



City of Seattle

January 25, 2016

Peter Rogoff
Sound Transit CEO
Union Station
401 S. Jackson St.
Seattle, WA 98104

RE: Acknowledgement of ST3 candidate projects

Dear Mr. Rogoff:

The City of Seattle appreciates the opportunity to provide the following comments on the development of the ST3 system plan and our priority candidate projects.

Seattle and the Puget Sound region continue to grow rapidly. In just the past five years alone, Seattle added 70,000 residents and 63,000 jobs. Unfortunately, our regional mass transit system remains decades behind where it needs to be to accommodate this growth. In order to realize the more livable and equitable city and region we desire, ST3 must continue the progress approved by voters in 1996 and 2008. We need to connect our regional centers in Tacoma, Everett and Redmond and expand light rail to more dense residential and employment centers in Seattle, and we need to do it as quickly as we can.

But we face a reality that even under the best circumstances most of these light rail connections are more than a decade or two away, and there is a growing disconnect between the long-range vision of ST3 and the immediate transportation needs Seattle and our region face today. The speed, reliability and capacity of light rail is critical for our city and region, and we strongly believe an ST3 proposal that invests immediately in key regional transit corridors will not only help address today's transportation crisis, but also garner stronger public support. With this in mind, the City of Seattle requests that ST3 fund near-term transit in Seattle and throughout the region to address immediate needs, while planning and building out light rail over the life of the plan. Some project concepts are suggested below.

The ST3 proposal must not only consider the system capacity needs of the next increment of light rail expansion, but must also address the long-term capacity needs of the region. The Downtown Seattle Transit Tunnel (DSTT) is a regional asset (44% of commuters destined for the 515,000 jobs in Downtown originate from outside Seattle), but one that represents the greatest constraint on regional rail capacity. Without the ability to run more trains through Downtown Seattle than the

DSTT can accommodate, our future investment in regional light rail will be permanently constrained.

The following are short descriptions of the top priority projects and programs Seattle needs to see in ST3. Additional program and project priorities are included in the attachment. We fully understand that each corridor project included in the ST3 System Plan will undergo a complete environmental and corridor analysis planning process subsequent to ST3 voter approval. In this process, corridor alternatives will be more fully developed and evaluated. Specific alignment and station locations will be considered and presented to both the public and the ST Board, and both will have several opportunities to weigh in and propose new alternatives for consideration. Only after the public and environmental planning processes are completed will the board recommend a specific alignment and station location. The ultimate alignment and station locations will then be solidified during the final design phase. Seattle plans to remain engaged throughout this process, and expedite it whenever possible to help build the transit system we need in our city and this region as quickly as possible.

Early Transit Deliverables – Seattle supports and requests the inclusion of early delivery transit projects and service enhancements that provide needed immediate transit capacity to regional destinations that may have to wait ten or more years for light rail service. Examples of this concept include: Funding operation costs of bus rapid transit lines on future light rail corridors to a Link level of service frequency until light rail can be constructed in the corridor; speed and reliability capital improvements; and early delivery of light rail infill stations.

New Regional Light Rail Tunnel in Downtown Seattle – Seattle supports a new regional light rail tunnel in Downtown. This new tunnel will ensure long-term capacity and reliability for the light rail lines originating in Tacoma, Redmond, and Everett as the regional system matures and continues to expand in the future. We applaud the opportunity to provide significantly increased capacity for the Tacoma Link connection by terminating in Ballard, and likewise, terminating Everett Link in West Seattle.

Downtown Seattle to West Seattle Light Rail – Seattle supports building light rail from Downtown Seattle to West Seattle, and would like to work with Sound Transit on integrated station area planning. Sound Transit estimates this light rail extension will carry 50,000 people per day. The alternative analysis/environmental process for the corridor should vet alignment options through a public participation process and consider the ridership, cost, equity and impact tradeoffs.

Downtown Seattle to Ballard Light Rail – Seattle supports building light rail from Downtown Seattle to Ballard through the Interbay corridor. Sound Transit estimates this light rail extension will carry 133,000 people per day. The alternative analysis/environmental process for the corridor should vet alignment options through a public participation process and consider the ridership, cost, equity and impact tradeoffs.

Additional Light Rail Station in the Vicinity of SR99 and Harrison Street – Seattle supports inclusion of this station in the Downtown to Ballard corridor, which provides access to the Seattle Center and South Lake Union, and provides urban station spacing serving existing dense land uses and regional transportation connections, as well as intense future growth. Today there are 70,000 jobs in the Uptown, South Lake Union and Denny Triangle neighborhoods, with another 20,000 jobs in the development pipeline in those same neighborhoods. And according to the Center City Commute Mode Split Survey, 42% of commuters destined for South Lake Union originate from outside Seattle. It is also important to note that this station would provide additional access to the Seattle Center and the 12,000 annual events attended by more than twelve million people, 50% of whom visit from outside of Seattle.

Additional Light Rail Station in Interbay – Seattle supports this station in the vicinity of W. Newton Street and 15th Avenue W. serving the Outside – West Urban Village and the Ballard-Interbay Manufacturing and Industrial Center. We understand that the profile of this station will be determined pending further project definition.

Infill Light Rail Station: Graham Street – Seattle supports constructing this infill light rail station as an early deliverable project to quickly increase access to the regional light rail system. Seattle has committed a \$10 million contribution from the voter-approved Move Seattle Levy to support this project.

Infill light rail station: 130th Street (Lynnwood Link) – Seattle supports this infill station being constructed and opened as part of the Lynnwood Link Extension. This approach will eliminate the risk of constructing a station while light rail is operating. This station will provide appropriate urban station spacing between the Northgate and 145th Street stations, and provide access to the growing and diverse communities of Lake City and Haller Lake.

Madison Street BRT – This bus rapid transit project will provide important regional high capacity transit on an east-west corridor connecting the 4 million annual ferry passengers at Coleman Dock, regional Link light rail, the First Hill regional medical center, Seattle University and dense housing on Capitol Hill. This project is a critical regional connection because only 40% of workers drive to First Hill and 56% are coming from outside Seattle. The project will be built to a high level of bus transit priority with dedicated transit lanes in more than 50% of the corridor and headways every 6 minutes or less. Seattle supports this project with a capital contribution from ST3 and a partial operating contribution to fund the remaining headways to bring the service frequencies up to Link light rail level of service. ST3 funding for this project would leverage committed local funding from the Move Seattle Levy as well as State funding. Additionally, Seattle will apply for federal funding to help pay for the full cost of implementing the project.

Incentives for Local Jurisdiction - The need to deliver transit projects as quickly as possible is clear and there should be zero patience for local jurisdictions, including Seattle, creating roadblocks and delay to the speedy delivery of the regional system. Seattle strongly supports the creation of incentive programs for jurisdictions that are willing to expedite permitting/review processes and additional incentives for jurisdictions that are willing to commit to local funding partnerships.

Transit Oriented Development Program – Seattle supports this funding program, that provides additional support for analysis of transit oriented development (TOD) opportunities and the potential for affordable housing. However, we suggest the following changes to the program: 1) expand the scope of eligibility to all existing and planned Sound Transit rail stations; 2) expand the scope to include community TOD planning, policy assistance, and education for communities planning for rail; 3) work closely with local government, housing authorities, and non-profit housing developers and providers to ensure affordable housing is strongly considered throughout the TOD program planning, development and implementation; 4) increase the budget of this program to include the expanded scope included above.

Seattle also has a strong interest in ensuring robust public comment and participation in the development of the ST3 plan. We would like to see Sound Transit staff pay particular attention to public outreach and engagement in communities of color, low income communities, and non-English speaking communities. We would like to see Sound Transit work closely with non-profit and community based organizations on these outreach strategies and meet with these groups as requested prior to the release of a draft plan, in particular in areas with new candidate projects. Most importantly we want to ensure that ideas generated and concerns express through these meetings are strongly considered by the Sound Transit staff and board in developing the ST3 plan.

Seattle applauds the work of Sound Transit in its project labor agreements to ensure we have high apprenticeship utilization rates, strong DBE and WMBE participation, and high usage of well-trained, local unionized labor. We encourage the Sound Transit Board and staff to look at adoption of priority hire practices to ensure that the workers in the region who live in economically distressed areas are benefiting from large construction projects that will come along with ST3 adoption.

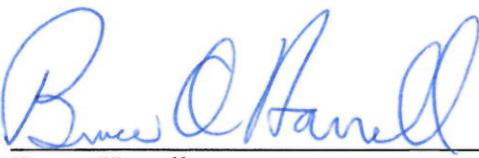
The future success of Seattle and our region depends on our ability to move a growing number of people safely, efficiently and reliably. The stakes for ST3 are high. The ST3 plan must be developed recognizing that job and residential growth in the region have occurred differently than envisioned in the original Sound Transit Long Range Plan. Sound Transit must put forward a system plan to voters this fall that isn't simply the product of a federated Board of Directors, but one that is prioritized based on the economic and mobility needs of the region, one that will make immediate investments in transit service, and one that will set the longer-term course to achieve our vision of a regional light rail system.

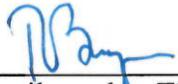
ST3 presents an opportunity to relook at the scale of the light rail system being built. Are the track ways and stations being overbuilt? Are they appropriate for the transit service and the context for which it is being provided? Are there ways to deliver the system faster and more efficiently? Seattle supports Sound Transit's ongoing efforts to answer these questions and ensure light rail is 'right sized' so our regional dollars are stretched further.

We appreciate the opportunity to continue a successful partnership with Sound Transit and support the expansion of the regional transit system to provide safe, efficient and sustainable transportation choices for all transit riders. If you have any questions about the content of this letter, please do not hesitate to contact Seattle's Sound Transit Board members, Mayor Murray and Councilmember Rob Johnson, or our staff contact Andrew Glass Hastings at Andrew.glasshastings@seattle.gov. Thank you again for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

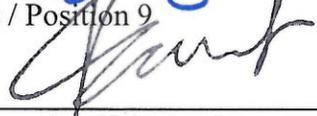

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Councilmember Sally Bagshaw
District 7

ATTACHMENT A

Additional Program and Project Priorities

C-13 West Seattle/Junction to Burien Transit Center/SeaTac LRT - Seattle supports this corridor being constructed following the completion of corridors C-01, C-03, and C-02 with connections to Ballard and West Seattle, as well as, an extension from Ballard to the University District. If this corridor is not included in the ST3 System Plan, we want to ensure that the design of C-03 will account for and accommodate this future extension to the south.

C-01g Additional LRT Extension and Potential Station to the Ballard High School/65th Street Vicinity – Seattle supports this extension and station serving 65th Street and Ballard High School. If this extension is not included in the ST3 system plan, we want to ensure that the design will account for and accommodate this future extension and station.

C-02 Ballard to University District LRT – Seattle supports this corridor being constructed following the completion of corridors C-01 and C-03 serving Ballard and West Seattle. If this corridor is not included in the ST3 System Plan, we want to ensure that the design of C-01 will account for and accommodate this future extension to the University District. We also suggest that Sound Transit evaluate and consider changes to the University District Station design that can be made with the current ongoing construction that would benefit future transfer or interlining connections with this corridor.

C-07 Transit Tunnel Improvements Enabling Increases in System Frequency – Seattle supports these system improvements and requests Sound Transit to consider implementing automated train control when this tunnel connects to West Seattle, and if it no longer serves the Rainier Valley.

R-05 System Access Program – Seattle supports this funding program, which provides for a 50% match for pedestrian, bicycle and transit access improvement in light rail station areas. This program will provide an opportunity to leverage Move Seattle Levy funding on projects such as Accessible Mt Baker and transit access improvements at the Rainier Beach Link Station. Seattle would also recommend inclusion of policy language to allow local jurisdictions the flexibility to use park and ride funding for system access projects. Such flexibility could result in local jurisdictions providing residents more frequent and reliable transit service rather than the construction of parking garages. Seattle also encourages Sound Transit staff to look into the possibility of entering into lease agreements with local parking providers to serve the park and ride lots rather than incurring the expenses associated with structured garage parking.

R-06 Innovation and Technology Fund – Seattle supports this funding program, which provides for research and development of new transit technologies (e.g., customer information systems, fare payment, connected and driverless vehicles, and safety systems), new business models with private service and shared transportation providers, new data and analysis programs, and expanded transportation demand management programs.

P-01 Future System Planning (ST4) – Seattle supports this funding of the future ST4 System Plan.

P-05 HCT Study: Light Rail Extending from West Seattle to Burien and SeaTac Airport Station – Seattle supports this future study providing direct light rail connectivity to the airport from the West Seattle Link light rail corridor.

P-07 HCT Study: Light Rail from Ballard to Crown Hill – Seattle supports this study extending light rail to the Crown Hill neighborhood. This extension is consistent with Seattle’s long-range high capacity transit vision, identified in the Seattle Transit Master Plan.

P-08 HCT Study: Light Rail on SR 522 – Seattle supports this study, which extends light rail to Lake City. This extension is consistent with Seattle’s long-range high capacity transit vision, identified in the Seattle Transit Master Plan.

P-09 HCT Study: Light Rail from Ballard to Bothell via Greenwood, North Seattle, and Lake City - Seattle supports this study, which extends light rail to Lake City and destinations north to Bothell. This extension to Lake City is consistent with Seattle’s long-range high capacity transit vision, identified in the Seattle Transit Master Plan.