

*11/22/2023 Special Board Meeting Written  
Public Comment Submissions*

Submissions

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Good morning. I'm John Niles, a four-decade resident of Seattle. I'm speaking as a citizen, transit user, and co-founder of Smarter Transit.

Here's the bottom line: the proposed option to hike property tax via Resolution 36 is not justified. Please look at the words in your documents:

Sound Transit -- spending three billion dollars annually -- seeks a property tax hike that yields an additional \$50 million dollars through 2046. This amount is claimed in the background document to be "significant." In fact, your staff declares that this tax hike is "necessary to generate sufficient funds to continue implementation of the Sound Transit 3 Regional Transit Plan."

But here's the context: Your agency's construction and operations are budgeted across the several decades ahead at one hundred and fifty billion dollars. Your revenue is dominated by a permanently authorized, no-sunset sales tax that's the envy of transit agencies across America. The \$50 million dollars lost if Resolution 36 does not pass, calculated as a percentage of one hundred and fifty billion dollars is a tiny, tiny fraction of one percent. To claim that collecting this trivial amount of money is "necessary ... to continue ST3 implementation" is absurd. Note also that any property tax hike would raise the cost of housing at a time when many families in our region are struggling to afford a home or even pay the

rent. Light rail may be the future, but monthly housing payments are the non-trivial, every-month reality of today.

As a former budget staffer for a major city, my recommendation is that Board members vote NO on Resolution 36. It would be a special holiday gift to the region, and a step in combating the rising cost of housing. Sound Transit could surely make up the lost fifty million with program efficiencies over the next two decades.

Thank you for considering this suggestion.

John Niles,