

08/27/2026 Board of Directors Meeting

Written Public Comment Submissions

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Brandon Johnson

Hello,

I am writing to express my opposition to the installation of fare gates on our light rail system.

While fare gates are often intended to curb fare evasion, they introduce significant drawbacks that undermine the goal of safe, accessible public transit:

- Station Congestion: Gates create bottlenecks at entrances and exits, slowing down foot traffic and creating safety hazards during peak rush hours.
- Accessibility Barriers: Physical barriers make travel significantly more difficult for riders with wheelchairs, strollers, bicycles, or heavy luggage.
- High Costs, Low Return: The steep upfront installation and ongoing maintenance costs rarely offset the revenue recovered from stopped fare evasion.
- Equity and Tone: Turnstiles shift the feel of the light rail from a welcoming public service to a heavily restricted enclosure, disproportionately impacting lower-income riders.

An open, proof-of-payment model supported by transit ambassadors is a far more effective, cost-efficient, and community-friendly approach. Please reject fare gates and keep our light rail open and accessible.

Best regards,

Brandon Johnson

Betty Lau

Written Public Comment for Sound Transit Board Meeting by Betty Lau, Thursday, Aug. 27, 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 State, and member of the Sound Transit Citizens Accessibility Advisory Committee (CAAC).

The duty of the Accessibility Committee is to "...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" (3/31/26 Sound Transit).

I've read the RapidRide R planning documents. Here is my accessibility input for your consideration.

RapidRide R will replace the #7 bus serving Rainier Avenue. It includes consolidation of bus route #7 stops, which is highly concerning for the negative impacts to seniors, the frail, non-English speakers, and those with disabilities.

While it's great to have a Rapid Ride to get us to light rail stations more quickly, please consider the unintended consequences of consolidating stops:

The stops to be eliminated include those directly in front of or near pharmacies, Kaiser Permanente, Kinon Assisted Living & Senior Activities Center, physical therapy clinics, and social service offices for residents in the Rainier Valley, those coming from Beacon Hill and other neighborhoods in South Seattle.

Apply Seattle's and King County's Racial Equity Toolkit to each existing stop to measure its community value. Sound Transit has a seldom used Racial Equity Tool. Use it, too.

The consolidation of stops would force me to walk a mile from Judkins Park station to CVS Pharmacy compared to the #7 bus stopping across the street.

Consolidation would force me to walk almost a mile from Othello Station to KinOn Nursing Home & Senior Center. By the time I walk that mile, I won't need to attend my senior exercise class! Fellow seniors from Beacon Hill and South Seattle ride the #7 to get there for senior tai qi, chi gong, Mah jong Monday, self-defense, dance, painting, tech, calligraphy and craft classes. They'll need help to walk, cane, and wheelchair the final mile....

Consolidation would force me to walk over a mile to get to physical therapy or acupuncture on Rainier Avenue.

Think of the impacts of consolidation to those who use mobility devices. Instead of making accessibility easier, consolidation of Bus #7 stops creates unnecessary barriers.

In proceeding with RapidRide R, Sound Transit, King County, and Seattle must develop a plan to get seniors and those with disabilities to Rainier Valley pharmacies, physical therapy, KinOn, Kaiser Permanente, and the many social service agencies serving low-income South Seattle.

Maybe we can have both a RapidRide R to light rail stations and a shuttle to get us over the “final mile.”
Call it the RapidRide R Plus!

Thank you.

Brien Chow

Public Comment by Brien Chow, Sound Transit Board Meeting, Thursday, 8/27/26 at Union Station, 1:30 p.m.

Good afternoon, Chair Somers and members of the Board,

I'm Brien Chow, Co-Founder of Transit Equity for All.

I urge the Board to commission an independent review before making further major commitments to DSTT2.

Sound Transit faces a \$34.5 billion funding gap.

Ballard Link no longer connects through DSTT2 to the existing CID Station.

Does the current DSTT2 configuration still deserve priority over other ST3 investments? Let's find out.

Before committing billions more...

Independently compare DSTT2 now versus deferring it to the final phases of ST3... including costs... operations... capacity... accessibility... rider benefits and opportunity costs.

Ballard needs connected transit.

West Seattle needs effective transit.

ADA riders need accessible connections.

ST3, including CID, needs an effective southern regional hub.

Deliver the highest-value ST3 benefits first!

Review DSTT2 now!

Thank you.

Devon Breithart

Hello,

Please take measures to improve Ballard transit while light rail is delayed. Please consider running shuttles/express buses to nearby light rail stations or key locations along the proposed BLE route.

Thanks,

Devon Breithart, MS, OTR/L

Occupational Therapist & Assistive Technology Specialist

Pronouns: She/Her

<https://devonbreithart.com/>

<https://www.thedynamicschoolot.com/>

Rose

Fair gates will make public transit far worse.

We will see more violence and confrontation leading to the light rail. We would not only need gates but maintenance when they are intentionally broken and a massive increase in security so people don't skip them.

There are also multiple stations where they are impractical.

It will create backlogs of people that make taking public transit far worse and far longer which will lead to less ridership.

We want to incentivize more ridership. The best way to do that is remove unruly passengers when needed and expand into Ballard and west Seattle.

This is not a one time cost. This will be an ongoing cost that people will try to strip gates for parts and technical difficulties will make people unable to use.

Vote no on fair gates

Rose
Sent from my iPhone

Jae Foxglove

Fare gates disincentive people to use public transit, create slowdowns for travelers, and create choke points that can be difficult to navigate for disabled riders and inconvenient for all. Please do not install fare gates at the light rail.

Thank you,
Jae Foxglove

Unnamed Commenters

Hi board,

The subject line sums it up.

-Seattle is sick of Sound Transit's lies. From derailments to delays without backup shuttles to ST3 not being fulfilled, the fact that Dow gets \$600k plus bonuses for his "excellency" just adds to how horrible a corporation ST is. Why are we bound to them? Why does Dow and his counterparts making more than the President of the US's salary? How did he possibly earn \$30k for a job well done? What job well done? HOW?

-The board needs to step down. Councilmembers aren't engineers. We need more folks on the board who understand how Light Rails work. The majority should be Light Rail experts. Can you explain why you think you are needed? You don't get bonus points for being on boards. Focus on your real jobs, please.

-ST3 was voted in 2016. It's a decade later and we're all a couple billion dollars short, but esp Ballard. We will never get our tax money back AND we're being squeezed to death with density. We created the density with the promise ST made to us that a light rail would come in our lifetime. Now instead we have fewer lanes, more folks getting smashed into on bikes and scooters, I hear more accidents happening now all around than ever before. Just last week someone t-boned someone on our street and yesterday a teen got hit by a car, while someone died on a scooter by being hit by a minivan. The frequency that these accidents are happening is alarming. We have less parking bc of density, but more cars than ever bc you can't get anywhere on time with the buses in Ballard. All this to say that it's time for ST to trim, trim, trim and keep your promise to Ballard before more people get smashed by cars because of what y'all have created. It doesn't take decades to buy land and figure things out and if you think it does then you have the wrong people in charge. Plenty of other major cities have done bigger transportation projects for a fraction of the price in far less time. Either you're being bamboozled or you're bamboozling us. Whichever it is, ST is single-handedly ruining Seattle. Make them get their shit together. Make them keep their promise to us. We voted. We paid. Now fire Dow, decrease extreme salaries, step down from the board, trim the fat, and start digging in Ballard. Yesterday.
Thanks.

The fare gate funding is a deeply misguided decision for a system that has done little for accessibility, struggles with basic reliability, and has been constantly delayed. Stations don't even have bathrooms or functioning escalators, but we're told that ST must drop millions on gates while it is facing massive deficits. Fares do not even come close to covering operational costs, a point shown every time fares are waived for games or a Taylor Swift concert.

Hi there —

I'm writing to strongly voice my opinion against adding fare gates at Link Stations c especially at this point in time. Fare gates create choke points, a danger in any case of public safety, and an extreme danger to members of our community while ICE is operating within our streets and taking more people than ever before.

I also believe that using this money to combat fare evasion is a mistake — throwing more money at fare evasion than fare evasion costs almost only serves to benefit those who create the fare gates themselves.

Thank you for reading and keeping an open mind.

Form Letters

Note: The following is a form letter submitted over 300 individuals.

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,

Comments received after the meeting's comment deadline

Lauren

Hello,

Fare gates disproportionately harm low income people, immigrants, and people of color. As a former recipient of the reduced fare card, I frequently did not even have enough to pay for one trip. Poverty is concentrated among marginalized people, and as NYC's infamous turnstiles demonstrate, more marginalized people will have interactions with the police because they cannot pay transit fare. There are more equitable ways of raising funds, such as a funding referendum.

Best wishes,

Lauren

Pronouns: they/them

Steph Hagerty

Hi there, please vote no on adding fare gates today.

We need to explore more equitable ways of generating revenue. This effort may discourage ridership and create more of a barrier for folks who need free or low cost transit, create more of a barrier for accessibility, and so on. Enforcing transit fare serves as a regressive tax on the poor and encourages more fossil fuel dependency. It also creates potential chokepoints for apprehension by ICE, and also a potential barrier to ingress/egress in case of emergencies. Fare gates also represents costly infrastructure that represents investment that could be spent best elsewhere for other ridership and system improvements.

We need to do be doing everything we can to make sure more people can ride transit, safely and equitably. Fare gates are not the answer. I hope deep down you can consider generations down the line and know that you have made the decision that best informs our future for our children to thrive equitably. Thank you for your consideration.

Thank you,

Steph Hagerty, Seattle Resident, frequent Sound Transit rider

Sent with [Proton Mail](#) secure email.

Unnamed Commenters

Greetings — the country and our region has been on fire all summer and temperatures continue to rise globally. And y'all want to spend money to police and restrict public transit use even more than?? Put those funds to make it free! What are we doing here.

Hello. I urge the council NOT to install Fare Gates as they are a disability access issue. The current system lets me use the train with my mobility aids. Fare gates could leave me stranded. Advocating for no fare is a better use of taxpayer dollars and time. Accessible infrastructure (both to the disabled and the poor) is better for the economy long term.

Do you want to murder people?
Do you want ICE to freely detain and deport people and harass American citizens?
Do you want people to stop using public transportation and sustainable travel options?
Fare Gates create a choke point to access transportation where ICE can take advantage of the choke point to stop and detain people and harass them and potentially arrest and deport them. And what else has happened as a result of ICE activity several times this year? Murder.
You're creating an environment unsafe to your passengers, which WILL ensure that some of your passengers stop using your transportation services. This is a net negative for the public community.
Do better.

Fare gates will create a convenient checkpoint for federal agents to attack marginalized people. They will also disincentivize train travel and clog walkways as well as highways creating traffic. Please do not install fare gates.