

01/23/2025 Board of Directors Meeting
Written Public Comment Submissions

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Bill Hirt

Attention: Sound Transit Board.

The following post from my blog details my concerns with the board's apparent "Fantasy Land" approach to the area's transportation problems.

Bill Hirt

The video of the January 7th Sound Transit System Expansion Committee meeting exemplifies another result of Sound Transit's "Fantasy Land" approach to reducing area's approach to public transit. That a transit board composed of city mayors, city and county council members, or county executives doesn't "assure" effective public transit.

That Dow Constantine's recent decision to select himself as board chair resulted in his receiving nearly \$250,000 in compensation as well as \$200,000 compensation for each of the other 17 board members. Most of whom will do so by sitting in front of computer screens in their home or local office, 3 to 4 hours, 2 or 3 times a month.

The result has been a Sound Transit Board more interested in transit-oriented development and affordable housing than reducing congestion. They've never recognized 4-car light rail trains don't have the capacity to reduce multilane freeway peak-hour congestion and cost too much to operate off peak. The result's been a 2025 Proposed Budget & Financial Plan those riding pay only 1% of the 2025 cost and 4% of the \$150.5B cost through 2046

That Snohomish Community Transit (SCT), King County Metro (KCM), and Pierce County Transit (PCT) all provided transit throughout Sound Transit service area that could have been expanded to meet transit needs. For example, SCT and KCM could have each added 50 bus routes an hour during peak commute with more capacity than 4-car light rail trains. Thus, there was never any need to extend light rail beyond UW stadium, across I-90 Bridge or beyond SeaTac airport. Funds not used for light rail tracks could have funded added parking or local routes to bus stations or stops.

Rather than add bus routes and access Sound Transit opted to use light rail train's limited capacity to replace bus routes into Seattle. Reducing transit capacity into the city doesn't reduce I-5 congestion, and riders added reduce access for UW extension riders. Again, all with a huge increase in operating cost, especially during off-peak operation. Yet the System Expansion Committee approved the 2025 budget with plans to spend \$197M for planning the extension to Everett and \$112M to Tacoma Dome. Down Payment on costs for future track extensions.

Another example of Sound Transit's "Fantasy Land" approach to public transit is their "Field of Dreams" premise "if we build light rail riders will come". Last year's Starter Line and Lynnwood Link debut demonstrated providing access to light rail trains does not assure ridership. Despite 70,000 residents living within a mile of a Starter Line station, weekday average ridership in November was 1712.5, a fraction of the 4000 to 5700 predicted. That 80,000 residents living within a mile of the Lynnwood Link stations resulted in only 6643 boardings, a fraction of the 24,000 to 35,000 predicted.

Yet Sound Transit continues with plans to spend \$250 million on a light rail station on 130th Ave without any parking in hopes commuters will choose to live within walking distance. The 2025 budget's Link System Expansion plans to spend \$270M planning the extension to West Seattle are downpayment on a \$7.1B plan for a second bridge over Duwamish Waterway for light rail from Alaska Junction to SODO.

All on the assumption commuters, who already have KCM service throughout the entire area, will transfer to light rail for the commute into Seattle. That those who transfer will be required to transfer again at SODO for a ride to International District rather than ride directly to far more convenient stops along 3rd Ave in Seattle.

That spending is dwarfed by the \$806M the committee approved for planning the Ballard Link Extension in the 2025 budget. Again, a downpayment for more than \$12B for a second tunnel under Seattle for light rail from Ballard to SODO. Assuming commuters riding KCM RapidRide routes from South Lake Union, Crown Hill, and Aurora Village will transfer to light rail for the commute into Seattle. Also assuming commuters would prefer exiting and accessing transit in DSTT rather than far more convenient bus stops throughout downtown area.

The bottom line is the 2024 Starter Line and Lynnwood Link debuts should be another "nail in the coffin" of the System Expansion Committee "Fantasy Land" for light rail. If not, "another nail" is coming in 2025 with light rail debuts across I-90 Bridge. It's unfortunate the Seattle TimesTraffic Lab project to "comment on how transportation funds are spent" seems unable to find either the hammer or nail.

Brien Chow

Written Public Comment by Brien Chow, Sound Transit Board Meeting, Th., 1_23_25, 1:30 p.m., Union Station

My name is Brien Chow, Transit Equity for All and Chong Wa Benevolent Association.

and I'm commenting today as a concerned citizen and advocate for equitable transportation.

Systemic racism refers to the pervasive and deeply embedded discrimination against individuals based on their race, which is ingrained in societal structures, institutions, and policies. Unlike overt individual acts of racism, systemic racism operates subtly and institutionally, leading to unequal opportunities and outcomes for marginalized communities in areas such as housing, education, employment, and public services. It often results in widespread disparities that persist over time, affecting the well-being and livelihood of those communities.

How has Sound Transit participated in systemic racism?

Sound Transit has taken steps to address systemic racism through various initiatives, but challenges still exist. Here are a few ways in which systemic racism has manifested within the agency:

1. Historical Exclusion:

- Historically, communities of color have been excluded from decision-making processes in transit planning, leading to systems and services that don't adequately address their needs².

2. Displacement and Gentrification:

- Transit construction projects have sometimes displaced residents and businesses, disproportionately affecting communities of color. Improved transit access can lead to gentrification, pushing out lower-income residents.
- Improved transit services often raise property values, leading to gentrification that displaces lower-income residents unable to bear the rising costs, often impacting communities of color³.

3. Inequitable Resource Allocation:

- Decisions on budget allocation, route planning, and service frequency have sometimes disproportionately affected communities of color, with fewer transit stops and limited funding for development in underrepresented neighborhoods.

4. Environmental and Health Impacts:

- Construction projects can create environmental disruptions such as increased noise, air pollution, and traffic congestion, which often impact marginalized neighborhoods more significantly disproportionately impacting their environmental quality and overall health.

5. Route Planning and Service Allocation:

- Areas predominantly inhabited by marginalized communities often receive fewer transit stops and less frequent service compared to other regions, limiting access to essential services and opportunities².

6. Displacement due to Construction:

- Multiple transit construction projects, such as the light rail expansions, have led to the displacement of entire communities and local businesses, predominantly affecting communities of color³.

7. Historical Lack of Representation:

- Historically, communities of color have been excluded from decision-making processes in transit planning, leading to systems and services that don't adequately address their needs².

These factors illustrate how systemic racism can become entangled in transit systems, creating lasting disparities for marginalized communities. Sound Transit has undertaken initiatives like

implementing the Racial Equity Tool and establishing the Office of Civil Rights, Equity & Inclusion to address these issues, but the effects of systemic racism in transit decisions remain a concern.

[1bing.com](#) [2www.soundtransit.org](#) [3www.soundtransit.org](#)

Oral/Written Public Comment by Brien Chow, Sound Transit Board Meeting, Th., 1_23_25, 1:30 p.m., Union Station

My name is Brien Chow, Transit Equity for All and Chong Wa Benevolent Association.

Definition of Systemic Racism: *also known as institutional racism...* refers to the pervasive and entrenched discrimination against individuals based on their race...which is embedded within societal structures, institutions, and policies.

Unlike overt acts of racism, systemic racism is subtle... and operates through established processes and norms...

leading to unequal opportunities and outcomes for marginalized communities in various aspects of life, including housing, education, and public services like transit.

Sound Transit's Systemic Racism Practices: can be identified through several key areas:

Historical Exclusion... Marginalized communities have historically been excluded from decision-making processes...

resulting in public transit infrastructure and services that do not adequately address their needs.

Inequitable Resource Allocation... Budgets, route planning, and service frequencies have sometimes disproportionately affected communities of color... by providing fewer transit stops and limited funding for development within their neighborhoods.

Displacement and Gentrification... Transit construction projects have often displaced residents and businesses in communities of color...leading to gentrification and pushing out lower-income residents who cannot afford rising property values.

Environmental And Health Impacts... Construction activities associated with new transit lines have increased noise, air pollution, and traffic congestion... disproportionately impacting marginalized neighborhoods.

Sound Transit is taking steps to address these inequities, such as through the implementation of the Racial Equity Tool and the establishment of the Office of Civil Rights, Equity & Inclusion. However, recognizing and mitigating the effects of systemic racism remains an ongoing challenge.

Understanding and addressing systemic racism in transit requires deliberate efforts and inclusive engagement to ensure equitable and fair treatment for all communities.

Thank you... Move Forward on 4th!

Sound Transit Board Meeting Public Comment by Brien Chow, Thursday, January 23, 2025
My name is Brien Chow, Transit Equity for All and Chong Wa Benevolent Association.
The Seattle Racial Equity Toolkit...
says to eliminate acts of discrimination, whether intentional or unintentional. Not Moving Forward
on 4th is the biggest one.
Key areas are:
Historical Exclusion...
from decision-making processes. The promises of CID community collaboration and problem
solving are not kept.
UNFAIR Resource Allocation...
by approving cost overruns for projects in neighborhoods like West Seattle and not the CID.
Displacement of residents, businesses, health care ...
while destroying cultural and linguistically appropriate services for CID communities of color and
the Region.
Environmental and Health Impacts...
cutting off 1300 non-English speaking seniors from getting around the CID, as well as getting to
medical care on First Hill.
For the sake of racial, social, and economic justice, Sound Transit must meaningfully engage with
CID to ensure the equitable treatment that well-resourced neighborhoods get.
Move Forward on 4th! ...
the only option that is best for the Region and the communities of color in the CID! Thank you.
Thank you... Brien Chow

Betty Lau

Sound Transit Board Meeting Public/Written Comment by Betty Lau, Jan. 23, 2025, 1:30 p.m., Union Station

Hello, I am Betty Lau of Transit Equity for All and the Chong Wa Benevolent Association of Washington.
Remember, the CID ranks as a “high equity priority.”
(<https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/494bdbb2da4f4574bb330f072bc77073>)
This means repair of past and on-going harms and provision of future benefits from light rail hub construction.
Sound Transit has broken its promise to build the voter and majority community approved 4th Avenue Union Station Hub.
Sound Transit gave us a choice of 4th Avenue or 5th. The Community overwhelmingly chose 4th. N&S of CID options popped up--ending talk about community voice and choice.
Yet the ST board voted to move to final design on the West Seattle link despite gargantuan cost overruns. West Seattle is ranked a low equity priority.

4th Avenue too expensive? Railroads too difficult to talk to? Chinese built the railroads, worked the canneries, dug the Mountlake Cut, and mined the coal that powered early Seattle's rise.

Sound Transit has experts in budget containment, creative problem solving, and construction technology (Capital Delivery Program Executive Directors Brad Owen, Michael Morgan and Manan Garg--LinkedIn Profiles).

They can overcome the challenges of building on 4th Avenue, the Region's most accessible and most connected location that does not destroy Chinatown, Japantown, and Little Saigon.

Move Forward on 4th!

Thank you.