

02/13/2025 System Expansion Committee
Meeting Written Public Comment
Submissions

Submissions

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Zach Thomas

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,

Zach Thomas

Tito Kohout

Sound Transit Board Meeting Comments,

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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,
Tito Kohout

Jan Roberts

The Sound Transit Systems Expansion Committee should vote NO on Resolution No. R2025-03

Voting no on Resolution No. R2025-03 would be a financial win for the Sound Transit board and regional taxpayers. It will save West Seattle from the irreparable, permanent damage to its human and natural habitats that Sound Transit acknowledges in its ST WSLE 2022 DEIS. Voting to stop this boondoggle could positively impact your political future.

Jan Roberts

Gale Sketchley

Sent from my iPad. Light rail today is not what the voters wanted. State and US government can't bail this project out. Check out their budgets. The light rail project is not sufficient to accomplish better transportation. What does this accomplish? So much difficulty getting to station cost and parking fees if driving, bus fees, longer commute times, transfers from sodo, all contribute to a burden on commuters who have jobs to get to. Low ridership, low projected birth rates, don't serve the west Seattle community. This is an old outdated concept with much havoc involved. Loss of jobs, environmental concerns, loss of housing, to name just a few. Those supporting this are not well informed. No build is the better option at this time. Thank you Gale Sketchley

Brien Chow

Public Comment at Sound Transit System Expansion Committee Meeting by Brien Chow, Thurs., 2-13-25, 1:30 p.m., Union Station

Hi, I'm Brien Chow.

Three successful projects that show why the 4th Avenue light rail Transit Hub is achievable:

1. **Metro Line 52, Amsterdam:**

- o Overcame poor soil conditions and complex political situations.
- o **Lesson:** Difficult soil and political challenges can be surmounted.

2. **150 North Riverside, Chicago:**

- o Railroad corridors required lots of successful collaboration
- o Creative solutions to soil issues.
- o **Lesson:** Mutual discussions and creative design overcame poor soils and proved railroad cooperation.

3. **Reinforced Soil Structures for Railways in Japan:**

- o Enhanced ground stability and ensured seismic resilience.
- o **Lesson:** Modern engineering stabilizes soil and creates robust infrastructure

By applying these lessons, the 4th Avenue light rail station can overcome poor soils and engage railroad collaboration--to become the highly used, southern Transit Hub promised for our tri-county Region.

Written Public Comment by Brien Chow, Sound Transit System Expansion Committee Meeting, Th., 2_13_25, 1:30 p.m., Union Station

"Good afternoon, members of the System Expansion Committee." 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.

Collective Lessons for the 4th Avenue Light Rail Station:

- Advanced Engineering Solutions: Effective soil stabilization and structural design.
- Innovative Construction Techniques: Special methods to minimize impact on surrounding infrastructure and properties.
- Resilience and Perseverance: Navigating political complexities and construction delays.

By applying the following lessons, the 4th Avenue light rail station can overcome its challenges and become a successful, robust addition to the transit system.

- Metro Line 52, Amsterdam, Netherlands... poor soils, complex politics, construction delays, special tunneling techniques used to protect historic structures (opened July 2018)

- 150 North Riverside, Chicago, IL... a 54-story skyscraper constructed on a 2-acre site in the West Loop, with 75% of its acreage dedicated to railroad corridor and easements (completed in 2017)
- Japan... geosynthetic-reinforced soil structures for railways (article from March 2014)

The above project examples serve as proof that complex infrastructure projects can overcome significant challenges, making the case that the 4th Avenue light rail station can indeed be built. Let's break it down:

Betty Lau

Public Comment by Betty Lau at Sound Transit System Expansion Committee Meeting, Thursday, 2/13/25 at Union Station

I'm Betty Lau of Transit Equity for All & board member of the Chong Wa Benevolent Association.

Since March 23, 2023 when this board approved further studies (note the plural) of the 4th Avenue station location chosen by the majority of the CID community, I have not seen a single Motion authorizing any funding to do anything about 4th. Instead, after a two-year information embargo, we get the biased "independent consultant" report that we weren't even notified was happening! I say biased because it must be compared to the benefits of having a 4th Avenue Transit Hub as promised to voters and CID community members.

South Lake Union got study after study, even an equity analysis so the board could "...have as much information as possible before making a decision on a preferred alternative" (Cathal Ridge).

Yet the decision to make N&S of CID preferred alternatives was made without a scrap of information!

We are told the \$800 million voter approved 4th Avenue station is too expensive. But it's okay for West Seattle Link to go to final design so "the true costs can be known," (KC Exec. Constantine) despite billions in cost overruns.

Yet the linchpin 4th Avenue station Transit Hub can't go to final design to find out its true cost, let alone have motions specifying doing anything since 2023.

There's a double standard operating here—one for the wealthy who own land at N&S of CID, and one for poor people of color trying to hang on to what little we have.

It's time for those backroom deals to include the majority voices of the CID!

Thank you.

Matt Roewe

Dear System Expansion Committee Board Members

I understand that Sound Transit is considering acquiring the Key Bank property in Uptown (at Queen Anne Avenue and Republican Street). This location is slated as an entrance for the Seattle Center Station in the Ballard Link Extension project. Obtaining the property now as a “categorical exclusion” (which allows for early acquisitions ahead of the record of decision) was precipitated by the owner filing a redevelopment application last July.

If Sound Transit acquires this property, the building will likely remain unoccupied with a cyclone fence around it until construction starts, which is at least 5 years away and likely more given the escalating costs and complexity of the project. Leaving the property unoccupied will create blight in the heart of Uptown’s business district as the property is already attracting graffiti, trash and encampments. This is too long for such an important location to remain fallow.

Please consider finding a tenant to activate this location for the next 5 years. Potentially an arts organization, a non-profit or any type of retail that benefits from the proximity to Seattle Center. The building is in good shape, has great visibility, it has an open floor plan and it would likely only need a few improvements for most users. If a tenant cannot be arranged, consider working with the City of Seattle Economic Development Office to make it available for pop-up art installations. If ST can’t make these arrangements, it may be better to demolish the building and put in a temporary, well-managed, parking lot until the BLE project is approved, funded and starts construction.

Thank you for your consideration.

Matt Roewe

Uptown Resident

Martin Westerman

Greetings Board Members,

Since Seattle proposed extending the World’s Fair monorail to SeaTac airport in the 1960s, we’ve seen the federal government offer to fund light rail (1970s), votes to extend the monorail to West Seattle (1990s-2000s), the Jackson St.-downtown trolley (1990), death of the waterfront trolley (2005) and soon, the SLU trolley (2007), and initial Line 1 and Jackson St. light rail track & stations (2009).

Counting Sounder and Amtrak, we’ve now got six north-south rail lines that don’t connect with each other, and one — Line 1 light rail, that never reaches projected system ridership, and rarely reaches projected segment ridership. Since 1941, three bridges have been built to West Seattle,

none accommodating light rail. If light rail was so important, we would have built it by now. But we didn't.

During all those decades, one mode has delivered most of Seattle's public transit riders efficiently, dependably and cost-effectively. Buses. We voted for better transit in 2016 ST3, but most of our ST3 dollars have been spent to pay off ST2, and fund media, presentations and EIS studies that say West Seattle light rail will not increase ridership, improve rider experience or reduce traffic congestion, and won't protect jobs, residents, businesses and the environment. ST3 called for improvements in West Seattle bus routes. What have you done with that investment we voted for in 2016?

It should be clear to this board by now that we have never spent our rail money well. So when you tell us that you want to spend \$7 billion on another 4-mile rail stub that won't carry any more riders when it's built in 20 years than buses carry now, it looks like you want to make another bad investment of public transit dollars. You should all vote no on Resolution No. R2025-03. Then, direct your staffs top explore the recommendations we have repeatedly made here. We want Sound Transit to efficiently, dependably and cost-effectively improve public transit. Not throw our money at another bad rail investment.

All the best,

Martin Westerman, West Seattle

Rethink the :ink

[Bill Hirt](#)

Dear System Expansion Committee,
following post for your Feb 13 meeting:

Bill Hirtt

I suggest you consider the

The February 13th System Expansion Committee meeting agenda continues the committee's Fantasy Land approach to the area's transportation problems. They've never recognized 4 car light rail trains can't accommodate the number of commuters needed to reduce multi lane freeway peak hour congestion and cost too much to operate off peak.

That Sound Transit should have never extended light rail beyond the UW Stadium, across I-90 bridge, or beyond SeaTac airport. Using light rail to replace bus routes reduces transit capacity, does nothing to reduce freeway GP congestion, and those transferring from buses reduces access for current riders. The results being the more the extensions, the higher the train operating cost, more lost capacity and no congestion reduction into Seattle. city.

The 2024 Starter Line and Lynnwood Link debuts should have debunked another Sound Transit premise "if we build light rail extensions riders will come". Yet the 2025 System Expansion

Committee Work Plan seemingly ignores those results. For example the lack of Lynnwood riders should have ended plans for the Everett Extension.

Yet the 2025 Proposed Budget & Financial Plan for the extension adds \$44 million to the \$84 million already spent and the work plan includes the following:

Consider amending the Everett Link Extension project budget for Phase 2

The meeting agenda's Recommendation to the Board includes authorizing the chief executive office to acquire property needed for West Seattle and Ballard extension. The 2025 work plan included "consider authorizing acquiring the property and increasing Project Allocation to date.

They seemingly ignore that the areas served by both extensions have access to bus routes with far better access to routes into far more convenient stops for egress and access in the city. That it's "unlikely" the number of riders that chose to transfer to light rail for the ride into Westlake will justify the \$13 billion cost for a 2nd tunnel or spending \$7 billion for a 2nd Duwamish Waterway bridge for a ride to SODO.

The bottom line is Sound Transit continues to use Prop 1 approval in 2016 to spend \$54 billion between 2017 and 2041 on light rail extensions detailed in ST3 map to justify spending \$150 billion collected between 2017 and 2046 doing so. Leaving \$20 billion in debt service payments in 2046. The February 13th System Expansion Committee agenda demonstrates they still don't recognize the folly

[John Niles](#)

Hello Sound Transit:

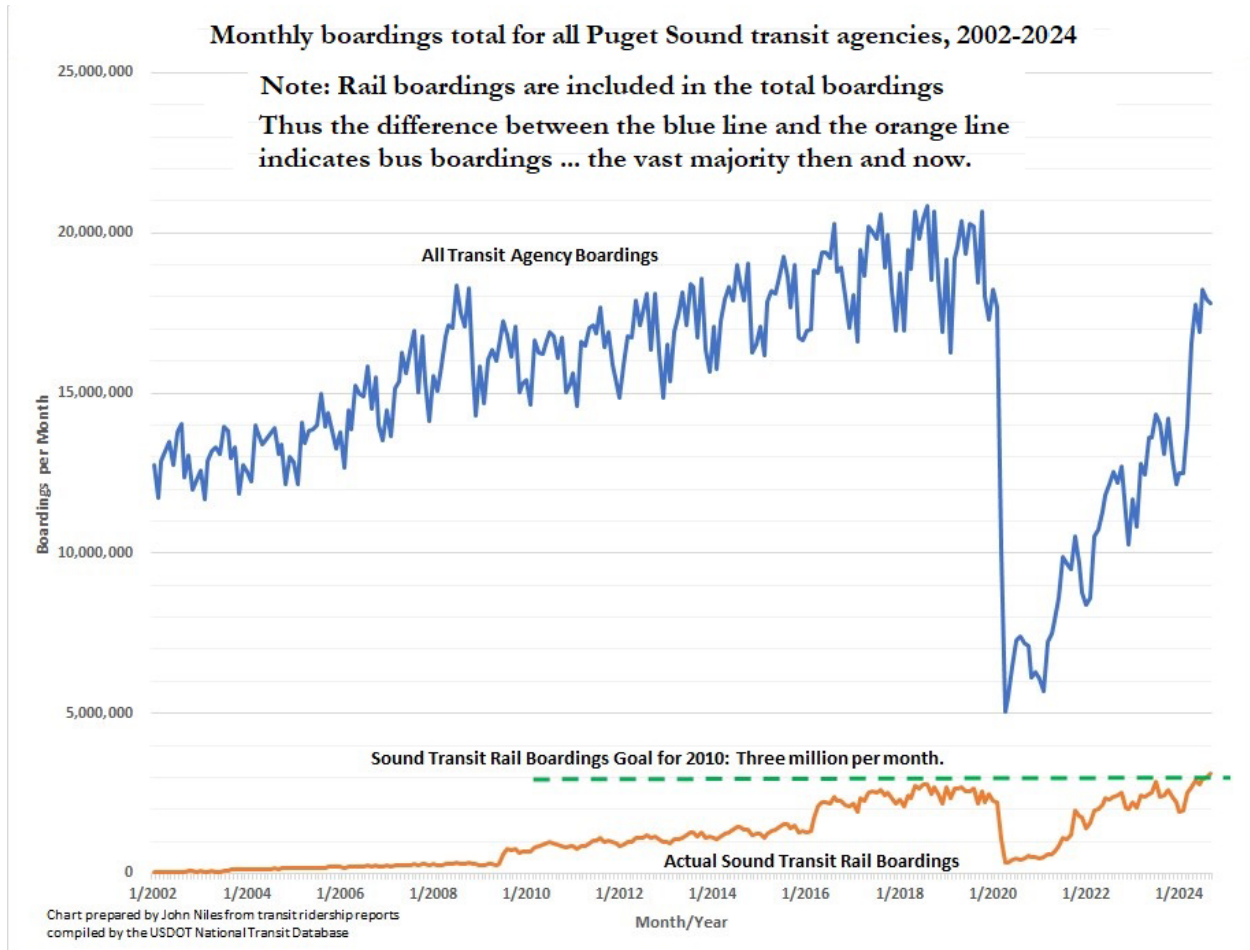
In support of Martin Westerman's insightful comment below to you leaders, attached is an illustration I prepared from transit agency submissions to FTA of the transit ridership provided regionally by buses in this century compared to the ridership provided by Sound Transit billions of dollars in rail investments. Vertical axis is monthly rider boardings. Note that in a day, the average transit customer makes at least two boarding, one for going someplace and one for going back to where the trip started.

Advancing West Seattle Light Rail Extension with any additional board votes is not in the public interest. Too many events have happened since 2016 to continue with "staying the course."

John Niles

Co-chair, Smarter Transit

Seattle citizen since 1982



On 2/13/2025 11:01 AM, MartinWesterman wrote:

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All the best,

Martin Westerman, West Seattle

Rethink the :ink

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John S. Niles

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