



Sound Transit Board of Directors Executive Committee  
c/o Board Administrator  
Sound Transit  
401 S Jackson St  
Seattle, WA 98104

April 5, 2017

Dear Members of the Sound Transit Board Executive Committee,

The Transit for All coalition recognizes the role that strong security policies can play in creating safe transit systems. In recent months, members of immigrant and refugee communities throughout Sound Transit's service area – and across the country – have experienced an uptick in traumatic instances of hate crimes, bias incidents, and harassment. While we believe it is incumbent upon all of us to create cultures where such disrespect and violence are rare and unacceptable, we find that **transit agencies like Sound Transit have a unique role to play in cultivating an environment that is welcoming to all riders** as well as in de-escalating negative interactions between riders to prevent instances of violence, should they arise.

We believe these goals are consistent with Resolution R2017-14, Adopting a Security, Law Enforcement, and Emergency Management Policy, because **prioritizing the protection of those most vulnerable to harassment will foster a safe environment for everyone**. We therefore urge the agency to adopt several measures in the service of our shared goals:

- **Use advertising spaces to cultivate welcoming environments.** BART recently launched a poster campaign to promote tolerance and inclusivity, but Sound Transit could go further by posting flyers that guide riders on how to respond to xenophobia if they witness it (see example on second page).
- **Proactively counter the “othering” of people of color**, including immigrants and refugees, by promoting equitable representation in agency materials of people of different cultural backgrounds, translating signs and announcements into foreign languages, and hiring ethnically diverse staff.
- **Require implicit bias trainings** for fare enforcement, vehicle operators, and security personnel. Controlling for racial bias requires constant vigilance and continual training: the agency must prioritize a proactive approach to ensuring equal treatment of riders of all races.
- **Require de-escalation trainings** for fare enforcement, vehicle operators, and security personnel. We hope incidents will never arise, but Sound Transit employees deserve to have the necessary tools to address them if they do.
- **Prioritize safety in transit planning and operations.** Equitable transit communities assure safe access to transit by ensuring facilities, safe movement around transit, and safe use of transit. For some users, the presence of law enforcement, and specifically armed law enforcement, may prevent riders from feeling safe on transit. These barriers to safety should also be taken into account.

Finally, on a separate but related note, Transit for All commends the Sound Transit Board of Directors for taking steps to address concerns around the interruption of Link Light Rail service to the SeaTac Airport during protests in late January. Because we believe that **transit should be an engine for democracy**, we strongly encourage the agency to invite coordination with community groups who plan demonstrations. **Early and open communication with community leaders will lay important groundwork for calm and safe acts of civil disobedience**, and further serve to build trust between the agency and the communities it serves. We encourage Sound Transit to work with OneAmerica and our partners in the May 1<sup>st</sup> Action Coalition to ensure uninterrupted transit service during our demonstrations on May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2017. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Rich Stolz  
Executive Director  
OneAmerica



Shefali Ranganathan  
Executive Director  
Transportation Choices Coalition



Kim Powe  
Acting Deputy Director  
Puget Sound Sage



- 1 Engage conversation.**  
Go to them, sit beside them and say hello. Try to appear calm, collected and welcoming. **IGNORE THE ATTACKER.**



- 2 Pick a random subject and start discussing it.**  
It can be anything: a movie you liked, the weather, saying you like something they wear and asking where they got it...



- 3 Keep building the safe space.**  
Keep eye contact with them and don't acknowledge the attacker's presence: the absence of response from you two will push them to leave the area shortly.



- 4 Continue the conversation until the attacker leaves & escort them to a safe place if necessary.**  
Bring them to a neutral area where they can recollect themselves; respect their wishes if they tell you they're ok and just want to go.

