



SEATTLE CITY COUNCIL | DISTRICT 1

COUNCILMEMBER LISA HERBOLD

April 2, 2019

sent by electronic mail

Lauren Swift, Sound Transit
401 South Jackson Street
Seattle, WA 98104

Dear Ms. Swift,

I am submitting these comments as District 1 Seattle City Councilmember, representing West Seattle and South Park. I am writing to:

1. Let Sound Transit know what I've been hearing from constituents in West Seattle about the ST3 proposal
2. Help inform the Sound Transit Board's identification of a Preferred Alternative and other alternatives to study in the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)
3. Reiterate my concern expressed in the March 29 Elected Leadership Group meeting that the schedule for publishing scoping comments does not allow members of the Elected Leadership Group (ELG), nor the Stakeholder Advisory Group (SAG), adequate time for review before making recommendations.

There is strong support for bringing light rail to West Seattle, but there is also significant concern about impacts

- Locating light rail stations and alignment will be a 100-year decision, with permanent, long-term impacts on the West Seattle community
- An elevated alignment through the heart of the West Seattle Junction Urban Village, and through a built neighborhood in the Youngstown area of North Delridge, would be unique to this line and unprecedented for light rail in Seattle
- Concerns are focused on displacement from residents and businesses in the Alaska Junction, especially regarding the elevated option; from residents around 35th and Avalon; in North Delridge; and Pigeon Point
- Concerns about construction impacts are also worthy of consideration, in particular reduced access to the peninsula, which has a small number of access points

I support consideration of the following additional options or design alternatives:

- In Delridge, please consider alternatives that reduce the impact on the neighborhood:
 - The Pigeon Ridge (purple) option, specifically those features such as: i. a station location that minimizes impacts on residents in the Youngstown area of North Delridge, ii. a station location further south than other alternatives, and iii. the best transfer environment for riders from communities to the south
 - The Yancy Street option considered in Level 1, or a similar design alternative

- Additionally, alternatives that reduce the visual and emergency access impact of the guideway height, especially along Genesee
- Given the developed nature of the West Seattle Junction and Youngstown neighborhoods, and the potential impact of an elevated alignment, consideration of additional option(s)/design alternatives in the EIS
 - One option would be to carry additional option(s)/design alternatives through the Draft Environmental Impact Statement, scheduled for 2020, and then have the Board consider which options to carry into the Final EIS. This could be done with an understanding that work will be done on funding
- Encouragement for mixing and matching options

I support identifying potential cost savings to fund tunnel(s)

- Consider potential station consolidation, if this assists in making tunnels more affordable in West Seattle and Ballard; in West Seattle community members have suggested, for example, elimination of the Avalon station (two stations are proposed in the West Seattle Junction Urban Village); two Level One options proposed by Sound Transit in West Seattle consolidated stations
- I encourage Sound Transit to explore opportunities for savings in the portions of the alignment planned for a tunnel; for example, in South Lake Union

Project purpose and need, and 2030-2035 service

- The line as planned would require West Seattle riders travelling north to transfer at the SODO station from 2030-2035. During peak commute times, for example the morning rush hour, trains arriving at the SODO station are likely to be full heading into Downtown, making for a poor transfer environment, and resulting in longer commutes for West Seattle riders. This runs contrary to the Purpose and Need statement for ST3, to *“Provide high-quality rapid, reliable and efficient light rail transit service to communities in the project corridor as defined through the local planning process and reflected in the ST3 Plan”*.
 - As a practical matter, bus service would likely be needed during peak commute times at current levels, limiting the effectiveness of the overall transportation system
 - This must be addressed either in, or alongside the EIS.

In closing, I request more time for review after the publishing of the Scoping Summary before either the SAG meeting or the next ELG is scheduled. In the March ELG meeting I asked whether the scoping comments are considered to be instructive to Level 3 review advisory decisions of the SAG and the ELG. My question was answered in the affirmative. For this reason I respectfully request a week’s time between the publishing of the Scoping Comments Summary and scheduling the SAG and ELG meetings.

Sincerely,



Seattle City Councilmember
District 1, West Seattle and South Park