



NORTHWEST SEATTLE COALITION

For Sound Transit 3

Contact: Ben Broesamle, Coalition Coordinator,
Email: contact@nwseattlecoalition.org

April 25, 2016

TO: THE SOUND TRANSIT BOARD

CC: ED MURRAY, Mayor, City of Seattle
SEATTLE CITY COUNCIL
KING COUNTY COUNCIL
RIC IGENFRITZ, Executive Director of Planning, Environmental and Project Development, Sound Transit
KAREN KITSIS, Planning and Project Development Manager, Sound Transit
SCOTT KUBLY, Director, Seattle Department of Transportation
ANDREW GLASS-HASTINGS, Transit and Mobility Division Director, City of Seattle
The Sound Transit 3 Contact Email Address

FROM: NORTHWEST SEATTLE COALITION - SOUND TRANSIT 3

RE: BROAD COALITION REQUESTS ACCELERATED DELIVERY OF LIGHT RAIL TUNNEL UNDER SHIP CANAL & NO AT-GRADE LIGHT RAIL

The communities and businesses that make up the Northwest Seattle Coalition straddle the Elliott Avenue West and 15th Avenue West corridor, spanning north and south of the Ship Canal. Our communities are at the eye of the growth storm and favor aggressive delivery of reliable transit to relieve current congestion and help meet the mobility needs of future population growth. Unfortunately, the draft Sound Transit 3 (ST3) system plan released for public comment in March consigns our communities to paying \$500 or more per household in new taxes for 22 years, bringing the total to \$11,000 or more, before receiving the light rail we are promised. The draft ST3 package would construct light rail running at-grade in the middle of Elliot and 15th Avenues West and utilizing a drawbridge over the ship canal. This rail line will have far more negative construction impact and be much less reliable permanently than is acceptable. It must be improved. The Northwest Seattle Coalition advocates strongly for the West Interbay, between 18th and 20th Avenues West, and a Tunnel under the Ship Canal route to Ballard.

As currently configured, the ST3 package will be a hard sell in our communities because it exacts too many taxes without delivering the most reliable, rapid transit option the corridor so badly needs. The compromise Draft System Plan route proposed will also take too long to construct.

The ST3 measure needs our communities' unqualified endorsement and support if it is to be enacted in November. The reason ST3 needs strong support from our communities is in the electoral numbers. There are 102,000 registered voters in the 36th legislative district (ten percent of King County voters). Election records show that our communities have both the highest percentage of registered voters and the highest percentage of voter participation in the state (over 85% in November, 2012). Simply put, the ST Board needs overwhelming support in our communities to increase the likelihood that ST3 will pass throughout its tri-county service area.

The Elliott Avenue and 15th Avenue West corridor, the aorta of our communities, had 54,500 cars crossing the Ballard Bridge daily in 2014, over double the traffic of Martin Luther King Way South. This corridor has become congested on a daily basis and is becoming more so. Ballard has grown by about 2,000 private parking spaces in recent years. The Interbay neighborhood is projected to grow similarly. Expedia proposes to add 2,000 parking spaces to its campus, which will open in 2019. The Elliott/15th corridor operates like a section of plumbing pipe with control valves at the Ballard Bridge and where the corridor meets downtown at Denny Way. When the control valves are plugged, nothing moves. To this mix, ST3 proposes to remove up to 50% of the existing car capacity (two travel lanes) on Elliot Avenue and 15th Avenue West and to perpetuate the current "control valve" impediment by using a draw bridge to cross the ship canal. The final route must enhance, and not diminish the current and potential future carrying capacity of the entire 15th Avenue West Corridor, both during and after construction, all without blocking residents, workers and patrons from crossing the street.

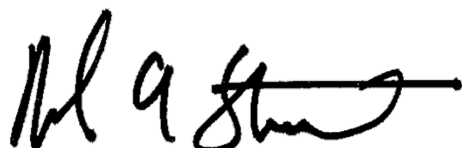
Our coalition has previously recommended alternatives that deliver much more reliable, rapid transit service at comparable cost. These alternatives, which involve: using a corridor to the west of 15th Avenue West; crossing the ship canal by means of a tunnel; and constructing an underground station in Ballard with the best options for northern and eastern expansion capability identified in Sound Transit planning documents as alternative C-01c. Our reasons for continuing to recommend this alternative, and related reasoning for constructing the most reliable and cost effective rapid transit system are detailed in the attached white paper.

In addition to more reliable service, we need light rail much sooner than 22 years from now. We believe that Sound Transit's priority must be first to deliver a reliable Ship Canal tunnel crossing to the highest ridership corridor proposed in ST3 and second to ensure the fastest delivery schedule possible.

Getting ST3 right is essential if the measure is to be embraced by the voters. Thank you for considering our views. Please direct questions about our letter and white paper to Ben Broesamle, the contact and coordinator for the Coalition and Chair of the Transportation Committee of the Magnolia Community Council. He can be reached by cell phone at (310) 562-2759 and by email at contact@nwseattlecoalition.org.

The Coalition is sending this letter with the signatories of thirteen current official-member organizations below. The Coalition continues to grow as additional organizations officially decide to join to our advocacy.

Very truly yours,




Mike Stewart, Executive Director
Ballard Chamber of Commerce



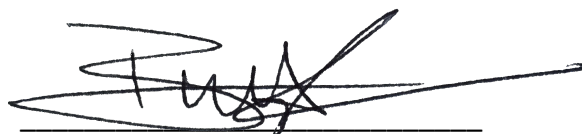
Tom Malone, Co-Chair, Urban Design
and Transportation Committee,
Ballard Partnership for Smart Growth



Catherine Weatbrook, Co-Chair, Urban
Design and Transportation Committee,
Ballard Partnership for Smart Growth



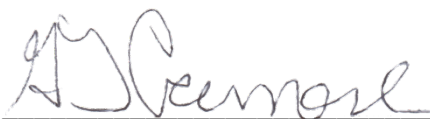
Michael Kahrs, President
Central Ballard Resident's Association



Bert Hopkins, President
Crown Hill Neighborhood Association



Jeff Thompson, Co-Founder
Interbay Neighborhood Association



Greg Carnese, Executive Director
Magnolia Chamber of Commerce



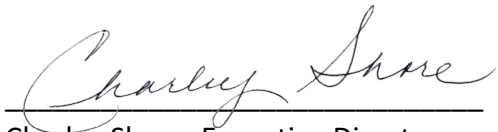
Bruce D. Carter, Co-President
Magnolia Community Council



Steve DeForest, Chair
Magnolia Queen Anne Dist. Council



Eugene Wasserman, President
North Seattle Industrial Association



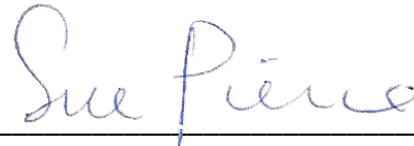
Charley Shore, Executive Director
Queen Anne Chamber of Commerce



Ellen Monrad, Chair
Queen Anne Community Council



Michael K. Davis, Transportation Committee
Chair, Uptown Alliance



Sue Pierce, Chair
West Woodland Neighborhood Assoc.



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