 public comments were turned in. Less than 5 were from limited English speakers and none were detected from the disabled community.

We will need conversions into braille, audio, and other modes, along with tactile maps in order for the ST Citizen's Accessibility Advisory Committee (CAAC) to do its job of advising the board. We also need it disseminated widely for other members of the disabled community who use these formats.

According to Sound Transit: "The purpose of the Citizens Accessibility Advisory Committee (CAAC) is to provide feedback regarding challenges and solutions for people with disabilities and older adults using Sound Transit bus and rail. **CAAC members are to identify challenges and solutions for the purpose of improving regional mobility, provide input regarding existing and future projects, and advise Sound Transit staff on the enhancement of transportation services for individuals with disabilities and older adults**" (received Thursday, Mar. 5, 2026 but post-dated to Mar. 31, 2026).

The fact is the CAAC has not been advising the board because we aren't getting information or we get it long after decisions are made. And there is no formal process by which to convey our advice. Meeting every other month has also slowed, delayed or simply blocked "...input regarding existing and future projects."

If there's a better way to hamper CAAC from carrying out its charge to "...improve regional mobility," I can't think of a better way to do it than by withholding information, meeting less than other Sound Transit committees and limiting the DEIS time for public comment—all while claiming to the feds that there is indeed an advisory group that specifically addresses the concerns of those with disabilities, non-English speakers and the elderly. George Orwell calls that strategy Doublethink and when manifested, Newspeak.

Given the information embargo about north and south of CID preferred alternatives, the shorter 60-day comment period and a fall publication date, there's time to get started on those translations into the languages and the necessary communication modes of the light rail riding public.

Transit Equity for All and CAAC are ready to collaborate with you about the best ways to have meaningful engagement with the most vulnerable of the transit riding public—limited English speakers, older adults, and those with disabilities.

Thank you.

Brien Chow

Written Public Comment by Brien Chow, Sound Transit Board Meeting, Thursday, July 9, 2026, Union Station, 1:30 p.m.

I am Brien Chow, Transit Equity for All and board member of the Chong Wa Benevolent Association of Washington.

"Operational performance during the 2026 FIFA World Cup provides an opportunity to evaluate..."

Transportation Value vs. Capital Investment

Major public infrastructure investments should be evaluated using objective questions routinely asked by *transportation professionals, legislators, auditors, and public finance experts*:

- *Does the project solve a demonstrated transportation need?*
- *Can existing infrastructure be optimized before constructing new infrastructure?*
- *Will the investment improve regional connectivity and accessibility?*
- *Do the expected public benefits justify the multi-billion-dollar cost?*

These questions provide an objective framework for evaluating whether the proposed **Second Downtown Seattle Transit Tunnel (DSTT2 with Split Stations)** represents the highest and best use of limited public resources.

Sound Transit currently reports an approximately \$35 billion affordability gap while considering one of the largest remaining capital investments in the ST3 program: the **Second Downtown Seattle Transit Tunnel (DSTT2 with Split Stations)**.

The central planning question is not whether a second downtown tunnel could be built...

The question is whether constructing it now...

represents the highest transportation value for taxpayers.

The existing **Chinatown–International District Station** is already the region's principal multimodal transfer hub, *connecting Link light rail, Sounder commuter rail, Amtrak, King County Metro, Community Transit, the Seattle Streetcar, and regional bus services.*

Public planning discussions have consistently recognized the Chinatown–International District Station's importance as one of the region's most significant transportation hubs.

Operational performance during the **2026 FIFA World Cup** provides an important opportunity to evaluate the existing **Downtown Seattle Transit Tunnel (DSTT1 Spine)**.

Despite extraordinary demand, the tunnel continued to support intensive rail operations through modern train control systems and high-frequency service.

This experience raises an important question about planning.

If the existing tunnel can accommodate extraordinary demand through operational management and modern signaling technology...

Does constructing a new \$4.5 billion tunnel (DSTT with Split Stations) ... provide transportation benefits proportional to its cost?

Demand peaks occur primarily during limited commuting periods each weekday. Before committing billions of dollars to new infrastructure intended largely to increase peak-hour capacity...

It is reasonable to determine whether optimizing DSTT1 Spine through signaling improvements, operational refinements, and fleet management could achieve comparable transportation benefits at substantially lower cost.

Given the agency's reported affordability gap, every major capital investment should demonstrate that it provides measurable public value that cannot be achieved more efficiently by improving existing public infrastructure.

The North and South of CID Split Station Alternatives

An effective regional transit system is measured not by the amount of infrastructure it builds, but by how well it serves the public.

The same four questions should guide evaluation of the proposed **North and South of CID Split Station** alternatives:

- *Do these alternatives improve regional mobility?*
- *Do they strengthen connectivity and accessibility?*
- *Do they provide greater transportation value than optimizing the existing Chinatown–International District Station?*
- *Are the public benefits sufficient to justify the additional cost and long-term operational complexity?*

The existing **Chinatown–International District Station** functions as the region's primary multimodal transportation hub, *bringing together Link light rail, Sounder commuter rail, Amtrak, King County Metro, Community Transit, the Seattle Streetcar, and regional bus connections in a single location.*

The proposed **North and South of CID Split Station** alternatives would distribute these connections across separate stations rather than strengthening the existing hub. Publicly identified concerns include:

- **Longer walking distances between transit services.**
- **Additional elevator and escalator movements.**
- **More complex transfers for passengers with luggage, mobility limitations, or disabilities.**
- **Reduced convenience for regional rail passengers connecting to Link light rail.**
- **More difficult wayfinding for visitors and occasional riders.**

The objective of regional transit planning should be:

- *to minimize transfers,*
- *shorten walking distances,*
- *improve accessibility,*
- *and simplify passenger movement throughout the transportation network.*

This leads to the central transportation question:

***Would constructing separate stations...
north and south of the Chinatown–International District
improve the passenger experience...
more than investing in and optimizing the existing
Chinatown–International District Station
as the region’s principal multimodal transfer hub?***

When considered alongside *Sound Transit's* reported affordability gap and the demonstrated operational resilience of *DSTT1 Spine* during the *2026 FIFA World Cup...*

These questions warrant comprehensive technical and financial evaluation before irreversible construction commitments are made.

Brien Chow

Co-Founder Transit Equity for All
FOR MORE INFORMATION... linktr.ee/TransitEquityforAll MFo4th

Public Comment by Brien Chow, Sound Transit Board Meeting, Thursday, July 9, 2026, Union Station, 1:30 p.m.

Good afternoon, Director Birney and Board Members.

My name is Brien Chow. I am Co-Founder of Transit Equity for All and Chair of the Outreach Committee for the Chong Wa Benevolent Association of Washington.

Sound Transit has acknowledged an affordability gap of approximately \$35 billion...

Before committing another \$4.5 billion to the ***Second Downtown Seattle Transit Tunnel... DSTT2 with the split stations.***

I respectfully ask the Board to answer four fundamental questions:

- Does ***DSTT2 with the split stations*** solve a demonstrated transportation need?
- Can we optimize our existing infrastructure first?
- Will it improve regional connectivity and accessibility?
- Do its public benefits justify its multi-billion-dollar cost?

The existing ***Chinatown–International District Station*** is the region's primary multimodal hub... connecting ***Link, Sounder, Amtrak, Metro, Community Transit, the Seattle Streetcar, and regional bus service.***

Yet the proposed ***split-station North and South of CID*** would...

- ***disperse those connections,***
- ***creating longer walks,***
- ***more transfers,***
- ***and greater accessibility challenges.***

The *2026 FIFA World Cup* also demonstrated the resilience of the existing ***Downtown Seattle Transit Tunnel (DSTT1-Spine)*** under extraordinary demand.

Before making an irreversible commitment... I respectfully ask the Board to *defer DSTT2 with the split-stations* until an independent technical and financial review determines whether optimizing *DSTT1-Spine...* this proven public asset... can better serve riders while protecting taxpayer resources.

Thank you

Gordon Bluechel

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

I will be commenting virtually but here are the slides that go with my comments. This raises concern that the extent of the wetlands at Everett Link SWI station may not be fully understood.

Best regards,

Gordon Bluechel
CEO & Managing Director
ACCESS LASER
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Access Laser Input on Everett Link & SW Everett Industrial Center Station Siting

Wetland Mitigation Concern with SWI-A

Access Laser – 2211 West Casino Road, Everett WA 98204

Gordon Bluechel – CEO & Managing Director

Established in 1999 in Arlington

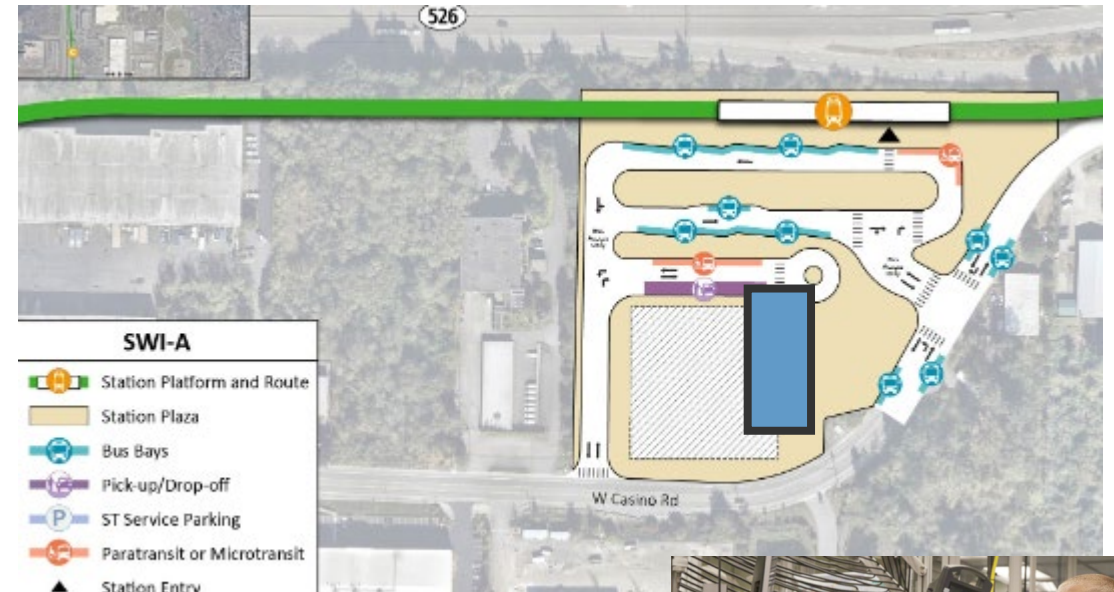
- 2018 to Present: In SW Everett Industrial Center on Casino Road

Acquired by TRUMPF Group in 2017

- Stuttgart Germany based €5B laser & machine tools group of companies
- Part of the EUV Business Division which supplies subsystems required for cutting-edge, high-density semiconductor devices made with process nodes at 7 nm and below

Employing 72 workers

- High wage employer
- Average tenure of almost 6 years
- 69% live in Snohomish County



Concern about Potential Impact to Wetlands from SWI-A

5.5.1 SWI-A



Note: Minor inconsistency between bay requirements in Table 4-2 and concept will be addressed along with further refinement of bus network assumptions if the alternative is advanced to Phase 2.

Figure 5-21 SWI-A Station Access Facility Concept Map



Early station layout for station alternative SWI-A, an elevated station located just south of SR 526 across the highway from Boeing. | Click on image to enlarge



The preferred SWI-A station concept occupies the parcel that contains the City of Everett-mapped wetland on 2211 W. Casino Road.

- Standing water from pond
- Beaver activity observed
- Mature wetland vegetation

Wetland Mitigation May Raise Costs for SWI-A

The Draft EIS did not identify wetland mitigation issues for SWI-A

Possible that the wetlands have evolved since last mapped

- The wetland contains an active beaver colony. Evidence of beaver activity includes multiple trees felled by beavers, some of which have fallen into the rear of the 2211 W. Casino Road parking lot
- Standing water is observed at all times of the year

We have made a public records request to Sound Transit for all records relating to wetlands and critical areas for the Everett Link Extension Southwest Industrial (SWI-A) station site

Access Laser continues to prefer a different site than SWI-A due to the potential disruption to our business

- The EUV systems used by Intel, Samsung, TSMC, and others cost 200-400M Euros each and have downtime costs of \$1M/hour
- We will be required to build a whole new production facility and qualify it with our parent and ASML prior to being able to decommission current facility – months long process & costly as we must duplicate equipment
- Some concern our parent company could decide to move production to Germany instead