

# 11/21/2024 Board of Directors Meeting Written Public Comment Submissions

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## *William Condon*

Sound Transit Board Meeting Comments,

Dear Sound Transit Board Members,

Sound Transit must build Ballard Link Extension stations under 4th Ave in CID, at Madison Street in Midtown, and at 7th and Harrison in SLU. We are writing to you today to urge you to put an end to the plan to start over on the Ballard to Downtown Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) that requires over \$100 million extra in direct costs, adds two years of delay in planning work, and increases the likelihood of future delays in opening the project.

The voters approved major expansion in 2016, and expect you to deliver it. Since then, we have participated in years of process and community engagement which produced the options already available to the board. Do we really have to wait even longer to finally ride a system we are paying for? It's time for the Sound Transit Board to choose from the existing Ballard Link Extension options.

Stopping the new EIS means stopping the deletion of three of the highest ridership stations in the system: Chinatown International District, Midtown, and South Lake Union Stations. Stopping the new EIS means maintaining the high ridership system this entire region voted for in 2016.

A new EIS will take years to complete and is likely to waste of hundreds of millions of dollars in direct and indirect costs, when all is said and done. All in the interest of putting forth worse options that fewer people will use. More self-inflicted delays are unacceptable on their own, but these are costly self-inflicted delays with an end goal of justifying bad decisions.

Do not permanently destroy our transit system out of short sighted priorities. Stop wasting time and money on endless process, choose existing options, and stop the new EIS before it starts.

Sincerely,

William Condon

## *Unnamed Commenters*

**The following comment was provided by two separate unnamed commenters.**

Hi there,

You're probably aware at this point of a concept for the CID station proposed by Nick Sattelle and Seattle Subway that involves restructuring the existing station. It looks extremely promising, as it could be exceptionally cheap and almost eliminate construction impacts, not to mention the vastly superior station arrangement. It could help get light rail to Everett and Tacoma years faster than a north-south alignment while reducing costs, advancing equity, and saving the CID from construction impacts.

I would like to express my support for this new concept in the strongest possible terms: it is definitely worth further investigation.

## *Marilyn Kennell*

Regional transit experts have assembled an alternative Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS-C) to Sound Transit's West Seattle Link Extension light rail plan. You can [find its version 5.1 here](#). At less than 20 pages, it is more accessible than the nearly 1000-page FEIS generated by Sound Transit. The group, Regional Transit Colleagues, has looked at the project from several angles, starting with how Sound Transit tax dollars—about \$1780 per household per year in King, Snohomish, and Pierce counties—are being spent.

This document should help the board assess the advantages and disadvantages of bringing light rail to West Seattle. We presented the initial version to Chairman Constantine on September 26, 2024. We have sent our most current revision (EIS-C, 5.1) to the US Department of Transportation, the US Department of the Interior, the Federal Transit Administration, and all Sound Transit board members.

At the System Expansion Committee (10/10/2024) and the Board of Directors meeting on 0/24/2024, Sound Transit presented slide shows of their Final EIS (totaling about 30 minutes). Our experts found some of the material outdated, inaccurate, incomplete, and vague. Our EIS-C addresses these findings.

Sound Transit's Final EIS disclosed that the 4-mile West Seattle light rail cost estimate is now over \$7 billion. Under Section 2 of the ST3 package, the board **must** reconsider infeasible, unaffordable, and unbuildable projects. At 2 billion dollars per mile, this project is "**unaffordable.**"

We, Rethink the Link and Smarter Transit, object to this spending and to how greatly and negatively WSLE light rail will impact West Seattle's economy, environment, services, and social fabric. Poorer neighborhoods will suffer disproportionately. Even if Sound Transit were to push out the timeline and find the needed funding, WSLE light rail has more disadvantages than advantages.

Our EIS-C has viable, cost-effective solutions that Sound Transit should have given due consideration in the final EIS. We request that the FTA delay issuing a Record of Decision until Sound Transit Board members have time to seriously consider (1) robust enhancement of Bus Rapid Transit and (2) the NO BUILD option.

Snohomish County and Pierce County taxpayers have been paying for and waiting for light rail for many years. Sound Transit should concentrate on moving people more efficiently along the north-south corridor instead of spending \$7 billion on the West Seattle stub, which will only take us to SODO in ten years.

Marilyn Kennell  
West Seattle  
mkennell@gmail.com

## *Kyle Jacobson*

Sound Transit board and staff,

I am a resident of Little Saigon, a member of the ISRD board, and an advocate for safe and accessible transportation throughout our region.

Residents and businesses in the CID and visitors to the neighborhood deserving convenient, efficient, and accessible connections to/from Downtown, South Seattle, the airport, the U District, and the East Side on Link as well as fast transfers to/from Amtrak, Sounder, the streetcar, and the 4th and Jackson bus hub. However, the expansion of light rail connections must not come at the expense of the CID's commercial and residential core.

The 5th Ave diagonal plan as currently proposed will be far too destructive and disruptive. But Dearborn station is too far from other modes, the current CID station, and existing housing and businesses. It represents a compromise to connectivity that the region's transit backbone will be stuck with for decades. Meanwhile, we are told that the 4th Ave shallow station would be too costly, too time consuming, and too challenging to build. Maybe so, but I am reminded that Rome has managed to build subway infrastructure at and under the Coliseum.

We simply must find a way to bring new connectivity to the CID without threatening existing connectivity for the neighborhood and the region's travelers AND without severely threatening the cultural, commercial, and residential gravity of the neighborhood in the process.

Thank you,  
Kyle Jacobson

## *Jade Smith*

As a long standing Seattle community member I am deeply concerned by sound transit's complete ignorance and total disregard for what the citizens have voted for and very loudly and publicly shown time and again that they want...for u to leave the Chinatown district ALONE!!

Why is it always poor people of color that you want to displace and take over their land?? Why have u gone back to a 5th avenue plan and erasing one of the most revered and recognized areas of our city??

Once again you have shown no thought to the people you are affecting in your consideration of more affluent areas. Why is everything money driven and not what is best for the community and the area??

U must reconsider these plans!

We will not accept such a travesty to occur to our beloved CID!!

Here are some points u should consider:

1. This is our 3rd and final Chinatown—no where else to go. FYI first was on waterfront, 2nd was on 2nd and Washington til the downtown expansion forced Chinese to move to King Street, a muddy tide flat in the 1920s.
2. Chinatown, Japantown, Little Saigon are on the Nation's 11 Most Endangered Historic Places List, (since May 2023)
3. Unjust taking of property from people of color, America's story .

4. Destroy Chinatown businesses forced to re-locate/close for years (economically and socially damaged beyond repair as community members and visitors avoid the area and parents w/draw their children from schools, daycares, and after school programs
5. Closure of main commercial streets for years: Weller and King
6. Endanger 1200+ elderly non English speaking residents by blocking off streets to Hing Hay Park, health clinics, emergency vehicles that come at least twice a day.
7. Breaking the promise that "5th Avenue is culturally infeasible to build."
8. Violating the Racial Equity Toolkit and the CID Community Engagement Toolkit by not collaborating with community transparently.

Sincerely,  
Jade smith  
52 year resident

*Stephen Fesler*

Good morning:

My principal message is that this board needs to bite the bullet on selecting and studying the new 5th Avenue S diagonal alternative and further evaluate the 4th Avenue S alternative for a CID station. A station at the Jackson Street Hub is the linchpin in the system. There's literally no point in building a second a tunnel through Downtown Seattle if a station on the Ballard Extension isn't situated at the Jackson Street Hub. The South of CID alternative is not legal, generates poor ridership, is heaped in conflict of interest, and offers no regional connectivity at the heart of the system. South of CID should be eliminated from any further consideration, as well as North of CID. If this board can't get CID right with 4th or 5th, this board must abandon the second downtown tunnel and move to configuring Ballard Link service through the existing tunnel, which is feasible, speedy, and cost effective.

You've already heard from me on other issues this month, but to reiterate:

- This board needs to allocate more annual budgetary funding for rider experience onboard trains and at stations. Those facilities are constantly in a poor state. We need frequent cleaning, graffiti removal, and replacement of broken/damaged assets.
- This board needs to be bolder in state legislative action requests with unitary permitting authority for Sound Transit projects, asking to lift the cap on levy lid lifts, improving methods to catch non-payment of MVET/car registration fees, and options to increase the debt capacity.
- This board needs to be honest that an ST3 realignment is immediately necessary in light of impending federal funding cuts and the unaffordable costs of Link that are stacking up from this board's gold-plated design choices.

Thank you.  
Kind regards,  
Stephen A. Fesler

## *Comments received after the meeting's comment deadline*

### *Amy Chen Lozano*

Good afternoon Sound Transit Board Members,

Years ago options for the Chinatown-International District station were presented to the community. One of which was the 5th Ave. station which would not only take away 1/3 of Chinatown and also appropriate land from marginalized people of color. The community unanimously rejected 5th Ave and we were assured repeatedly by Sound Transit Board members and staff that 5th Ave. was off the table.

Many of us are here today because despite being told that 5th Ave. was not an option; that it was culturally infeasible, the Sound Transit staff continues to study 5th Ave. and also blog about their progress.

Chinatowns are disappearing across the country; embattled by neglect and anti-Asian hate crimes. These are also the same marginalized neighborhoods often bookmarked for upheavals of transportation projects and devastating urban planning.

Seattle's Chinatown-International District is over a century old and the last Chinatown in the State of Washington. Sadly, the Washington Trust of Historic Preservation selected the CID as one of the Most Endangered Places in Washington and the U.S.

Mayor Harrell: in the March 2023 Sound Transit Board meeting, you declared the Chinatown-International District as a "gem of a neighborhood" and pledged your support in preserving our community. We need your help. We need you to make good on that promise. Please tell your fellow board members and Sound Transit staff to remove 5th Ave as an option. Stop using it as a comparison. Stop studying it. If it is truly off the table, then take it off the table. Our community is counting on you.

Help us save OUR Chinatown.

Amy Chen Lozano  
OCA Greater Seattle Asian Pacific American Advocates

### *Sandra Rodarte*

Dear Sound Transit Team,

On behalf of my father-in-law, I respectfully request that Sound Transit reconsider its plan to acquire their property to develop a new facility. My in-laws have worked tirelessly over the years to obtain their home, and it is disheartening to see it potentially taken after all their hard work and dedication. We understand the importance of expanding the transit system. Still, we firmly believe other undeveloped areas in Federal Way could be considered alternative sites for this facility. By exploring these options, Sound Transit can meet its goals without causing hardship to families who have invested so much in their homes.

We kindly ask that you look into other possibilities for this development and reconsider the acquisition of my in-laws' property.

Thank you for your understanding and for considering this request.

Sincerely,

Sandra Rodarte

*Brien Chow*

**I'm Brien Chow, from the Chong Wa Benevolent Association of Washington State and Co-Founder of Transit Equity for All.**

**A History Lesson:**

**2019**

**CID, Pioneer Square and SODO are given the choice of 4th Avenue or 5th Avenue for a light rail station.**

**2022**

**We choose 4th Avenue thru 5,100 DEIS comments...**

**Mayor Harrell says...**

**5th Avenue is "culturally infeasible to build" and won't be.**

**2023**

**N&S of CID...**

**are pushed on us although the majority supports...**

**...Fourth Avenue.**

**• The City and Sound Transit start a campaign of...**

**"Single Narrative Exploitation" ...**

**which is...**

**...uplifting the few that agree with them.**

**Last week...5th Avenue Diagonal is resurrected!**

**The moral of the story:**

**Cattle chutes let cattle walk calmly to the slaughtering area.**

**When they resist, cattle prods...get them back in line.**

**That's what Sound Transit feels like...**

**a Cattle Chute leading us to slaughter.**

**Thank you.**

Sent from my iPhone

*Janet Brown*

The 5th Avenue option would demolish 1/3 of Chinatown and would encroach upon a cultural resource for people all over the city and beyond. Please remove the 5th Avenue option from your plans for light rail expansion.

Thank you,  
Janet Brown

*Valerie Jusela*

Sound Transit Board Members -

Take 5th Avenue off the table.

Preserve Seattle's Chinatown - International District.

Sincerely ,

Valerie Jusela

*Betty Lau*

**The substance of this comment is attached to the end of this document.**

## **Public Comment at Sound Transit Board Meeting by Betty Lau, Thursday, Nov. 21, 2024, 1:30 p.m., Union Station**

Hello, I'm Betty Lau, speaking on behalf of Seniors in Action today.

These seniors number over 1,300 living in a dozen low-income buildings in Chinatown, Japantown, and Nikkei Manor. None speak English well. Here's what the 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue Diagonal plan means to frail seniors:

- Barriers to getting around the neighborhood: haul trucks, roadblocks, ditches, torn up streetscapes, limited access to Hing Hay Park, planks in the way of wheelchair, walker and cane users.

That's not right!

- Long term street closures blocking emergency vehicles from coming in and transporting seniors to life saving emergency room care.

That's not right!

- Cutting off access to and relocating health clinics, shops and restaurants seniors depend on for culturally appropriate health care, goods and foods.

That's not right.

- Lack of planning for seniors with dementia, Alzheimer's, vision, hearing, and mobility issues walking outside.

That's not right.

Therefore, Seniors in Action is adamantly opposed to any and all of the 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue South alternatives.

You must find another way that does not destroy the quality of life for seniors, businesses, and visitors to Chinatown, Japantown, and Little Saigon.

Thank you.