

Denis Law
Mayor



Mayor's Office

January 20, 2016

Sound Transit Board
c/o Board Administrator
Sound Transit
401 South Jackson Street
Seattle, WA 98104

RE: City of Renton Sound Transit 3 System Plan Candidate Projects Comment Letter

Dear Chair Constantine and Members of the Board:

We sincerely appreciate this opportunity to provide feedback on the candidate projects under consideration for inclusion in the Sound Transit 3 (ST3) System Plan. With this letter we acknowledge the scope of the candidate projects that would directly affect the City of Renton and offer our recommendations for how the projects and system plan should be modified to leverage the greatest benefit to regional mobility and the City of Renton.

Our intent with this request for feedback is to recommend a restructuring of two east corridor project elements—E-02 and E-04. Compared to the current project definitions, the modifications outlined below will better meet our desired outcomes for a denser, transit-friendly community, and address the future mobility needs of our city's residents and employees. We request the board fully fund these projects to complement ST3, and we recommend early project implementation. These changes are a key step to gain support from our residents.

Additionally, we acknowledge and support without change the three region-wide/multi-corridor projects that will have a net positive effect on mobility and access (R-01, R-05, and R-07) within our city. We have high expectations that these region-wide/multi-corridor projects will deliver needed transit service hour increases, help shape non-motorized improvements, and leverage transit-oriented development (TOD) potential at bus rapid transit (BRT) station locations.

Proposed Changes

The I-405 Bus Rapid Transit candidate project consists of four build options (derived from two capital investment options) and four operable segments. There is no substantive difference in access to Renton between the different build options. Operable segments B and C are partially within the city. With that context in mind, the following changes to the ST3 E-02 and E-04 candidate project definitions are requested (from north to south, shown in enclosed map):

Segment Definition

To ensure these elements are built as a fully operable project within the overall boundaries of the City of Renton, we are requesting modification of the Segment B definition in addition to the project elements requested below:

- Extend Segment B from North 8th Street to SR 167/Rainier Avenue South/South Grady Way.
- Begin Segment C at SR 167/Rainier Avenue South/South Grady Way.

Without the change in segment definition, implementation of the I-405 Bus Rapid Transit candidate project within the City of Renton would be dependent on funding and completion of two segments. With this change in definition, upon completion of Segment B the BRT would provide access from Bellevue to the entirety of Renton, and would be consistent with Renton's Comprehensive Plan and City Center Community Plan.

North Renton Project Elements

- Eliminate direct access HOV/transit ramps proposed for North 8th Street.
- Eliminate BRT Station at North 8th Street/Park Avenue North with garage and bus layover.

South Renton Project Elements

- Add direct access HOV/transit ramps at I-405/Talbot Road South (or alternately at Rainier Avenue South, Lind Avenue SW or Oakesdale Avenue SW, depending on design constraints) that access to and from the northern portion of I-405.
- Provide Business Access and Transit (BAT) lanes on Talbot Road South between South Grady Way and I-405 direct access ramps.
- Add transit center ("South Renton Transit Center") with joint transit-oriented development and shared-use parking (up to 2,000 spaces) at South Grady Way/Rainier Avenue South.
- Provide BAT lanes on South Grady Way between Talbot Road South and SR 167.
- Provide BAT lanes on SW Grady Way between SR 167 and SR 181.

With these changes the BRT route would travel to Tukwila Amtrak/Sounder Station (City of Tukwila) on arterials. The segment would then resume routing to the Tukwila International Boulevard Station.

Justification for Proposed Changes

Renton is a city of over 98,000 residents that consists of a regional urban center with a large employment base of over 50,000, including over 15,000 Boeing employees. Renton has experienced tremendous growth over the past two decades and is currently planning for residential and employment growth at a level that is higher than any other core city in the region. The ST3 candidate projects as currently proposed do not effectively reflect the changing land use patterns and travel demand that has occurred during these transformative years and that is further envisioned and encouraged to occur in the future.

North Renton

The North 8th Street direct-access HOV/transit ramps project dates back 15 years to 2001 with the approval of Sound Transit Resolution No. R2001-09. The need for the project was based on the planned redevelopment of the Boeing and Kenworth manufacturing plants into a mixed-use community with a wide range of residential, commercial and open space uses. Today that project is no longer being considered and instead the substantial manufacturing base is now planned to continue indefinitely. Since project justification was primarily based on redevelopment, the city does not consider these direct access ramps as a necessary component to mobility improvement in north Renton. Instead the project's amended lifetime budget of \$68M should be reallocated to the South Renton Transit Center.

Without the direct-access ramps, the proposed BRT Station at North 8th Street/Park Avenue North with the garage and bus layover is not warranted.

South Renton

Under the current ST3 E-02 candidate project description (either the low or intensive capital option) the I-405 Bus Rapid Transit candidate project would bypass south Renton. To better connect residents and job sites in south Renton (as well as the SR 167 corridor) to the regional transit system, we are requesting a Renton BRT station at a new regional transit center (South Renton Transit Center), envisioned adjacent to the I-405/SR 167 interchange, that would repurpose and redevelop the vacant 8.3-acre former Sound Ford site. At this site the I-405 BRT would connect to the RapidRide F Line as well as routes 101, 102, 148, 153, 167 and 169.

A regional station would support significant area redevelopment and TOD opportunities, many of which are already in early development stages with large office-based employment arriving in this area before ST3 will be realized. Within present zoning, the station area is forecast to be home to 2,575 residents and 8,237 jobs by 2040. When significant TOD occurs in this station area at or near the maximum residential density permitted by current code, it would substantially increase ridership for both Sound Transit's I-405 BRT and local transit service operated by King County Metro including the RapidRide F Line. The new transit center in south Renton would also allow for the shift of regional and pass-through transit trips away from the current Renton transit center to this hub with reduced travel time and improved reliability by avoiding downtown congestion.

We are also proposing that Sound Transit's planned investment in a park-and-ride facility in Renton be transferred from the currently proposed north Renton site (North 8th Street and parking garage/Park Avenue North) to this South Renton Transit Center site in the vicinity of Rainier Avenue South and South Grady Way. Presently the nearly 350-stall south Renton park-and-ride fills to capacity on a daily basis. There is ample evidence of significant latent demand at this location, and the addition of the I-405 BRT is certain to enhance demand even further. This site offers the opportunity to expand commuter park-and-ride access in

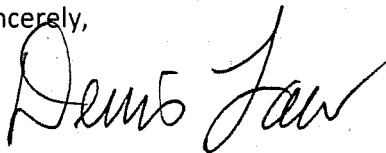
this high demand area with development of shared-use parking, as part of a transit-oriented joint development project. Collaboration in the development of such a project between King County Metro, Sound Transit, the City of Renton and a private site developer would offer the potential to lower Sound Transit's costs for project development, as well as operations and maintenance.

For efficient, reliable access to and from the South Renton Transit Center we are proposing direct-access HOV/transit ramps at I-405/Talbot Road South (or alternately at Rainier Avenue South, Lind Avenue SW or Oakesdale Avenue SW, depending on design constraints), as well as BAT lanes on Talbot Road South and South Grady Way. While Resolution No. R2001-09 stated that direct-access ramps at Talbot Road South were infeasible due to its proximity to the I-405 and SR-167 interchange, this project element would introduce ramps coming from the northeast only, rather than the southwest, which is toward the interchange. Therefore the feasibility of this proposal should be evaluated with fresh eyes. Further the rationale for eliminating the ramps was based on an old assumption of a need for full reconstruction of the I-405 and SR 167 interchange, which is now reality with the construction of the SR 167/I-405 HOV direct connector project.

The city has developed more detail for this proposal than reflected in this letter and would be pleased to share that with Sound Transit staff if requested. The plan includes a TOD concept for the station site that would—consistent with current zoning—accommodate 900 residential units, 500,000 square feet of mixed-use retail and commercial space, 2,000 shared-use parking stalls and six acres of new publicly accessible streets, walkways and open space.

Thank you for considering our comments as we plan for our city's future mobility. The projects in the final package presented to voters should be in step with local and regional plans. We welcome close coordination with Sound Transit as the ST3 System Plan continues to develop.

Sincerely,




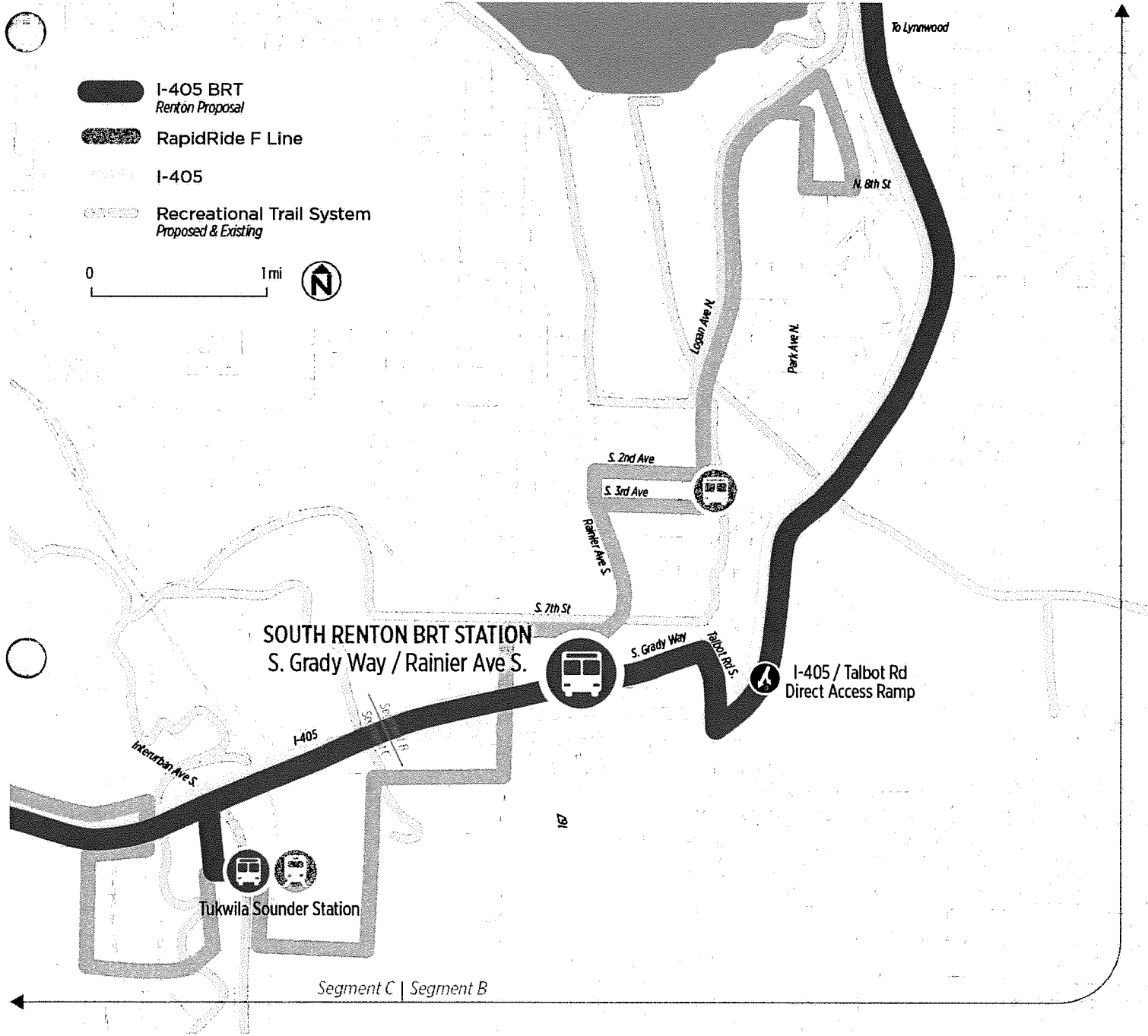
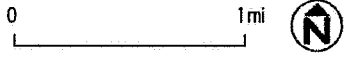
Denis Law
Mayor

Enclosure

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cc: Renton City Council
Jay Covington, Chief Administrative Officer
Gregg Zimmerman, Public Works Administrator
Chip Vincent, Community & Economic Development Administrator
Doug Jacobson, Deputy Public Works Administrator, Transportation

-  I-405 BRT
Renton Proposal
-  RapidRide F Line
-  I-405
-  Recreational Trail System
Proposed & Existing



Segment C | Segment B