



**CITY OF KIRKLAND**  
**Department of Public Works**  
123 Fifth Avenue, Kirkland, WA 98033 425.587.3800  
[www.kirklandwa.gov](http://www.kirklandwa.gov)

---

**MEMORANDUM**

**To:** Kurt Triplett, City Manager

**From:** David Godfrey, P.E., Transportation Engineering Manager  
Kathy Brown, Public Works Director

**Date:** January 7, 2016

**Subject:** Sound Transit 3

**RECOMMENDATION:**

It is recommended that the City Council receive a briefing on ST 3, and review two letters addressed to the Sound Transit Board concerning ST 3. The first is from Mayor Walen, representing the City of Kirkland, and the second is co-authored and endorsed by a group of eastside cities including, potentially, the City of Kirkland. These letters are scheduled for final review and approval on the Unfinished Business portion of the January 19<sup>th</sup> City Council agenda. The Transportation Commission will also review the letters at their meeting on Thursday, January 14 and members of the Commission will be attending the Study Session to provide their feedback and insights.

**BACKGROUND DISCUSSION:**

*Policy Support and Background regarding ST 3 investments on the Cross Kirkland Corridor*  
Over the past several years, the City of Kirkland has worked closely with the community to shape a vision for our city's future. This effort, which was called Kirkland 2035, involved hundreds of stakeholder participants from our community, setting priorities based on our community's vision looking 20 years into the future. This extensive public engagement process formed the basis of the policies contained in our city's Comprehensive Plan, our Transportation Master Plan, and the Cross Kirkland Corridor (CKC) Master Plan. Throughout the community planning process, improving transportation was one of the areas identified by our community as a top priority; and the need for better transit was a consistent theme. Transit is a key element of our Transportation Master Plan, and the Cross Kirkland Corridor is noted in each of these documents as a high priority transportation corridor for pedestrians, bicycles, and transit.

When the Burlington Northern/Santa Fe (BNSF) Railroad was purchased by the Port of Seattle, the Transportation Commission proposed, and the City Council adopted, an interest statement for how the corridor should be developed in our city (Attachment A). Recognizing the critical need for improved north-south transportation within and through Kirkland, and the multimodal opportunities provided by the ERC, the City of Kirkland purchased a 5.7 mile segment of the ERC to ensure its speedy development as a pedestrian/bike corridor, and to preserve opportunities for the best possible transit service in the future. An interim trail was quickly designed and constructed to put the corridor to immediate use for pedestrians and bicycles. Our longer-range CKC Master Plan sets forth policy and concept designs for development of a fully multimodal transportation corridor, which includes transit as an essential component.

The City of Kirkland has conducted a broad program of public outreach to gather comments concerning ST 3 investments of I-405 and the Cross Kirkland Corridor. The following is a list, in no particular order, some of the most frequently heard concerns:

1. Safety for trail users. The proximity of trail users and transit vehicles and safety concerns about crossing HCT to access the corridor.
2. Accessing the corridor. There is a concern that HCT will form a barrier in the community and prohibit crossings in many places where they now exist.
3. Impacts to natural environment. Concerns have been raised about environmental impacts to wetlands, trees, and views. These concerns have raised questions about where (laterally) on the corridor HCT and the trail will be located.
4. Need for a trail to remain. There is a fear in the community that if HCT is built on the CKC, there will not be a trail or the trail will be inadequate to meet community needs.
5. Other places for transit. Because of its perceived negative impacts on the trail, some community members are suggesting that transit should be located somewhere else (such as on I-405) and believe that other locations could be equally effective for transit.
6. Negative impacts of transit vehicles. Visual, odor and noise impacts of transit vehicles.
7. Frequency of buses. Concern that bus frequencies will exacerbate concerns 1, 5 and 6 and create traffic backups where the CKC crosses City streets.
8. Ability to fit on the corridor. There is a perception that the corridor is not wide enough to support proper development of a trail and HCT together, or that there are parts of the corridor where width is not adequate. (See item 3)
9. Commitment from Sound Transit. There is an overarching concern from community members, even those with different viewpoints about HCT on the CKC, that Sound Transit may not construct the corridor in a way that takes Kirkland's interests into account. Some of those who have said they oppose HCT on the CKC have said that they would support it if there were a "legally binding" way to obtain assurance that the CKC would be built out according to the CKC Master Plan vision.
10. Parking impacts. Community members have expressed the need for added parking areas for corridor access, assuming that HCT would draw transit riders to station areas and failure to adequately plan for this will cause impacts from parking in neighborhoods.
11. Property values. Some people who live along the corridor are concerned that adding HCT will decrease property values.

12. CKC transit will be for "others." The concern here is that BRT on the CKC may serve routes that carry people who are passing through Kirkland, impacting the corridor without direct benefits to residents of Kirkland.
13. Construction impacts. Concern that during construction, the entire trail or portions of the trail will be closed for long periods of time.

*Letter from the City of Kirkland*

In a December 7, 2015 letter (see Attachment B), Dow Constantine, King County Executive and Chair of the Sound Transit Board of Directors, asked that jurisdictions prepare correspondence to indicate receipt of the draft ST 3 candidate project templates and to comment on them. Specifically, Chair Constantine's letter states, in part: "With this letter I am asking for your acknowledgement and feedback on the scope of the candidate project(s) in which your jurisdiction is interested" and "...we would like to have your acknowledgement on the scope of candidate projects of interest to you along with any other feedback, by Thursday, January 21, 2016."

On January 5, the City Council reviewed materials in preparation for the City of Kirkland's response letter to Chair Constantine. Included in the briefing materials was a draft outline of the letter. Based on the comments from Council, public input, and a technical review of the project templates, a draft letter has been prepared for Council's consideration and approval (Attachment C). The draft letter is being reviewed by the City's Transportation Commission, Council's Public Works, Parks and Human Services Committee and by Council's ST 3 Ad Hoc Committee. These reviews will take place after Council packet material for the January 19<sup>th</sup> meeting has been published. Therefore, staff will provide any proposed revisions at the Council meeting on January 19.

Three main points in the letter summarize the City's position with respect to what must be included in an ST 3 ballot measure:

- **High Capacity Transit (HCT) is needed on the CKC:** Provide adequate funding to construct and operate Light Rail on the Cross Kirkland Corridor/Eastside Rail Corridor, between the Totem Lake Urban Center and Downtown Bellevue, but include language that specifically allows the flexibility to instead construct and operate the highest level of Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) or any other suitable mode of HCT. The choice of mode would occur after a successful Sound Transit ballot measure based on input from the City of Kirkland and evolving technologies and best practices at the time of construction. The need for this flexibility stems from the fact that Bus Rapid Transit may provide better, more flexible service and may better address the concerns that we have heard in extensive public outreach in the Kirkland community, and that new modes of public transportation might well be available over the next decade and authorized by Sound Transit. Additionally, it would be in the best interest of the City, as well as the region, if this unique opportunity for a dedicated HCT guideway on the Eastside could be shared by regional (Sound Transit), and local (Metro Transit) transit services. A flexible approach for any future HCT mode is essential to address all of these considerations.

A major reason for Kirkland's request to allow flexibility in selecting a mode on the CKC/ERC is that we are interested in working with the Sound Transit Board to develop and support a project that addresses the concerns of our community, especially with regard to the Cross Kirkland Corridor. The selection of mode is a complicated one that requires more time than is available before the Sound Transit Board must make decisions about what will be in the ST 3 package.

- **The policies and plans in the CKC Master Plan must be realized:** Place the transit generally on the east side of the corridor to retain sufficient space for the trail Master Plan. Improve the trail component of the Cross Kirkland Corridor, consistent with the City of Kirkland's CKC Master Plan, and build the trail simultaneously with the transit.
- **405 BRT must provide reasonable access points in Kirkland:** ST 3 must contain a BRT project on I-405 that allows excellent transit access to both the Totem Lake Urban Center and downtown Kirkland with TOD at the Kingsgate Park and Ride.

The letter also includes detailed comments on the ST 3 project templates prepared by Sound Transit, summarized as follows:

1. General
  - a) Include TOD at Kingsgate Park and Ride as part of a project in ST 3
  - b) Ridership estimates should be refined. In particular, the regional modeling approach used by Sound Transit, although appropriate for gross scale modeling over the entire three-county region, does not reflect important ridership trends and forecasts at a smaller geographic scale. The number and locations of stops are absolutely critical to a city the size of Kirkland, but are not shown to have any effect on ridership in the current model. Similarly, trips within a city the size of Kirkland are not captured in the ridership model.
  - c) Reconfigured King County Metro Bus Routes should be modeled with each Candidate project. Service integration, and the potential value of overall transit service delivery, should be considered in project selection.
  - d) A calculation of project benefits should be completed that would allow easier comparison of the value of projects.
2. E-02 Bus Rapid Transit on I-405 from Lynwood to Burien or Sea-Tac and the associated sub projects E-02c 1 and E-02c 2.
  - a) The scope of this project should be reviewed and revised to include all elements of a high quality BRT system.
  - b) E-02b Bus Rapid Transit on I-405 from Lynnwood to Burien or Sea-Tac (Intensive Capital) with connections at NE 85<sup>th</sup> (E-02c1 and E-02c2) must be included in the ST 3 package.
  - c) E-02c1 and E-02c2 should be combined into one project.
  - d) The concept of center stations should be considered on both NE 85<sup>th</sup> Street and I-405, in projects E-02c1 and E-02c2. These projects should include a median aligned busway on NE 85<sup>th</sup> Street.

- e) The scope of project E-02c2 should consider routing to 6<sup>th</sup> Street, next to the redeveloping Kirkland Urban project, rather than 3<sup>rd</sup> Street to improve travel time and ridership.
3. E-03 Totem Lake to Issaquah Light Rail
- a) Re-scope the project with funding adequate to construct and operate Light Rail, but provide the flexibility to instead construct and operate the highest level of Bus Rapid Transit or other suitable mode of High Capacity Transit so that the Kirkland community can determine which mode best serves Kirkland and the region.
  - b) Provide a connection between LRT on the CKC/ERC and downtown Kirkland.
  - c) Provide a flexible guideway that could be used by Metro Transit buses as well as light rail similar to the street car lines in Tacoma and Seattle.
4. E-06 BRT on Eastside Rail Corridor from Kirkland to Bellevue
- a) Consider a more complete transit service plan that includes King County Metro service. Any HCT guideway should be flexible for use by Metro Transit as well as Sound Transit.
  - b) Examine travel time estimates and resulting impacts on ridership
  - c) The scope of project should consider routing to 6<sup>th</sup> Street, next to the redeveloping Kirkland Urban project, rather than 3<sup>rd</sup> Street to improve travel time and ridership.
  - d) Routing must include aerial routing in Totem Lake to avoid delay caused by congestion and traffic signals.
  - e) Review the costs of the project to better understand why costs are much higher than industry norms.

A summary of community comments and a policy basis for Kirkland's positions are also in the letter, with material largely unchanged from that in Council's January 5 packet.

#### *Multi City Letter to the Sound Transit Board*

The Cities of Bellevue, Issaquah, Kirkland, Redmond, Renton and Bothell have prepared a joint comment letter on ST 3. Council reviewed a draft of the letter at the January 5 Council meeting. Council's ST 3 Ad Hoc Committee has reviewed the letter and proposed some minor changes. These have been combined with edits proposed so far by other cities (Attachment D). Because the letter is due to the Sound Transit Board on January 21 and because five other City Councils are simultaneously reviewing the letter, there is limited opportunity for editing the letter. As with the letter from the City of Kirkland, the draft multi-city letter is being reviewed by the Transportation Commission, Council's Public Works, Parks and Human Services Committee and by Council's ST 3 Ad Hoc Committee. These reviews will take place after the time when Council packet material for the January 19<sup>th</sup> meeting has been published. Therefore, staff will provide any revisions, including those that other cities may provide, at Council's meeting on January 19<sup>th</sup>.

#### *Zero Emissions Requirement on the Cross Kirkland Corridor*

At the January 11 Public Meeting, the idea of requiring any transit vehicle operating on the Cross Kirkland Corridor to be electric or have zero emissions was raised. The Council has previously expressed a desire to accomplish this goal. This would avoid diesel fumes, and/or other carbon emissions. Sound Transit light rail is electrified and Proterra, Inc. currently produces all-electric buses that can meet the needs of municipal bus fleets. King County Metro has purchased several Proterra buses as a pilot project and as the technology advances and the electric bus market increases, additional options may become available in the years

between the time a Sound Transit measure passes in 2016 and design and construction of a transit thoroughway are completed. Therefore staff does not believe that such a zero emissions requirement would prohibit any of Sound Transit's HCT options from operating on the CKC. The City Manager has asked the City Attorney and staff from Planning and Public Works to evaluate legislative and/or regulatory options to make the CKC a zero emissions corridor. Staff hopes to have some initial options to present at the Study Session for Council review and feedback.

*Conclusion*

If done correctly and in a way that addresses community concerns, an approach to HCT in Kirkland that includes both BRT on I-405 and, most importantly, HCT on the Cross Kirkland Corridor, will best serve the needs of the City of Kirkland and the Eastside. Our precious opportunity to create one of the best multimodal corridors in the world was noted at the Eastside Rail Corridor Regional Advisory Council Summit on January 9, 2016. Keynote speakers and presenters from around the country participated in the event, which was attended by elected officials and other stakeholders from the communities that share an interest in the ERC. It was noted by one of the speakers that the ERC provided not just a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for a world class integrated pedestrian, bike, and transit system; rather, this is a once-in-a-century opportunity. If implemented in a way that addresses the issues raised by Kirkland residents and businesses, ST3 provides our community, the Eastside, and our region the means of grasping this once-in-a-century opportunity to improve our community and our quality of life.

# City of Kirkland

## Eastside Rail Corridor Interest Statement

*Adopted by the Kirkland City Council April 19, 2011*

### Introduction

In December 2009, the Port of Seattle purchased the Woodinville subdivision from the BNSF Railroad. The Eastside Rail Corridor, stretching between Snohomish and Renton via Kirkland, thereby became a publicly-owned corridor. The City of Kirkland has long been interested in the corridor as a potential facility for bicycle and pedestrian transportation, having identified the Cross Kirkland Trail<sup>1</sup> project more than 15 years ago.

With the corridor coming into public ownership, the City Council directed the Transportation Commission to conduct public outreach, then identify and document the City's interests in the corridor. This Interest Statement is the product of that work.

Outreach elements included gathering comments at the Wednesday Market, fielding three on-line surveys, meeting with Boards, Commissions and neighborhood groups, walking the corridor, and receiving testimony at Transportation Commission meetings. The 2009 Final Eastside Commuter Rail Feasibility Study<sup>2</sup> prepared by Sound Transit and PSRC also served as a reference.

This Interest Statement is not a proposal or a recommendation per se. Rather, it is intended to guide evaluation of proposals for corridor development. Proposals that satisfy more of the interests would rank more highly than proposals that satisfy fewer of the interests. The conclusions at the end of this document describe the type of corridor development that is likely to be practical and meet the City's interests given current information.

### Interests

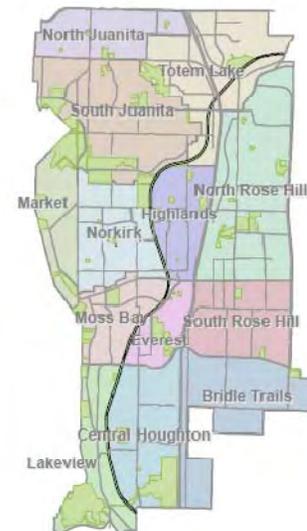
#### **Serve Transportation needs of Kirkland**

Transportation on the corridor should be integrated with and support the City's transportation goals<sup>3</sup> to provide travel options within Kirkland and to points outside Kirkland. This implies an interest in how and when the corridor is developed in other cities as well.

#### **Keep the corridor in public ownership**

The region has determined<sup>4</sup> that the public interest is served by public ownership of the corridor, and the City of Kirkland supports this position. Keeping the corridor in public ownership may require the City to purchase its portion of the right-of-way, and Kirkland's ownership may help the City meet other interests as well.

The Eastside Rail Corridor (black line) touches many neighborhoods and parks in Kirkland



A section of the right-of-way in the Highlands neighborhood



Source: City of Kirkland

#### **Council Goal concerning Balanced Transportation:**

*Kirkland values an integrated multi-modal system of transportation choices.*

**Council Goal: To reduce reliance on single occupancy vehicles.** (September 2009)

***Actively use the corridor in the near future***

Because the corridor is a valuable asset that could be used to transport people, allowing it to remain unused or undeveloped has a high opportunity cost. The longer it is not used, the more resistance may be encountered toward any particular use.

***Maintain the corridor in good condition***

The corridor should be maintained to protect its value and the value of adjacent properties. Proper operation of drainage facilities, prevention of encroachment, and the preservation of structures and crossings are examples of ongoing maintenance needs.

***Contribute to economic sustainability***

Development of the corridor should be done in a cost-effective manner and should consider the short- and long-term costs of construction, maintenance, and operation. Development should support current and future plans for economic and neighborhood development.

***Connect Totem Lake***

Because of the corridor's proximity to the Totem Lake Urban Center<sup>5</sup>, it has the potential to help connect Totem Lake to the rest of the city and the region.

***Protect neighborhood feel and atmosphere***

Development of the corridor should allow for access across and along the corridor and not create barriers within or between neighborhoods. Residential neighborhoods should be protected from any excessive noise and safety impacts caused by corridor uses. Development of any trailheads, transit stations and/or parking locations should consider and minimize impacts to neighborhoods. The corridor is adjacent to several parks, schools and other amenities. These facilities should be protected appropriately as the corridor is developed.

***Plan for a multi-use facility***

In the long term, transit, pedestrians and cyclists should be able to simultaneously travel safely and efficiently in the corridor. Planning or implementing one transportation mode must not foreclose future corridor use by another mode. Additionally, underground utilities that currently use and will continue to use the corridor<sup>6</sup> must be considered. Freight operations may be considered along the corridor, but there does not appear to be much commercial interest in freight rail service within Kirkland.

The existing corridor contains many drainage facilities that require regular maintenance.



Source: City of Kirkland

The Burke-Gilman trail in Seattle is on an abandoned railroad right-of-way.



Source: King County

This area in the Houghton neighborhood contains wetlands.



Source: City of Kirkland

A shared rail and trail facility



Source: Marin County Bicycle Coalition

**Serve the transportation needs of pedestrians and bicyclists**

A bicycle and pedestrian transportation facility should allow all-weather, day and night use. It should be sized to allow simultaneous safe passage for both pedestrians and bicyclists of all skill levels. Its development should include protection of existing connections and include new connections to the City’s streets and trails. The Active Transportation Plan<sup>7</sup> has a list of such connections.

**Design Transit to efficiently move people**

Successful transit systems must have certain characteristics. Service should be frequent, available most of the day, operate between desirable destinations, be easily accessible by potential riders and offer reasonable travel speeds. The best choice of transit technology may vary, with one system best in the shorter term and another better in the longer term. The viability of transit in the corridor should be compared to other options.<sup>8</sup>

**Plan any transit use in close consultation with the City of Kirkland.**

Locating transit stations and associated parking and feeder bus connections has major short- and long-term impacts on the surrounding neighborhoods and on the transportation network. A process to determine station locations should include extensive work with neighborhood groups, appropriate Boards and Commissions, and the City Council.

**Consider grade-crossing delay and safety**

Crossings must provide a reasonable level of safety and convenience for both users of the corridor and for street traffic. Design of the corridor should consider the potential time delays and safety concerns for all users of the corridor and facilities that intersect it.

**Disclose and mitigate environmental impacts**

Develop the corridor in a way that meets the City’s goals for environmental sustainability. Prior to any development of the corridor, a complete environmental review should be conducted to identify and disclose impacts and to propose mitigations for those impacts. Noise, air quality, surface water and sensitive areas are topics that typically require analysis in an environmental review.

**Conclusions**

By its nature, an interest statement does not establish specific positions on issues. Instead it describes interests, which could be met in a variety of ways. The purpose of these conclusions is to demonstrate how the interests described above could be met, to varying degrees, by a range of development options.

Ultimately, the City’s interests would be met by implementing a welcoming, transportation-oriented facility for pedestrians and bicyclists, coupled with a high-capacity transit system that connects Kirkland to the region.

These photos illustrate different types of transit. How they might help meet Kirkland’s interests on the corridor would depend on a number of factors.

**Heavy rail: Sound Transit Sounder**



Source: Railpictures.net Image © PNWRailfan

**Electric Light Rail: Sound Transit Link**



Source: lisatown.com

**Diesel multiple unit: DMU in service in Australia**



Source: thetransportpolitic.com

**Bus Rapid Transit: Community Transit Swift**



Source: blogs.seattleweekly.com

The main focus for development of the corridor in the short term should be on a trail. A paved, accessible, bicycle and pedestrian trail would be far less expensive than a high-capacity rail or bus system and would require a less extensive planning process than would a transit option. However, it is important that trail planning be done with rail compatibility --that would meet Kirkland's interests-- as the long-term goal.

Due to its poor physical condition, the current infrastructure in the corridor is not capable of supporting rail traffic that would offer a viable transportation option. If rail were to be located on the corridor, a safe, fully-featured, high-capacity rail system – similar to Link Light Rail—is perhaps the ideal option. A high-capacity rail system would require a great deal of careful planning to meet Kirkland's interests.

Because of its high cost and Sound Transit timing, it is not likely that regional rail transit would be in operation before 2030. Moreover, the Eastside Rail Corridor may not be the best alignment for such a route. In the shorter term, there may be less expensive corridor transit options that could be developed, such as bus rapid transit linking the South Kirkland Park & Ride and Totem Lake.

While freight operations may be part of a future rail corridor, there does not appear to be much current commercial interest in freight rail service within the city. It is difficult to conceive of freight rail operations that would meet many of Kirkland's interests.

The Eastside Rail Corridor is a transportation facility that represents enormous opportunity for the City of Kirkland and the region. Kirkland is fortunate to have such a facility within its boundaries and should strive to see that its interests are met during development of the corridor.

#### City of Kirkland Transportation Commission

The City of Kirkland Transportation Commission is made up of seven members appointed by the City Council to four-year terms. The Commission meets every month to make recommendations on transportation policy to the City Council. Visit the Commission webpage where you can join the Transportation Commission List-Serve and automatically receive e-mail updates on the Commission's activities.

*Commission members:*  
Donald Samdahl, Chair  
Joel Pfundt, Vice Chair  
Morgan Hopper  
Tom Neir  
Thomas Pendergrass  
Sandeep Singhal  
Michael Snow  
Carl Wilson

#### **Summary of interests**

- **Serve transportation needs of Kirkland**
- **Keep the corridor in public ownership**
- **Actively use the corridor in the near future**
- **Maintain the corridor in good condition**
- **Contribute to economic sustainability**
- **Connect Totem Lake**
- **Protect neighborhood feel and atmosphere**
- **Plan for a multi-use facility**
- **Serve the transportation needs of pedestrians and bicyclists**
- **Design transit service to efficiently move people**
- **Plan any transit use in close consultation with the City of Kirkland**
- **Consider grade crossing delay and safety**
- **Disclose and mitigate environmental impacts**

<sup>1</sup> The Cross Kirkland Trail was originally envisioned as a trail that would operate beside what was at the time an active railroad corridor.

<sup>2</sup> 2009 Final PSRC and Sound Transit BNSF Eastside Commuter Rail Feasibility Study, 2009 Puget Sound Regional Council <http://www.psrc.org/transportation/bnsf>

<sup>3</sup> City of Kirkland Council Goals. <http://www.ci.kirkland.wa.us/Assets/City+Council+Goals.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> BNSF Corridor Preservation Study, Final Report May, 2007 Puget Sound Regional Council. Page 7. [http://www.psrc.org/assets/3176/\\_07-20\\_BNSFfinalreport.pdf](http://www.psrc.org/assets/3176/_07-20_BNSFfinalreport.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> In cooperation with member cities, Puget Sound Regional Council has designated a number of Urban Centers where regional growth is to be targeted. Totem Lake is the only Urban Center in Kirkland. Downtown Bellevue, downtown Redmond and Overlake are examples of other nearby Urban Centers.

<sup>6</sup> Puget Sound Energy and Cascade Water Alliance are examples of current and potential users respectively.

<sup>7</sup> *More People, More Places, More Often, an Active Transportation Plan* City of Kirkland, March 2009. Page 100. [http://www.ci.kirkland.wa.us/depart/Public\\_Works/Transportation\\_Streets/Active\\_Transportation\\_Plan.htm](http://www.ci.kirkland.wa.us/depart/Public_Works/Transportation_Streets/Active_Transportation_Plan.htm)

<sup>8</sup> Ridership on existing King County Metro routes could be a reasonable benchmark. The proposed Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) System on I-405 could also be compared.



RECEIVED  
 DEC 10 2015  
 CITY OF KIRKLAND  
 CITY MANAGER'S OFFICE

December 7, 2015

The Honorable Amy Walen  
 Mayor of Kirkland  
 123 5th Avenue  
 Kirkland, WA 98033

Dear Mayor Walen,

On behalf of the Sound Transit Board, I want to thank you for your input and continued engagement on the development of Sound Transit 3 (ST3), the next set of regional high-capacity transit investments that we plan to present to voters next November. To reach that goal, we expect to have a draft system plan out for public comment and review next spring, with final adoption by the Board at our meeting in June. Input from jurisdictions, the citizens we serve, our partners, and stakeholders across the region will continue to inform and shape our work in the months ahead.

The purpose of my letter is to ask for feedback as we begin to evaluate the ST3 candidate projects and start to identify projects and services for the next system plan. At the December 4 Board workshop, staff presented technical reports for each candidate project, along with corridor summary information, for the list of candidate projects approved by the Board last August. The candidate project reports can be found at [www.SoundTransit3.org](http://www.SoundTransit3.org). With this letter, I am asking for your acknowledgement and feedback on the scope of the candidate project(s) in which your jurisdiction is interested.

Through the implementation of Sound Move and Sound Transit 2 capital programs, the agency has come to value the need for common understanding and clarity about the scope and initial assumptions of proposed voter-approved projects. At this stage in the planning process, the scope of these candidate projects inform the cost estimates, which in turn inform the financial plan needed to support the system plan. To ground the system plan in solid analysis and to ensure success over the long run, it is paramount that we continue to advance our planning work with accuracy and transparency. Sound Transit asks you to acknowledge the scope elements included in candidate project reports of interest to you and note if there are scope elements that have been overlooked or included unnecessarily. To keep our work on schedule, we would like to have your acknowledgement on the scope of candidate projects of interest to you, along with any other feedback, by Thursday, January 21, 2016.

Over the next several months, the Board intends to develop a system of capital projects and services that, in combination with state and local transportation services and infrastructure, keep our regional economy and people moving. Using the technical work presented at the December 4 workshop and on-going feedback from citizens, cities, and partners, the Board will utilize our regular meetings to discuss priorities, leading to the adoption of a draft plan in the spring.

**CHAIR**

**Dow Constantine**  
*King County Executive*

**VICE CHAIRS**

**Paul Roberts**  
*Everett Councilmember*

**Marilyn Strickland**  
*Tacoma Mayor*

**BOARD MEMBERS**

**Claudia Balducci**  
*Bellevue Mayor*

**Fred Butler**  
*Issaquah Mayor*

**Dave Earling**  
*Edmonds Mayor*

**Dave Enslow**  
*Sumner Mayor*

**John Lovick**  
*Snohomish County Executive*

**John Marchione**  
*Redmond Mayor*

**Pat McCarthy**  
*Pierce County Executive*

**Joe McDermott**  
*King County Council Vice Chair*

**Mary Moss**  
*Lakewood Councilmember*

**Ed Murray**  
*Seattle Mayor*

**Mike O'Brien**  
*Seattle Councilmember*

**Lynn Peterson**  
*Washington State Secretary of Transportation*

**Larry Phillips**  
*King County Council Chair*

**Dave Upthegrove**  
*King County Councilmember*

**Peter von Reichbauer**  
*King County Councilmember*

**CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER**

**Joni Earl**

Thank you for your continued engagement and feedback on the ST3 planning work. An integrated and robust transportation system is key to maintaining our economic competitiveness and the quality of life we enjoy in the Puget Sound region. My colleagues on the Board and I look forward to working with you in the weeks and months ahead on an ST3 plan that delivers on this vision.

Sincerely,



Dow Constantine  
Chair, Sound Transit Board

c: Sound Transit Boardmembers  
Mike Harbour, Acting Chief Executive Officer  
Ric Ilgenfritz, Planning, Environment & Project Development  
Ann Snell McNeil, Government & Community Relations

Sound Transit Board  
c/o Board Administrator  
401 S. Jackson Street  
Seattle, WA 98104-2826

January 20, 2016

Dear Chair Constantine and Sound Transit Boardmembers:

Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on the project templates for the ST 3 candidate projects. It is exciting to contemplate an ST 3 ballot measure and the positive effects of increased transit in our region, and the City of Kirkland looks forward to working with you to shape the ballot measure in the months to come.

This letter responds to Chair Constantine's letter dated December 7, 2015, requesting local governments to acknowledge receipt of the templates for the candidate projects and give feedback on the project scopes along with any other feedback agencies may wish to offer. Our comments mainly concern the following projects:

- *E-02 Bus Rapid Transit on I-405 from Lynwood to Burien or Sea-Tac* and the associated sub projects E-02c 1 and E-02c 2.
- *E-03 Totem Lake to Issaquah Light Rail*
- *E-06 BRT on Eastside Rail Corridor from Kirkland to Bellevue*

To realize the vision and policies set forth in our long-range plans (see *A policy basis for Kirkland's support* below), there are three overarching requirements of any ST 3 package from the City of Kirkland's perspective:

- **High Capacity Transit (HCT) is needed on the CKC:** Provide adequate funding to construct and operate Light Rail on the Cross Kirkland Corridor/Eastside Rail Corridor, between the Totem Lake Urban Center and Downtown Bellevue, but include language that specifically allows the flexibility to instead construct and operate the highest level of Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) or any other suitable mode of HCT. The choice of mode would occur after a successful Sound Transit ballot measure based on input from the City of Kirkland and evolving technologies and best practices at the time of construction. The need for this flexibility stems from the fact that Bus Rapid Transit may provide better, more flexible service and may better address the concerns that we have heard in extensive public outreach in the Kirkland community, and that new modes of public transportation might well be available over the next decade and authorized by Sound Transit. Additionally, it would be in the best interest of the City, as well as the region, if this unique opportunity for a dedicated HCT guideway on the Eastside could be shared by regional (Sound Transit), and local (Metro Transit) transit services. A flexible approach for any future HCT mode is essential to address all of these considerations.

A major reason for Kirkland's request to allow flexibility in selecting a mode on the CKC/ERC is that we are interested in working with the Sound Transit Board to develop and support a project that addresses the concerns of our community, especially with regard to the Cross Kirkland Corridor.

The selection of mode is a complicated one that requires more time than is available before the Sound Transit Board must make decisions about what will be in the ST 3 package.

- **The policies and plans in the CKC Master Plan must be realized:** Place the transit generally on the east side of the corridor to retail sufficient space for the trail Master Plan. Improve the trail component of the Cross Kirkland Corridor, consistent with the City of Kirkland's CKC Master Plan.
- **405 BRT must provide reasonable access points in Kirkland:** ST 3 must contain a BRT project on I-405 that allows excellent transit access to both the Totem Lake Urban Center and downtown Kirkland with TOD at the Kingsgate Park and Ride.

**A policy basis for Kirkland's support.**

As mentioned above, both regional and local transit play an important role in Kirkland's Transportation Planning. In particular, HCT on the CKC has a central role.

Following more than three years of public involvement, the Kirkland City Council recently adopted a number of documents that define Kirkland's future course, including the Comprehensive Plan and the Transportation Master Plan. In 2014, the Cross Kirkland Corridor Master Plan was adopted after a vigorous public outreach program. All of these plans identify HCT on the CKC as a goal toward which the City should be striving.

The Kirkland Comprehensive Plan's 2035 vision of a livable, walkable, green community can only be met with a high quality transit system that connects with the regional system. Developing transit as a realistic alternative for many trip types is one of the foundations of the City's Transportation Master Plan and will best be accomplished when transit can travel on a guideway that is separate from mixed traffic. A separate transit way on the CKC is one way of accomplishing this. The transportation element of the Comprehensive Plan was developed in coordination with the Plan's land use element and its recognition of Kirkland's future growth, including at the Totem Lake Urban Center.

Results from the past three community surveys (conducted biennially in Kirkland) have shown traffic congestion as an item that is important to the community but which needs improved performance. Adding better transit options is one several strategies that can be used to reduce traffic congestion.

Along with local policy support for transit on the CKC, there is regional policy basis for HCT on the Eastside Rail Corridor (ERC). The ERC Regional Advisory Council<sup>1</sup> (RAC) has adopted a policy statement in support of HCT along the entire corridor along with facilities for walking and biking. RAC's policy vision is consistent with the reasons Sound Transit's purchased an HCT easement on the ERC

---

<sup>1</sup> King County, the cities of Kirkland and Redmond, Sound Transit, and Puget Sound Energy own segments of the Eastside Rail Corridor or easements on the Corridor. These owners work together through the Regional Advisory Council (RAC) to maintain a collaborative, regional planning process for the ERC. The owners' goal is to achieve connectivity and multiple uses, maximizing public benefit and enjoyment throughout the corridor both directly and indirectly.

In addition to the many policies and long-range plans associated with the CKC, Transit Oriented Development (TOD) at Kingsgate Park and Ride is directly referenced and supported in the City's Totem Lake Business District Plan, in both Goals and Policies.<sup>2</sup> We believe that this site is a perfect candidate for TOD development, furthering our city's Sound Transit's and the region's goals for affordable housing, accessible transit, traffic congestion reduction, and reduced carbon emissions.

### **Comments and questions on the ST 3 Candidate Projects and templates**

#### *Summary of Kirkland's Comments*

Background and explanation for these comments are detailed in the discussion below.

1. General
  - a) Include TOD at Kingsgate Park and Ride as part of a project in ST 3
  - b) Ridership estimates should be refined. In particular, the regional modeling approach used by Sound Transit, although appropriate for gross scale modeling over the entire three-county region, does not reflect important ridership trends and forecasts at a smaller geographic scale. In other words, the number and locations of stops are absolutely critical to a city the size of Kirkland, but are not shown to have any effect on ridership in the model. Similarly, trips within a city the size of Kirkland are not captured in the ridership model.
  - c) Reconfigured King County Metro Bus Routes should be modeled with each Candidate project. Service integration, and the potential value of overall transit service delivery, should be considered in project selection.
  - d) A calculation of project benefits should be completed that would allow easier comparison of the value of projects.
  
2. E-02 Bus Rapid Transit on I-405 from Lynwood to Burien or Sea-Tac and the associated sub projects E-02c 1 and E-02c 2.
  - a) The scope of this project should be reviewed and revised to include all elements of a high quality BRT system.
  - b) E-02b Bus Rapid Transit on I-405 from Lynnwood to Burien or Sea-Tac (Intensive Capital) with connections at NE 85<sup>th</sup> (E-02c1 and E-02c2) must be included in the ST 3 package.
  - c) E-02c1 and E-02c2 should be combined into one project.
  - d) The concept of center stations should be considered on both NE 85<sup>th</sup> Street and I-405, in projects E-02c1 and E-02c2. These projects should include a median aligned busway on NE 85<sup>th</sup> Street.
  - e) The scope of project E-02c2 should consider routing to 6<sup>th</sup> Street, next the redeveloping Kirkland Urban project, rather than 3<sup>rd</sup> Street to improve travel time and ridership.

---

<sup>2</sup> Policy TL 18-3: Seek opportunities to expand housing in the Totem Lake Business District, Goal TL-34: Support transit-oriented-development (TOD) at the Kingsgate Park and Ride. Policy TL-34.1: Encourage new transit-oriented development.

3. E-03 Totem Lake to Issaquah Light Rail
  - a) Re-scope the project with funding adequate to construct and operate Light Rail, but provide the flexibility to instead construct and operate the highest level of Bus Rapid Transit other suitable mode of High Capacity Transit so that the Kirkland community can determine which mode best serves Kirkland and the region.
  - b) Provide a connection between LRT on the CKC/ERC and downtown Kirkland.
  - c) Provide a flexible guideway that could be used by Metro Transit buses as well as light rail, similar to the street car lines in Tacoma and Seattle.
  
4. E-06 BRT on Eastside Rail Corridor from Kirkland to Bellevue
  - a) Consider a more complete transit service plan that includes King County Metro service. Any HCT guideway should be flexible for use by Metro Transit as well as Sound Transit.
  - b) Examine travel time estimates and resulting impacts on ridership
  - c) The scope of project should consider routing to 6<sup>th</sup> Street, next to the redeveloping Kirkland Urban project, rather than 3<sup>rd</sup> Street to improve travel times and ridership.
  - d) Routing should include aerial routing in Totem Lake to avoid delay caused by congestion and traffic signals.
  - e) Review the costs of the project to better understand why costs are much higher than industry norms.

*General comments: Ridership*

City of Kirkland staff and consultants have raised general concerns around the ridership forecasts in the Project Templates. The regional ridership model uses forecast zones that are relatively large. Although this may be appropriate at the regional scale, there are aspects that are of interest to Kirkland that are not depicted. For example the model under-counts trips within Kirkland, and the ridership benefits of stations closer to homes, jobs, and key transfer points, due to the limitations of a model designed for regional rather than municipal-level analysis. The model assumes that all people live and work at the middle point of each zone, (known as the 'zone centroid'). For regional analysis, this is a reasonable simplifying assumption. However, this assumption means the model cannot distinguish between the average access trip differences under different station-location scenarios, because the model cannot, for example, distinguish between people living in the Everest versus the Lakeview neighborhoods within Kirkland. This plays out in the analysis of Project E-02 BRT on I-405 in that the Intensive Capital (E-02a) option with more stops and access has the same ridership forecast as the Lower Capital (E-02b) alternative.

While the model does not project added ridership with additional stops, ST staff has indicated that increased stops do result in increased travel time in the ridership model. This further complicates comparisons of templates with one another.

*General comments: Coordination with Metro Service*

One of the most important factors in projecting ridership for a proposed project is the transit service plan that will operate in conjunction with the project. What the model assumes about the service plan, as well as what will happen to the existing bus services, will generally determine ridership projections.

For example, Project E-06, includes one service that runs from Totem Lake to Bellevue. All other Metro and ST bus services are assumed to remain as they currently exist. Therefore, ridership on the E-06 appears much lower than it might be with a more sophisticated service plan in which King County Metro would also operate services on the CKC/ERC BRT infrastructure. If only one ST-operated BRT service is assumed on the CKC, and no other bus service changes are assumed, competition between existing bus routes and the new BRT service will draw riders away from the new BRT, thereby decreasing projected ridership. Sound Transit staff has indicated a willingness to discuss service changes but it indicated that most service planning decisions would come in a later design phase. While this may not significantly alter other templates, it has a very significant impact on the viability of the projects affecting Kirkland, most particularly E-06, E-02c1, and E-02c2. To a far greater degree than other candidate projects, these projects in Kirkland can significantly benefit from integration with King County Metro service.

*General comments: Comparing results*

The ST3 templates represent the results of a significant modeling and evaluation effort put forth by Sound Transit and its consultants; however, the presentation of results makes it difficult to compare the benefits of one project to another. While projected ridership, cost per rider, and trip time are shown, these are not compared against any baseline conditions, and hence provide no way to estimate project benefits relative to project cost.

As there is no clear basis for comparing the relative technical merits of each project, the Board and the public are given no basis for determining the fairness of each project's inclusion in or exclusion from the final ST3 package, or a project's position in a proposed timeline for ST 3 implementation.

For example, in order to prioritize funding for transit projects from among a set of project applications, the Federal Transit Authority (FTA), performs a comparative analysis using various metrics, the most significant of which is a cost effectiveness analysis, requiring each project to demonstrate a cost per user benefit, or 'dollars per transit user benefit hours. This 'dollars per transit user benefit hour' indicator provides a way of comparing one project against another.

Benefit in a transit project is typically calculated by first determining the travel time and ridership for a set of services under existing conditions, and then comparing this to travel time and ridership after the project is implemented. Additional time savings and additional riders are then weighed against the project's cost. Even a very expensive project may be viable if it brings enough new passengers and new time savings.

The ST3 templates include projected trip lengths and travel times for several projects after implementation, but as they do not compare this to the current time required to make the same trip by transit, nor the current demand, there is no way to compare the projects' potential benefits under 'build' and 'no build' conditions. Without such a measure of user benefit, it is difficult to objectively compare higher and lower cost options.

***Project Specific Comments: Candidate Project E-02a: Bus Rapid Transit on I-405 from Lynnwood to Burien or Sea-Tac (lower capital)***

*Quality of Bus Rapid Transit on I-405 as presented in E-02a –Seg. A.*

Considering the elements that characterize Bus Rapid Transit (BRT), Kirkland staff and consultants have raised a concern that this proposal is express bus service renamed “BRT.” Key elements that distinguish high quality BRT but that do not appear in the templates include:

- Dedicated right-of-way (Buses will operate in shoulder lanes and general purpose lanes over some of the route and Express Toll Lanes are subject to congestion.)
- High quality stations with platform-level boarding. The improvements included for the in-line station at NE 128th Street are “minor improvements including signage.”
- High levels of bicycle access (The Kingsgate/Totem Lake Station is not considered an urban station, but rather a suburban station)
- Multiple service routes that can leave the main facility. The template includes only one route and excludes service beyond the I-405 BRT corridor.
- It is unclear if the vehicles being proposed have appropriate configurations. Our team recommends purchase of vehicles that have doors on both sides of the coach in order to serve center platforms thereby saving hundreds of millions of dollars in station construction costs over stations on both sides of a stop.

*Kirkland improvements in E-02a –SegA.*

Template E-02a-SegA utilizes the existing inline bus transit station at NE 128th as the only stop in Kirkland. The fact that there are no new connections for the Totem Lake Urban Center or for Downtown Kirkland means this project proposal offers little to no benefit or value to Kirkland residents, businesses and workers. Further, only considering a garage at the Kingsgate Park and Ride does not maximize the potential for increasing affordable housing stock through transit oriented development (TOD) at that site. In June 2015, Deputy Mayor Sweet and I visited the Kingsgate Park and Ride site with Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) Secretary Peterson to discuss Kirkland’s interest in TOD there and how to work with WSDOT to move forward. Secretary Peterson was very open to this possibility and we are anxious to see the project move forward as part of ST 3.

With no new access to Kirkland, either at Totem Lake or to Downtown, E-02a-SegA is unacceptable.

***Candidate Project E-02b-SegA: Lynnwood Transit Center to Bellevue Transit Center (Intensive Capital)***

*Description*

In Kirkland, Template E-02b-SegA is an improvement over E-02 b because it includes an inline station at NE 112<sup>th</sup> St, providing a second connection to the Totem Lake Urban Center. ST staff explained that the reason the addition of 112th Street did not yield any additional riders was because the station is close to the Kingsgate Park and Ride stop, and the two stops split the demand rather than generating new demand. This could be the result of the large zones used for modeling described above. The quality of bus rapid transit comments made for E-02a-Seg A also apply to this project. Because this project alone does not include a connection to NE 85<sup>th</sup> Street, it is unacceptable to the City of Kirkland.

*Comparison of E-02a and E-02b in SegA:*

Sound Transit's 2014 Sound Transit Central/East High Capacity Transit Corridor Study<sup>3</sup> indicated larger differences in travel time savings than are recognized in the templates. It also seems as though the addition of The HOV to HOV direct connection between I-5 and I-405 would likely save minutes of travel time but neither of these differences manifest themselves in ridership differences between the alternatives.

***Candidate Project E-02c1: Kirkland-NE 85th Street BRT Inline Station (Intensive Capital)***

To provide any meaningful service to the City of Kirkland, Template E-02c1 must be funded and included in any iteration of ST3 Candidate Project E-02-SegA. As noted above, center platform stations on NE 85th Street and I-405 could save substantial construction costs over split stations. These savings may be several times greater than any impacts to fleet costs needed to provide vehicles with doors on both sides of coaches. To effectively connect riders with other service, this project must be completed with project E-02c2 (below).

***Candidate Project E-02c2: Kirkland-NE 85th Street Bus-Only Lanes (Intensive Capital)***

Again, to provide any meaningful service to the City of Kirkland, Template E-02c2 must be funded and included in any iteration of ST3 Candidate Project E-02-SegA. As described above, this project must be included with E-02c1 in order to be effective. Template E-02c2 calls for "outside" bus only lanes. To provide speed and reliability and set the stage for BRT service along this link, the lanes should be located in the center of the roadway. This configuration would also allow for a center platform on NE 85th Street. It would require less street widening and perhaps reduce the reconstruction costs of the NE 85th Street interchange. It could also be used by BRT service on the CKC/ERT to connect to downtown Kirkland. Bus-only lanes on NE 85th must allow for a center lane station to serve E-02c1. The template as proposed also connects to 3rd Street in Kirkland, but it may be beneficial to connect to 6th Street and the Kirkland Urban development because it would reduce the length of the project and still make a strong connection to downtown Kirkland.

***Candidate Project E-03: Light Rail from Totem Lake to Issaquah via Bellevue***

The scope for this project must be altered to provide flexibility to allow for alternative High Capacity Transit considerations such as Bus Rapid Transit on the Eastside Rail Corridor in Segment A from Totem Lake to Bellevue, if, upon further analysis and public input, this is the optimal mode for the CKC. Even if light rail is constructed, it should be constructed in a way that would allow for use of the corridor by King County Metro Transit buses.

A connection between downtown Kirkland and LRT must be provided. This could be accomplished through a project similar to E-02c2 (see comments above).

---

3

[http://www.soundtransit.org/sites/default/files/documents/pdf/projects/HCT\\_2014/STCentralEastHCT\\_CorridorReport\\_KBI.pdf](http://www.soundtransit.org/sites/default/files/documents/pdf/projects/HCT_2014/STCentralEastHCT_CorridorReport_KBI.pdf)

**Candidate Project E-06: Bus Rapid Transit from Totem Lake to Bellevue on CKC/ERC**

*Ridership*

This analysis in this project's template would benefit from a consideration of how King County Metro Service could be reconfigured to better take advantage of new capital projects. There are several Totem Lake-Bellevue and Seattle bound services that could benefit from travel on the CKC. For example, in 2015, Metro's Route 255 carried an average of 6,905 passengers, Route 235 carried an average of 1,140 passengers, Route 234 carried an average of 1,145 passengers, and Route 311 carried an average of 1,075 passengers.

Route	Daily 2015 Ridership
255	6905
235	1140
234	1415
311	1075

Our consultants estimate that if just these four routes used the CKC/ERC BRT for part of their trip, there could be over 10,000 daily riders upon opening of the project with estimated ridership of 34,500 by 2040. Note that one of the primary benefits of this project is improved service for Seattle oriented transit riders, something that is lacking in the E-02 and E-03 projects. By using the CKC, Metro buses traveling from I-405 to Seattle via SR 520 could avoid the congested freeway interchange by using the direct access ramp to and from the west at 108<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE and SR-520 adjacent to the South Kirkland Park and Ride.

The template for E-06 calls for one service with a 10 minute peak headway between buses. If the service plan above were implemented, a better frequency could be maintained. At a minimum, a frequency equal to that assumed in the E-03 template, 7.5 minutes should be used.

*Travel time*

The template shows an estimated travel time of 35 minutes from the Totem Lake Transit Center (TC) to the Bellevue TC on the BRT. The service that would travel from Totem Lake to Bellevue most closely mimics the existing 235 bus route. Currently, the trip on the 235 between Totem Lake TC and the Bellevue TC takes 37 minutes. Consultants working for the City of Kirkland conducted a travel time analysis and determined that the trip from Totem Lake TC to Bellevue TC would take roughly 27.5 minutes. This difference is important because ridership assumptions should increase if the trip time is decreased by 25%. The reasons for the difference in travel time have to do with operating assumptions around how long buses take to slow at a station, pick up passengers and accelerate away from the station. More importantly they have to do with the routing assumptions described below.

*Routing*

As described in the discussion around the template for project E-02c2, routing for project E-06 was considered on Central Way in curbside transit lanes with some mixed traffic to 3rd Street and Kirkland Way before rejoining the CKC/ERT. Kirkland prefers a more direct routing in median aligned, exclusive bus lanes between the CKC/ERT and 6th Street, with a station at Kirkland Urban (former Kirkland Parkplace). This location balances the needs of pedestrian access to downtown while also minimizing the diversion from the CKC/ERC for BRT vehicles and the additional delay caused by mixed traffic.

In the Totem Lake area, Kirkland asked that full BRT infrastructure throughout Totem Lake to the Kingsgate Park and Ride, including an elevated busway over 124th Street be assumed in the

template. The template assumed Business-Access-Transit (BAT)<sup>4</sup> lanes through Totem Lake, subjecting the BRT to congestion delay between the Kingsgate Park and Ride, Totem Lake TC, and Totem Lake Mall, and signal delay at 124th Street. The assumption of operation in mixed traffic added to the travel time assumed for the route by ST. The elevated busway must be added to this option.

### *Costs*

The ST template lists the total capital cost for the E-06 template as \$747 million. With 10 miles of new infrastructure, this averages out to \$74.7 million per mile. This is a much higher cost per mile than most BRT projects developed in the United States. For example, CTfastrak's BRT, built on a converted freight rail line like the proposed CKC/ERC BRT, is widely known to be a very expensive project. The cost for the CTfastrak BRT was \$567 million for 9.4 miles, or an average of \$60.32 million per mile, still less than the CKC/ERC BRT estimate. Los Angeles' Orange Line was similarly on an old rail line and cost around \$30 million per mile, and Pittsburgh's Martin Luther King, Jr. East Busway also cost around \$30 million per mile. Only Boston's Silver Line Waterfront, which averaged to \$80 million per mile, is more expensive and that is because it included a new tunnel under Boston Harbor. To allow for an accurate comparison across templates, and to establish a measure of benefit per unit of cost, the capital costs of the E-06 template should be revisited.

Vehicle costs should also be revisited. At \$1.8 million this is much higher than the industry norm cost of BRT vehicles. In order to mitigate the impacts of transit vehicles on the trail portion of the CKC, only quiet ultra low emission or zero emission electric buses should be operated. These buses may in fact have a higher cost than the average BRT vehicle, but this is not clearly described in the templates as a reason for the higher vehicle cost.

### **A summary of what we have heard from our community**

The City of Kirkland has conducted a broad program of public outreach to gather comments concerning ST 3. Sound Transit staff have helped support and presented at the larger of these meetings. The most frequent concerns heard at public meetings include: safety for trail users, access across the corridor, preserving the natural environment, the need for a trail to coexist with transit—even in the narrower sections of the corridor, sound, odor and emission impacts of transit and construction impacts to the trail and surrounding properties. The City of Kirkland expects that Sound Transit will make an early commitment to the active mitigation each of these concerns in the planning, design, construction, operation and maintenance of ST 3.

### **Elements the City of Kirkland would require in ST 3 projects.**

The following is a list of initial points that Kirkland would need included in an ST 3 project set. At this early stage in the review process a full or final list cannot be included, but this is a beginning point for our key requirements.

These requirements are built around two themes: one is thorough, accurate planning based on adopted policy that will lead to an effective transit system; the other is addressing concerns we have heard from the public. There is of course overlap between these two areas and they should be blended to reach the most effective conclusion. The following list draws from both areas:

---

<sup>4</sup> BAT lanes allow transit to travel in them, and autos can use them to turn from at driveways and intersections but cannot travel extended distances in them.

1. Projects serving Kirkland must deliver capital and service components that significantly advance the structure of transit service in Kirkland. This will require both BRT on I-405 and the funding required to construct Light Rail on the CKC/ERC with the flexibility needed to fund and construct alternative High Capacity Transit modes such as Bus Rapid Transit on the CKC/ERC in Segment A from Totem Lake to Bellevue, if, upon further analysis and public input, this is the optimal mode for the CKC. Even if light rail is constructed, it should be constructed in a way that would allow for use of the corridor by King County Metro Transit buses.
2. Any transit on the CKC must address the community's concerns about noise, safety, visual impacts, and environmental impacts.
3. Any Sound Transit project constructing HCT on the CKC must include design and construction of a trail that implements the CKC Master Plan vision for the main trail.
4. Within the bounds of any existing easements, HCT on the CKC must generally be to the east of the centerline of the corridor unless a different alignment is needed to preserve the natural features of the corridor that enhance the trail experience. The need for HCT to be on the edges of the CKC is to ensure the remaining width is sufficient to fulfill the CKC Master Plan vision.
5. Accessibility across the corridor must be preserved. Numerous safe crossings, in addition to those at intersections, must be provided in keeping with the CKC Master Plan vision.
6. Only vehicles that are quiet and have zero or ultra-low emissions, such as electric vehicles, can operate on the CKC.
7. Any project for BRT on I-405 must include stops at NE 85<sup>th</sup> and at NE 112<sup>th</sup> Streets. It must also include an exclusive guideway transit solution to connect downtown Kirkland and the I-405/NE 85<sup>th</sup> Street interchange.
8. Sound Transit must work with the City of Kirkland to mitigate parking impacts from station locations.

If done correctly and in a way that solves community concerns, an approach to HCT in Kirkland that includes both BRT on I-405 and, most importantly, HCT on the Cross Kirkland Corridor, will best serve the needs of the City of Kirkland and the Eastside. Our precious opportunity to create one of the best multimodal corridors in the world was noted at the Eastside Rail Corridor Regional Advisory Council Summit on January 9, 2016. Keynote speakers and presenters from around the country participated in the event, which was attended by elected officials and other stakeholders from the communities that share an interest in the ERC. It was noted by one of the speakers that the ERC provided not just a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for a world class integrated pedestrian, bike, and transit system; rather, this is a once-in-a-century opportunity. If implemented in a way that addresses the issues raised by Kirkland residents and businesses,

ST3 provides our community, the Eastside, and our region the means of grasping this once-in-a-century opportunity to improve our community and our quality of life.

Once again we would like to thank you for the efforts of the Sound Transit Board and the Sound Transit Staff to advance this very complicated program. We look forward to the successful passage of a package of transit projects that increases mobility in Kirkland and in the region.

Sincerely,  
Kirkland City Council

Amy Walen  
Mayor

January 19, 2016

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

**Re: Eastside cities' joint ST3 candidate projects comment letter**

Dear Chair Constantine and Members of the Board,

The cities of Bellevue, Issaquah, Kirkland, Redmond, Renton and Bothell appreciate the opportunity to provide feedback on the candidate projects under consideration for inclusion in the Sound Transit 3 (ST3) System Plan. The following shared comments reflect the interests stated in the "ST3 System Plan Joint Interest Statement" submitted to the Board on July 14, 2015, and are in addition to the city-specific comment letters that may be provided to Sound Transit by January 21, 2016.

The Eastside is a vital and growing area, and an integral component of the regional economic engine. Eastside cities are projected to reach nearly 700,000 regional residents and more than 550,000 jobs by 2040. Our cities are interconnected both geographically and economically, and have many common interests and goals. We are boldly reshaping our regional growth centers and downtowns into dense, mixed-use, urban centers that need frequent and reliable transit service to sustain economic growth and viability.

ST3 has the potential to create transit connections within the Eastside, and provide connections between the Eastside and the rest of the region. For ST3 to be successful on the Eastside, the Board must invest in projects that effectively meet the travel demands of both our current communities and those of the future.

It is imperative that the ST3 System Plan address the Eastside transit network in a comprehensive fashion to serve the substantial expected growth, and to maintain the principles of subarea equity as defined in ST2. Should ST3 be approved by the voters, the Eastside will be making a significant tax investment into the package, and we look forward to seeing specific details about the Eastside projects in step with these funds. ~~Given the substantial tax investment into ST3 from the Eastside,~~ We request the Board fully fund the following projects, and related project adjustments early in the ST3 System Plan:

- **E-01:** Complete the East Link spine to Downtown Redmond.
- **E-02:** Fully implement Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) on I-405, from Lynnwood to SeaTac. Adjust the scope of the proposed low intensive capital project to provide sufficient access for the line to operate as an efficient BRT facility; the project components necessary to function as BRT and maximize service and ridership include:
  - Access improvements including, but not limited to, additional inline stations at NE 85<sup>th</sup> Street, relocation of the North 8<sup>th</sup> Street HOV direct access ramp in Renton as

discussed under project E-04, direct access to the Tukwila Sounder Station, and at least one additional location south of I-90;

- [Expanded park-and-ride facilities:](#)
  - Dedicated transitway with inline flyer stops;
  - Vehicles with multiple doors for entry/exit, designed to “dock” with stations to eliminate a step-up onto the bus;
  - Off-board fare collection;
  - Frequent, all day service, with intuitive maps and simple schedules;
  - Transit signal priority where applicable for faster, more efficient service; and
  - Sophisticated communication systems to track vehicle locations and provide arrival information directly to passenger cell phones or other kiosk displays.
- **E-03:** Light rail from Totem Lake to Issaquah via Bellevue to connect these three regional growth centers with fast, frequent and reliable transit service. The scope for this project ~~should~~ **must** provide flexibility [in Segment A \(Totem Lake to Bellevue\)](#) to allow for ~~alternative~~ **any** High Capacity Transit [alternatives available to Sound Transit, so that the Kirkland community can determine which mode best serves Kirkland’s needs. The HCT infrastructure must also enable joint use by transit providers. considerations on the Eastside Rail Corridor in Segment A from Totem Lake to Bellevue, if desired by the community.](#)
  - **E-04:** In lieu of the proposed North 8<sup>th</sup> Street HOV direct access ramps in Renton, provide a new transit center and parking garage at Rainier Avenue South and South Grady Way.
  - **N-09 and N-10:** Build BRT on 145<sup>th</sup> Street and SR 522 to connect with North Link, in accordance with the plans of the local jurisdictions through which it passes, to provide HCT between the Eastside, including the University of Washington Bothell/Cascadia College Campus, and the greater Seattle area via the north end of Lake Washington.

In addition to the above projects, we urge Sound Transit to provide detailed information about investment plans for enhanced and expanded Regional Express Service (REX) between Eastside cities and the region. These investments should include adding service to overcrowded and high ridership routes, and implement capital investments that improve the quality of these services and the rider experience.

We also look forward to an in depth discussion about ST3 plans for non-motorized station access improvements, such as pedestrian and bicycle facilities, and leveraging transit oriented development opportunities.

The regional infrastructure investment represented in a potential ST3 package presents an extraordinary opportunity to synchronize plans from multiple agencies to achieve important regional growth, transportation and environmental policy goals. It is critical that we work in unison to address the important ties between land use and transportation in the early planning phases of the ST3 System Plan to realize the maximum potential of this regional investment. An effective transit system will also seamlessly integrate REX, BRT, light rail and local bus service. We look forward to seeing work products that demonstrate integration between Sound Transit and King County Metro planning efforts.

Thank you for considering our comments as we plan for our region’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,

XXX

DRAFT