

12/15/2022 Board Meeting Written Public Comment Submissions

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Carson Baker

ST,

Comment as follows:

Please further study a Thorndyke portal option for Ballard light rail. This option serves the most people and serves the heart of Ballard. The developing area east of downtown could be served by lightrail expansion someday, but the west side needs connectivity now!

Thank you,

--

Carson Baker | Structural Project Engineer, PE

Darcell Slovek-Walker – Transitional Resources

Hello Sound Transit Board Members,

My name is Darcell Slovek-Walker and I am the CEO of Transitional Resources. First, I want to say that we deeply appreciate the Sound Transit Board's commitment to doing all that is possible to save Transitional Resources from the path of the West Seattle light rail. I know that you all understand the critical work we do and how important it is for us to continue providing our services to those in need.

We appreciate the time and efforts Sound Transit has taken, and we understand the final version of the proposal isn't due yet, but we are still unclear of what the plan is for the route and how it looks for our program. Our clients keep asking me every single day if they will still have a home, and I don't know what to say to them. It is very stressful and heartbreaking. It is so important that our critical services remain intact in the community, and the homes people have made with us are vital in keeping them safe, stable, and in recovery.

We appreciate any updates you can give us. Please feel free to reach out to me at darcellw@transitionalresources.org if you have any further questions about TR and our work.

Thank you,

Darcell

Jim Fletcher

Sound Transit Board,

Please see the email I sent to our Lake Forest Park Council. This project needs to be re-evaluated in light of the significant socio/economic demographic changes that have occurred since the Board first evaluated and then approved this project. I hope the Board takes the appropriate steps to do so.

Regards,

Jim Fletcher

Begin forwarded message:

From: Jim <fletchjim@hotmail.com>
Subject: Sound Transit
Date: December 7, 2022 at 12:01:08 PM GMT-7
To: citycouncil@ci.lake-forest-park.wa.us

Dear Council Members,

I am attaching a letter regarding our concerns regarding the Sound Transit ST3 project. Although this is a 'form' letter, it does reflect our concerns. We have been residents of LFP for over 41 years. Enhancing a transit corridor that saves 2-4 minutes getting through LFP at the expense of a more dangerous turnoff on to NE 157 Place, the taking of homes and adjoining spaces, the loss of a significant number of trees, let alone the expense of the project, doesn't seem justifiable. Additionally, we were shocked to learn at a recent meeting with the Sound Transit people, they said that 'it was not their job to question the veracity of the project in light of how covid has impacted ridership and the need for such expansion, but only to inform the neighborhood of the aspects of the project.' Why do we have bureaucrats, rather than elected officials, telling us what we need? I am not sure that considering the overall impact on ridership now and the for the foreseeable future that the project can be justified?

I've never written about an issue before, but this one, with its significant impacts, merits further review and evaluation. I would encourage you all to require nothing less.

Regards,

Jim & Marlene Fletcher

The letter referred to in this comment is pasted below:

Dear Mayor Johnson and Councilmembers,

As a resident of Lake Forest Park and member of the Sheridan Beach Community Club (SBCC) Homeowners' Association, I'm reaching out today to express my concerns with the Sound Transit Stride S3 Project through Lake Forest Park.

While I appreciate the regional goals of this project, these efforts and benefits must be balanced with their impacts on local communities and neighborhoods. In Lake Forest Park, the Stride S3 project runs directly through our residential neighborhood, resulting in land acquisition from 61 SBCC homes, permanent easements on 30+ homes, removal of 439 trees throughout Lake Forest Park and the addition of a large 16-foot retaining wall. These project details will significantly alter the character and tree canopy of our community and increase noise for hundreds of homes.

Last week, our community held a meeting with Sound Transit officials, and we were told that this highly disruptive 1.2-mile widening through Lake Forest Park would result in just two minutes of time saved for transit and motorists. We were told that transit data justifying this project was several years old, dating pre-COVID. And we were told that despite these datapoints, the project continues to move forward.

Our ask of the Lake Forest Park City Council: **Hold Sound Transit accountable to our community by asking for a 90-day pause to hear our citizens' concerns, and to work directly with the City and our community to develop new design refinements.** Specifically, refine the project to reduce the amount of tree canopy destruction and property acquisitions, to mitigate noise impacts, and to rethink and reimagine the retaining wall.

As currently contemplated, the project's impacts to our City, our neighborhood and our individual homes are simply unacceptable and unprecedented on any other stretch of ST3. Our community deserves better.

Thank you for your consideration.

Krista Forsyth Fisher

To Sound Transit Board:

I am a resident of Lake Forest Park, WA. I would like to express my deep concerns regarding the Sound Transit Stride S3 Project through Lake Forest Park.

In Lake Forest Park, the Stride S3 project runs directly through my residential neighborhood. As described, it will result in land acquisition from 61 homes, permanent easements on 30+ homes, removal of 439 (or more!) trees throughout Lake Forest Park, and the addition of a large 16-foot plain cement retaining wall with no noise mitigation. These project details will significantly alter the character and tree canopy of my community, and increase road noise levels for hundreds of homes. Last week, our community held a meeting with Sound Transit officials, and we were told that this highly disruptive 1.2-mile widening through Lake Forest Park would result in just two minutes (!) of time saved for transit and motorists. Just TWO minutes!

We were told that transit data justifying this project was several years old, dating pre-COVID. And we were told that despite these datapoints, the project continues to move forward. WHY? I ask that you please reevaluate the need for this project by using current information and data.

Please pause the project in order to take time to study and reevaluate the overall scope. Consider the damage to this residential neighborhood. The LFP section of the project runs through the middle of an actual neighborhood! It goes through people's properties where they raise their families. The properties will be severely altered and likely devalued. This section of LFP is not a business district, but a residential neighborhood where children and neighbors cross at the crosswalk that connects the two sides of our community. This project, as described to us at the Sound Transit community meeting, will devastate the connectivity of the neighborhood, alter/damage many properties, and ultimately make it less safe for our children to cross this wider, busier roadway that Sound Transit has envisioned.

Please work with **the City of LFP and our community members to develop new design refinements**. Specifically, refine the project to reduce the amount of tree canopy destruction and property acquisitions, to mitigate noise impacts, and to rethink and reimagine the retaining wall. The project's impacts to our City, our neighborhood and our individual homes are unprecedented on any other stretch of this project. Please pause and work to change the scale of the project, so as to not harm the LFP community in order to gain 2 minutes of travel time.

Thank you for your consideration.
Krista Forsyth Fisher

Stephen A Fesler

The article referred to in this comment is included at the end of this document.

This email is for the full board meeting on December 15th. Please distribute its contents.
Happy holiday boardmembers:

In November, I wrote an op-ed [urging you all to take rider experience seriously](#). You approve a budget today that is imperative in correcting the abysmal experience your constituents have on Sound Transit services every day. You can read the op-ed attached, but I must inform you that this budget is not baked. It continues broken promises with your constituents. It has to be adjusted and you have to go deeper than this and that may mean tough decisions. Rider experience is too important to let fester in open wounds.

I urge you not to approve today's budget, focus on debates and seek public feedback, and hold a special meeting at the end of year. You need to work on drastic amendments before approval. Some starting points in your work that I put into my op-ed:

- *Fund floating station cleaning staff throughout the system (existing light-touch cleaning cycles aren't close to enough) and re-install trash bins on platforms;*
- *Put more money into state of good repair for leaks, cracking floor tiles, and other station infrastructure and fixtures;*
- *Expedite a robust, inclusive, and rider-focused vertical conveyance design process for downtown stations, shrink the replacement timeline by at least five years, and advance rollout of vertical conveyance monitors;*

- *Hire and fund more staffing to operate the Link 1 Line every six to eight minutes all day, everyday (10- and 15-minute frequencies on a metro system is abysmal and routinely causing overcrowding); and*
- *For the love of God, get real-time arrival information turned on at stations as soon as possible — don't take "not yet" for an answer.*

Please get our system back on the tracks. Thank you.
Stephen Fesler

Kelli Refer – Move Redmond

The letter referred to in this comment is attached below.

Dear Board Members,

Please see the attached letter in support of running and Eastside Starter line.

Thank you for the ability to comment,

Kelli Refer (she/her)

Executive Director | Move Redmond

George Mitchell

Hello Everyone,

My name is George Mitchell. Thank you for the opportunity to provide my comments. I am a resident of King County, and I use Sound Transit express busses and the Link Light Rail daily in order to get to work every day. I work swing shift, so I am often using public transportation well after dark.

1. I do not feel safe in our stations, trains, and busses. I have been threatened and harassed an excessive amount of times. People have threatened to beat me. People loitering in the stations have screamed at me at the top of their lungs while I have passed by. A man started masturbating in front of me in the station. I have often gotten off the elevator at Roosevelt after 10 pm to come face to face with someone smoking drugs in the elevator vestibule. People will often smoke drugs on the trains and busses. The driver either tries to kick them off resulting in a stand-off that makes me late for work, or they ignore it so there's no delay. I report these incidents to security, but it seems to have little effect.

2. The stations, trains, and busses are in a disgusting state. There is always trash all over the place. I frequently find used drug paraphernalia. The seats are gray and brown with dirt and who knows what else. I found blood-soaked rags on the train once. I once discovered a pile of feces in Westlake station. I reported it. The feces were disposed of, but the streaks were left behind. I reported that and nothing was done about it. It is disheartening and disgusting that Sounds Transit can't even mop their own stations or pick up trash.

3. The escalators and elevators are constantly broken. This is especially frustrating at Roosevelt station, which is considerably deep.

4. The trains and busses do not run long enough at night. It would be nice if I didn't have to run straight home after getting off shift, and could instead go and spend my money in the city.

5. There needs to be better communication to riders regarding route delays and cancellations. I was once left waiting for the 522 for over an hour at Roosevelt station at 11 at night. Who do I even call about that? I want to be able to rely on the transit.

6. Is it true that none of the Sound Transit Board Members actually use the transit options? If so, I believe that should be a requirement. At least once a week, or something similar. If you have the power to make decisions about public transportation, you should at least know what it's like from a rider perspective.

That is all I have at this time.

Thank you,
George Mitchell

Joe Kunzler

Dear Executive Dow (and Sound Transit Board);

Joe Kunzler. Sorry that I won't support you for Chair of the Sound Transit Board. I have CC'd who I will - Boardmember Claudia Badassuchi.

Here goes:

1) The way you've handled Jonathan Choe really is a low point to anybody who believes in the free press. I'm not comfortable supporting you versus...

2) Claudia Badassuchi who is the ultimate Sound Transit 12. It's obvious she gives a damn for Merica and knows as Zelensky says... indifference kills.

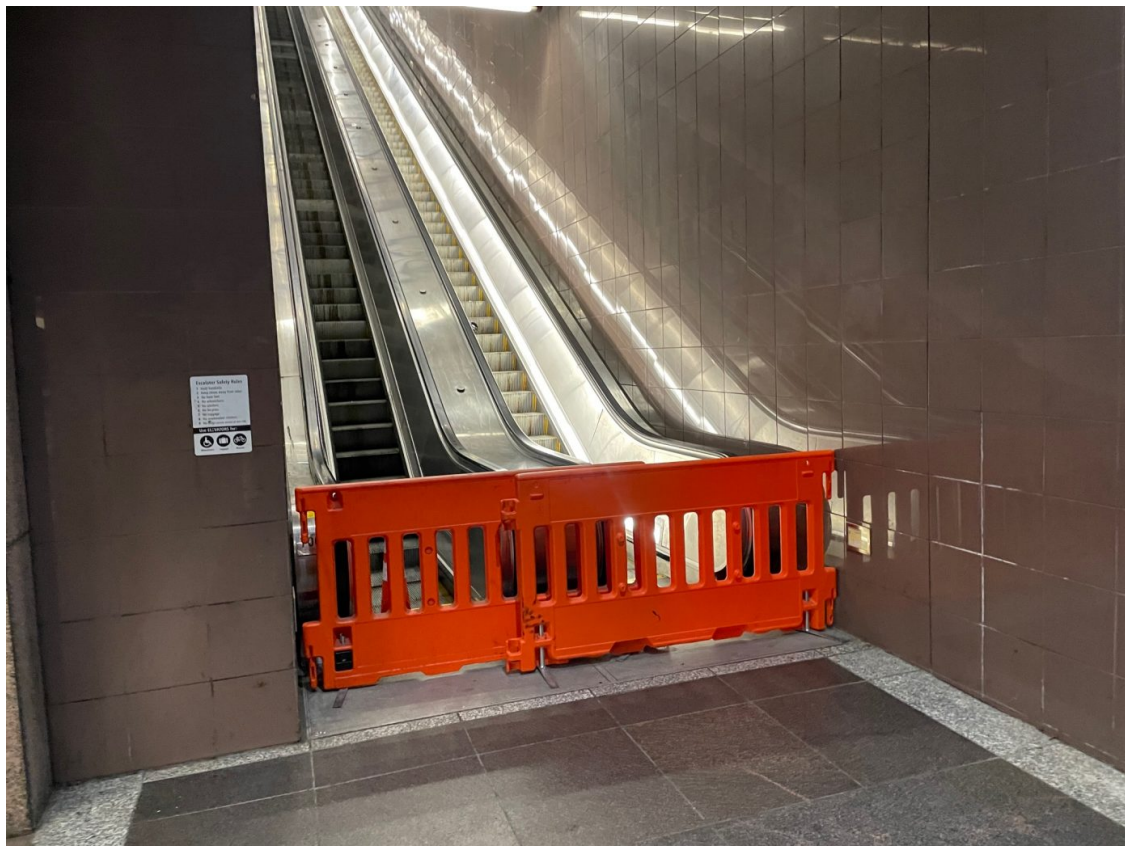
3) See Alex Tsimerman is still a problem. Claudia Badassuchi can handle Alex - and has. Giving hate no quarter in Martin Luther King County means giving hate no quarter and throwing Alex Tsimerman out. Confronting evil. We do this to get Karen "Russ" Kitsis her ball back.

4) Reports are you're running for Governor. I want someone who wants to get light rail to Bellevue by Christmas 2023 and Lynnwood by mid-October 2024. Not a gubernatorial candidate. I want someone who won't accept NO as an answer. Hope you understand.

GO SOUND TRANSIT!
JOE SENDS

Sound Transit's Board Needs To Act on Rider Experience Now

By Stephen Fesler - November 16, 2022



Completely broken escalator set at Pioneer Square Station. (Credit: The Urbanist)

The Sound Transit board is asleep at the wheel. Riders can see it clearly when they venture onto Link. Walk into any station and you will find trash [collecting on platforms and tracks](#), in station hallways and escalator grates, and around unmaintained collection bins. [Broken escalators](#) and elevators? Check. [Cracking platform tiles](#) and [leaking ceilings at brand new stations](#)? Double check. Liquids and chips sloshing around trains and frequencies still lower than prior to the pandemic? Check, check, check. And it's not just Link. Sounder's getting steamrolled by [Burlington Northern Santa Fe intentionally delaying trains](#) and agency partners are flailing at ST Express bus service delivery in part due to [staff-related policies completely under their control](#).

This is no way to run a system, but most boardmembers seem far more concerned about long-off future Link expansions in their fiefdoms (including [ones to ridership dead-zones](#)) and [esoteric fare policies](#) than they are about everyday operations, maintenance, and ultimately rider experience that affect their constituents.

Back in June at a Rider Experience and Operations Committee meeting, the board was made aware that over 600 people had [written in about the dire state of vertical conveyance systems \(which is projected to last until 2031 unless there is a policy change\)](#) and of the [extreme service reductions](#) staff had in mind for a series of modest

maintenance projects collectively dubbed "Future Ready." When push came to shove, no boardmember had the curiosity to ask anything about the Future Ready plans and the committee chair brazenly claimed that the board was well briefed on them (that wasn't true).

Widespread public outcry did later lead Sound Transit to **rethink and successfully lessen the pain of initial Future Ready work**, but that was not because any boardmember publicly challenged the staff. And the bus bridges during maintenance closures have **left much to be desired**, which can likewise turn off riders. The board also never took any consequential action to address the worsening state of affairs for escalators and elevators.

Sound Transit can't just be a bureaucracy-mired agency where staff chooses what the board hears, sees, and thinks. Real oversight by the board is critical. Boardmembers must push staff to address problems as they crop up and challenge staff on bad assumptions and plans. It shouldn't have to be just advocacy journalism fulfilling that role.

The board needs to act with urgency and intention. Boardmembers need to demonstrate that they actually care about rider experience and compel staff to follow through. If they don't, they risk harming not just the Link brand but kneecapping the entire Sound Transit brand for many years to come. Bad rider experiences do far more damage than any series of ribbon-cutting photo-ops and newsletter successes can overcome in building confidence and optimism about the future.

To the board's credit, they did select Julie Timm **as the new agency CEO** earlier this summer. Though only on the job since September, Timm seems to be trying to do all she can the right ship — particularly for everyday riders — and has communicated her observations to the public outside of board meetings. That's to be commended, but it takes two to tango. The board holds power of the purse and the force of policy.

Boardmembers can start to address rider experience issues by commissioning truly rider-oriented meetings. Bring advocate riders in and ask them what their concerns are. Ask them how the board can take action to improve system conditions. Then translate these concerns into real financial and policy directives. The board can also go deeper by bringing non-voting rider advocates on to the board as permanent members to help in this area.

Taking substantial actions will not be easy. It will take a full ridership experience program, additional funding, and more staffing to bring Link back to a good state of repair and operations. It's going to affect the larger financial plan and possibly Sound Transit 3 project timelines, but riders made happy today are riders still boarding tomorrow. It's the right thing to do.

Fortunately, right now is **budget season**. The board has the opportunity to make very substantive investments in rider experience. And we know exactly where the budget is

failing even with proposed increases: rider experience and operations. The board needs to go through the budget with a fine-toothed comb, beef it up, and fix a faltering system.

A few specific suggestions to at least get the ball rolling:

- Fund floating station cleaning staff throughout the system (existing light-touch cleaning cycles aren't close to enough), reinstall trash bins on platforms, and institute cleaning sweeps of vehicles at the end of every Link trip;
- Put more money into state of good repair for leaks, cracking floor tiles, and other station infrastructure and fixtures;
- Expedite a robust, inclusive, and rider-focused vertical conveyance design process for downtown stations, shrink the replacement timeline by at least five years, and advance rollout of vertical conveyance monitors;
- Hire and fund more staffing to operate the Link 1 Line every six to eight minutes all day, everyday (10- and 15-minute frequencies on a metro system is abysmal and routinely causing overcrowding); and
- For the love of God, get real-time arrival information turned on at stations as soon as possible — don't take "not yet" for an answer.

The board can't keep letting the wheels come off. It's time for the board to get to work. It's time to get transit back on track.

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Article Author

Stephen Fesler

[Website](#)

Stephen is a professional urban planner in Puget Sound with a passion for sustainable, livable, and diverse cities. He is especially interested in how policies, regulations, and programs can promote positive outcomes for communities. With stints in great cities like Bellingham and Cork, Stephen currently lives in Seattle. He primarily covers land use and transportation issues and has been with The Urbanist since 2014.



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Dear Sound Transit Board Members,

Move Redmond is a membership organization, and our members collectively represent over 100,000 people who live, work, and go to school in Redmond. We advocate for better streets, trails, and transit to make Redmond more accessible from all over the region. I am writing today to show support for the Eastside Starter line for Eastlink light rail.

I would like to acknowledge that this is an incredibly complex project and that safety is a top priority. I appreciated the presentation in the Sound Transit System Expansion Committee meeting highlighting the thorough process that the agency takes in preparing and honing operations on each new system expansion. It was encouraging to see that there are no fatal flaws to operating an Eastside Starter line.

Opening an Eastside Starter line centers the needs of transit riders and best leverages the investment in Transit Oriented Development that the City of Redmond has made. A few weeks ago our team did outreach in Overlake and we stopped to talk to the people working at the leasing offices in Esterra park. People in that development are anxiously awaiting the light rail opening. They moved into these apartments to have transit access. When we talk to our members who have offices and buildings adjacent to the Overlake Village and Redmond Technology Station, they too are anxiously awaiting light rail. The connection between South Bellevue and Redmond Technology Station on light rail will be so much more efficient and reliable than the current transit connections. The stations are nearly ready and the people who live and work near these stations are ready for light rail, too.

I also acknowledge there are trade-offs and that Lynwood will have a slight delay if the board chooses to go forward with the Eastside Starter line; however, their delay would only be a few months and the opening would be in the same calendar year. That delay is minimal in comparison to the projected delay for the whole Eastlink line. Earlier, this year Move Redmond and Complete Streets Bellevue sent out an action alert and the community rallied in support of an Eastside starter line. I urge you to move forward with this option and deliver high quality transit to the people on the Eastside as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Kelli Refer.

Kelli Refer
Executive Director
Move Redmond