

08/13/2026 System Expansion Committee
Meeting Written Public Comment
Submissions

Submissions

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Joe Kunzler

Joe Kunzler here.

Say listen, I hope the Board AND Staff are well aware that Alex Tsimerman can come back at this meeting. I hope every single ST Boardmember [studies their procedures](#). I point you to pages 6-8. It is important to exclude Avrum (Alex) Tsimerman for a year at the first opportunity. Hate doesn't need a platform. Sound Transit has had to work hard since a historic [2017 PDC case](#) to keep Tsimerman at bay.

In my opinion, for Chair Birney, this could very well be a full-circle moment for her and I'll leave it at that. It's also important that the Chair have eyes on the boardroom/battlefield to interdict trouble immediately. Tsimerman's sign could be an easy vehicle to that one-year exclusion.

Thoughtfully;

Joe A. Kunzler

growlernoise@gmail.com

Hi there ST Boardmembers & staffers;

Joe A. Kunzler here. I wanted to make damn sure this e-mail/intel brief landed on the ST Board System Executive Committee's desks before tomorrow's events.

The TL;DR version for the youngsters in the audience addicted to social media: Make Sound Transit like Redmond City Council. Some can talk about they're against hate, tomorrow is the real deal.

Because I don't know who's going to be Chair tomorrow, you all get [the briefing](#) as well as some of your staff. Many of you have seen Tsimerman and what his hate can do. Some of you have had the PDC have to address you appeasing Tsimerman. I ask you to please inform your colleagues just how fun that is. /sarcasm Don't worry, Brandi Kruse is fouling around and finding out too, and so too is a used car saleswoman.

Today is also the 9-year anniversary of events in Virginia that fundamentally changed this nation. Charlottesville, Virginia, was a wake-up call to another Joe who said we're in a battle for the soul of this nation. That Joe saved us from COVID-19 too, you know.

I say we're in a battle for the soul of Sound Transit. But some of us have been here before. That intimidates Tsimerman. Maybe he won't show up, I've noticed that lately.

See we [have the procedures](#). We have the experience. We have the airspace. This isn't going to be Sound Transit 2017 or Redmond 2023.

One last thing, if nothing else... from How Democracies Die,

"Mutual toleration refers to the idea that as long as our rivals play by constitutional rules, we accept that they have an equal right to exist, compete for power, and govern. We may disagree with, and even strongly dislike, our rivals, but we nevertheless accept them as legitimate. This means recognizing that our political rivals are decent, patriotic, law-abiding citizens—that they love our country and respect the Constitution just as we do. It means that even if we believe our opponents' ideas to be foolish or wrong-headed, we do not view them as an existential threat."

Tsimerman is a threat to mutual toleration. I ask you to please stand up to that threat.

My YouTube notes on the last showdown w/ Tsimerman are up at bit.ly/202602Adolph for your review.

Very strategically;

Joe A. Kunzler

growlernoise@gmail.com

Reid Smith

Dear Sound Transit Board,

Please do whatever is in your power to bring Light Rail to Ballard ASAP.

It feels completely disheartening to me to think that I will first get to ride the Light Rail to Ballard when I am 67 and my future kids are possibly in their mid-30s.

That is crazy that we, the City of Seattle and the region, are not able to figure that out. Honestly, it's a little embarrassing.

Building an interconnected, fast, reliable, and efficient light rail system that serves key population hubs like Ballard is a necessity for making our city an actual city and not just some big town. People want to live in a city where they can take Light Rail everywhere, not where they need to drive and get stuck in traffic everyday.

This is a major priority for me and I will be voting for candidates that actually do things to support that mission.

Please figure this out.

Reid Smith

Betty Lau

Written Public Comment by Betty Lau, Sound Transit System Expansion Committee Meeting, Thursday, Aug. 13, 2026, 1:30 p.m., Union Station

Hello, System Expansion Committee Members!

I'm Betty Lau, co-founder of Transit Equity for All (TEA), board member of the Chong Wa Benevolent Association (est. 1891), and member of the Sound Transit Citizens Accessibility Advisory Committee.

"The full Ballard Link extension from Chinatown-International District to Market Street in Ballard could open as soon as 2042 if Sound Transit further reduces project costs, increases financial capacity, and secures the remaining construction funding" (Ballard Link Extension Update, 7/31/26).

It's a mystery as to how this CID connection to Ballard and Seattle Center was arrived at, because the information embargo, i.e., lack of transparency, continues.

Could it be Sound Transit is finally keeping its promise to Chinatown International District to use our chosen and promised location of 4th Avenue at Union Station for the regional ST3 Southern Hub? Is **that** the connecting station?

Or could it be the Sound Transit Board will vote against preserving Chinatown International District and seize property long owned by families of color on 5th Avenue while closing Chinatown's commercial and residential streets for 10 years? Is **that** the connecting station?

Hold on! There's a Sound Transit Instagram posting! In it, Sound Transit staff says south of CID and North of CID are the stations that will connect the CID to Market Street and the Seattle Center ("Brad Owen, acting chief capital delivery officer, outlines a path to opening light rail all the way from Chinatown International District to Market Street by 2042" IG July 31, 2026).

Huh?? The mysterious connecting station(s) can't possibly be the split stations of North and South of CID because **North station is in Pioneer Square** and **South station is deep in SODO**, with its platform at 6th Avenue South & Royal Brougham (HNTB report, 2023). From there, the distance to Little Saigon Creative is 1.1 miles--definitely outside the walk shed centered on the 6th and Royal Brougham/South of CID platform.

Someone at Sound Transit needs to explain how split stations outside the Chinatown International District are suddenly providing connectivity for the CID and the Region.

According to Sound Transit consulting firm VMS: "**The South of CID alternative does not provide good connectivity between the light rail lines, to the heavy rail corridor, or to a major employment center. It is unclear what the advantage of this location is from a utility standpoint**" (VMS report, 2023).

In addition, HNTB points out in its 2023 report that the split stations **force out-of-direction travel, longer distances to transfers, 12-minute walks, extra transfers, and longer distances to other transit modes (bus, streetcar, ferries, Sounder, Amtrak)**. Further, those from the eastside will lose direct

access to the airport. Northbound riders are forced to get off in SODO and walk/wheel uphill to Pioneer Square in order to continue journeying north.

Construction of the North of CID station calls for demolition of the Reynolds Hotel, owned by the Imai family. The Imais were incarcerated in WWII by Executive Order 9066. The family was among the very few fortunate enough get their property back after being released in 1945. Ironically, they stand to lose it again, permanently, and against their wishes, to Sound Transit.

Due to the many flaws of the split stations, **five** Legislative Districts passed resolutions against them and in support of the promised but since scuttled 4th Avenue Super Hub. The Legislative Districts are the 11th, 36th, 37th, 43rd, and the 46th (see respective websites to read the resolutions).

By claiming North and South of CID stations connect Chinatown International District to Market Street to the Seattle Center, Sound Transit staff are adding a new fiction to an already lengthy list of fictions, starting with telling the CID community that we had a choice of routes, 4th Avenue at Union Station or 5th Avenue; and when we overwhelmingly chose 4th, Sound Transit staff suddenly ceased saying we had a choice and instead, invented the North and South of CID preferred alternatives (Jan. 2023), which has deliberately delayed construction for well over 3 years, at a cost of \$50 million per month of delay (TAG recommendations report, 2022).

North of CID and South of CID stations clearly bypass the CID. From Mark Langley: "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" (Move Forward on 4th petition, 2022).

This is what happens when the Racial Equity Tool is ignored. This is what happens when the Sound Transit Accessibility Committee is not consulted. This is what happens when community collaboration is lip service. The Ballard Link Extension CID Bypass Segment is a giant disconnect for Regional Ridership, especially the most vulnerable—low-income communities of color, non-English speakers, and those with disabilities!

Sound Transit, do better!

Thank you.

Paula Goode

Dear Sound Transit Board Members and Acquisition Counsel:

As the Board considers Resolution R2026-18 and acquisition authority affecting approximately 55 West Seattle properties, I ask that you consider a basic property-owner protection:

What does Sound Transit mean by “*good-faith negotiation*,” and what must actually occur before a property is moved into condemnation?

I ask this from personal experience.

In my own Sound Transit acquisition, I provided substantial contrary valuation information supported by an independent professional appraisal review. The response was essentially that we had a “**difference of opinion**.” There was **no** meaningful back-and-forth negotiation over those differences before the matter was moved into condemnation. From condemnation notification you only have 3 options, 1. Accept the offer as presented, 2. Mediation 3. Go to Court.

Meaningful negotiation finally occurred during mediation, after I had retained condemnation counsel. That process cost me approximately \$44,000. What struck me afterward was that much of the substantive back-and-forth that occurred during a single day of mediation could have occurred across a table **before** condemnation. A property owner **should not have to spend tens of thousands of dollars to get to that table**.

My experience caused me to look more closely at the broader acquisition process. Sound Transit acquisition data I have reviewed appears to show that a substantial number of properties **proceed into condemnation** rather than being resolved through voluntary acquisition. I am seeking additional records to better understand those numbers. I have also spoken with three attorneys familiar with Sound Transit acquisitions whose experiences raise the same concern: **meaningful negotiation** frequently appears to occur **after** condemnation begins rather than before it.

That **deserves the Board's attention**, particularly now.

Sound Transit's **own procedures** and **state and federal acquisition requirements** describe more than presenting an offer and asking an owner to accept or reject it. They contemplate discussing the offer and its basis, allowing an owner to present relevant valuation information or proposed changes, considering that information, and revisiting the appraisal when new information warrants it.

Yet Sound Transit's newly updated **June 2026 Property Acquisition and Residential Relocation Handbook** describes the process to owners much more simply: an offer and appraisal are presented, and the owner is given a reasonable opportunity to “consider and respond.” The handbook also tells owners they may obtain their own certified appraisal or professional review, **but it does not clearly explain what constitutes negotiation**, what **Sound Transit will do with contrary valuation evidence**, or **what steps must occur before condemnation**.

This gap is particularly important because eminent domain begins with an **unavoidable imbalance of power**. Sound Transit controls the acquisition process and timetable, retains the appraiser and review appraiser, has experienced acquisition staff and legal counsel, and

ultimately holds the power of condemnation. The individual property owner has none of those advantages and did not choose to enter the transaction. If an owner disagrees with Sound Transit's valuation, **the burden quickly shifts to that owner to obtain professional advice**, hire an appraiser and potentially retain condemnation counsel. Some imbalance is inherent in eminent domain. The acquisition process should not **add** to it.

Before this next group of property owners enters the acquisition process, I ask the Board to establish a **formal, written pre-condemnation negotiation process**, based on Sound Transit's own procedures and applicable state and federal requirements. At minimum, it should:

1. Explain the offer and its valuation basis;
2. Give the owner a reasonable opportunity to obtain professional advice and respond;
3. Allow submission of a counteroffer, appraisal, appraisal review, remainder-damage information, or proposed changes to the acquisition;
4. Require documented consideration and response to material information submitted by the owner;
5. Require updated appraisal information and a revised offer when new information warrants a change;
6. Require documented consideration of an administrative settlement before condemnation;
7. Provide a low-cost or agency-funded neutral settlement conference or mediation when a genuine valuation dispute remains; and
8. Before referral for condemnation, require the acquisition file to document that these steps occurred, or explain why a step was not applicable.

I also ask that Sound Transit's residential and non-residential acquisition handbooks be **revised to define "negotiation" in plain language and explain the process to property owners**, including what happens when an owner submits an independent appraisal, appraisal review, or counteroffer.

None of this prevents Sound Transit from exercising eminent domain, when necessary, nor does it require the agency to accept an owner's valuation. It simply **creates a fair and transparent process** for trying to resolve legitimate differences before the property owner must enter litigation.

Condemnation should be the result of an **unsuccessful** negotiation—not the place where negotiation finally **begins**.

With a significant number of West Seattle property owners about to enter this process, I believe this is the right time for the Board to define "**negotiation**," establish a formal pre-condemnation process, and make those protections clear to property owners.

I respectfully request a written response from Sound Transit addressing whether it currently has a formal definition or required process for good-faith negotiation before condemnation; if so, what that process requires; and whether the Board and staff will consider the safeguards outlined above before these West Seattle acquisitions proceed.

Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to your response.

Respectfully, Paula Goode

Form letters

Note: The following is a form letter submitted by over 100 individuals as of the August 13, 2026 System Expansion Committee meeting.

Sound Transit Board Meeting Comments,

Dear Sound Transit Board,

Ballard needs light rail today. We all know that waiting until the 2060s is completely unacceptable. When we voted, in droves, to expand light rail to Ballard via ST3, we entrusted you to begin service to the Market Street station in Ballard in 2035. To now hear that the “best-case scenario” is 2042 is a betrayal of community trust. We have relied on Sound Transit to steward our tax dollars for the last decade, and it is outrageous that we would have nothing to show for it, a quarter- (or even half-) century later.

We demand Sound Transit do the following to ensure that rapid, reliable transit arrives to Seattle’s only disconnected regional center as soon as possible:

1. In 2026, open shuttles between Ballard and the existing network as a stopgap until our light rail station opens.
2. Release the promised Request For Information (RFI) by October 2026 to find better and faster ways to build to Market Street.
3. Provide specific details on how your five proposed financial levers will get the Ballard date to 2042, and how Sound Transit will implement them.
4. Move quickly to incorporate industry best practices, such as those outlined in the Transit Costs Project and Transit Abundance Playbook.
5. Announce and hold a public forum in Ballard in September, 2026, to be attended by Sound Transit board members, CEO, and executive leaders, with opportunities for all community members to ask questions directly.
6. Continue to host public forums in Ballard on a regular basis, both when updates or changes need to be made to the plan, and at a minimum of every 6 months.

We all want to achieve the original dream of ST3: a world-class regional rail network. Our community is prepared to partner with you to make that a reality. We look forward to your action on the above items and your increased transparency, accountability, and collaboration going forward.

Thank you for your service to our region.

Sincerely,