

Denis Law  
Mayor



Mayor's Office

April 28, 2016

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

**Re: City of Renton Sound Transit 3 Comment Letter**

Dear Chair Constantine and Members of the Board:

The City of Renton appreciates the opportunity to provide additional feedback on the Draft Sound Transit 3 (ST3) System Plan. In our previous two comment letters in the past nine months, as well as through joint Eastside city communications, we have stated to the Board our urgent need for high quality transit projects in the I-405 corridor. We have reviewed the latest draft ST3 plan and have the following comments.

The I-405 corridor needs a High Capacity Transit (HCT) investment consistent with that of light rail. Although we appreciate the inclusion of bus service on I-405 in the draft plan, what is described as "I-405 Bus Rapid Transit (BRT)" does not qualify as HCT, but rather regional express service with improved headways. Full BRT, as we have requested of the Board in our previous communications, and as envisioned in the I-405 Master Planning effort that was sponsored by Sound Transit and WSDOT, is the equivalent of light rail on rubber tires. This includes branded vehicles with multiple doors for entry/exit (designed to "dock" with stations to eliminate a step up onto the bus) and off-board fare collection. We have seen little evidence of these characteristics of full BRT in the draft plan.

On I-405, full BRT will include center-running operations the length of the system and serve in-line stops and direct access ramps throughout the corridor. To our disappointment, there are no stops at all between downtown Bellevue and south Renton described in the draft plan. Although we do appreciate that a new transit center in south Renton has been included in the plan, there are no direct access ramps or local street improvements to provide access to the station.

We again ask the Board to work with Sound Transit staff to deliver full BRT in the I-405 corridor, as described in the 2002 WSDOT/Sound Transit I-405 Master Plan. To maximize taxpayer transportation investments, it is essential that Sound Transit work in close coordination with WSDOT during the continuous build-out of I-405 to capitalize on

one another's efforts. The Board should consider dedicating funding for further study of additional I-405 system BRT stations and/or light rail in the I-405 corridor to help plan for this coordination now and to prepare for ST4. We are ready to work with Sound Transit and WSDOT staff to identify the most expedient locations for stops in every segment of the corridor as planning continues to move forward.

For BRT to be successful there must be a robust bus feeder system in place. Sound Transit should preserve and add significantly to the 600,000 regional bus service hours outlined in the draft plan throughout the duration of the ST3 package to ensure a high quality bus network continues to feed riders to the BRT system. These investments should also be adding service to overcrowded and high ridership routes and creating new routes such as a Renton-to-Seattle Express Bus route.

As for the timing of the development of the South Renton BRT station at the corner of Rainier Avenue South and South Grady Way, we again ask that you purchase the property at this time using a portion of the \$68 million that has been set aside for Renton projects as agreed upon in our 2002 settlement agreement with Sound Transit. This site offers the opportunity to expand commuter park-and-ride access in this high demand area with the creation of shared-use parking as part of a transit-oriented joint development project.

Sincerely,



Denis Law

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