



**CITY OF KIRKLAND**  
**Department of Public Works**  
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[www.kirklandwa.gov](http://www.kirklandwa.gov)

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**MEMORANDUM**

**To:** Kurt Triplett, City Manager

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

**Date:** March 30, 2016

**Subject:** UPDATE ON SOUND TRANSIT 3 (ST3)

**RECOMMENDATION:**

It is recommended that City Council take the following next steps during the final public comment period for Sound Transit's ST3 Draft System Plan:

- Review potential ST3 projects in the Draft ST3 System Plan.
- Review the set of projects that the Council expressed interest for in past letters to the ST Board but that are not in the ST3 Draft System Plan.
- Review the March 24<sup>th</sup> letter (Attachment A) to Mayor Walen from Sound Transit Board Chair, Dow Constantine and the Eastside Board members.
- Based on these reviews, indicate priority projects and actions that the Council wishes staff and the City Council's ST3 Ad-Hoc Work Group to take.
- Consider requesting that the Ad-Hoc Work Group and staff prepare a draft response letter to the Sound Transit Chair and Eastside Board members for review and approval by the full Council at the April 19, 2016 City Council meeting.

**BACKGROUND DISCUSSION:**

***Review of potential ST3 projects: Draft ST3 System Plan***

The Sound Transit Board released a Draft System Plan for ST3 on March 24, 2016. Templates with more technical data were posted on the [ST3 website](#) on March 29, 2016. The plan is a 25-year, \$50 billion set of investments. A map of the Draft System Plan is attached to this memo as Figure 1.

In summary, Draft ST3 System Plan includes the following elements in Kirkland:

- Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) on I-405 with new in-line station access at NE 85<sup>th</sup> Street
- Transit lanes from NE 85<sup>th</sup> Street to downtown Kirkland,
- 800 additional parking stalls at the Kingsgate Park and Ride
- BRT service at 10 minute frequency on I-405;
- An environmental and planning study of future HCT between Bellevue and Bothell (University of Washington Bothell campus). The study segment includes the Cross Kirkland Corridor (CKC). The purpose of the study is to evaluate transit mode

alternatives, select a mode, and complete the environmental work needed to achieve a Record of Decision and prepare for eventual future construction of HCT on this segment of the Eastside Rail Corridor.

Note that the March 24<sup>th</sup> letter from the Sound Transit board members discusses the planned BAT lane connection along NE 85<sup>th</sup> Street, and indicates that the proposed transit lanes would extend from downtown Kirkland to 132nd Avenue NE (the Kirkland-Redmond city boundary). Sound Transit staff met recently with Kirkland staff and stated that the project in the Draft ST3 System Plan does not extend to Redmond; rather, the Draft System Plan only includes transit lanes that extend from downtown Kirkland to I-405 (assumed to be roughly at 120<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE). Confirmation should be requested from the Board that the intent is to include transit lanes from I-405 to Redmond on NE 85<sup>th</sup> Street, as well as from downtown Kirkland to I-405.

***Review of potential ST3 projects that Council expressed interest for in past letters to the ST Board but that are not in the ST3 Draft System Plan.***

In addition to the absence of a BRT project on the CKC, the major projects that were of interest to the Kirkland City Council, but are not in the ST3 Draft System Plan, are listed below:

- BRT stop on I-405 at the southern portion of the Totem Lake Urban Center (NE 112<sup>th</sup>)  
This project would provide an additional in-line stop at NE 112<sup>th</sup> Street with pedestrian access across I-405. It was included in Sound Transit's candidate projects for I-405 BRT, but is not in the Draft System Plan.

By 2035, Totem Lake is expected to double its housing units to approximately 12,000 units. Employment is expected to increase from today's 13,000 employees to approximately 52,000 employees. An additional stop at south Totem Lake would support the redevelopment of the Par-Mac area, a 30-acre business district zoned for 8-story, office/high-tech uses. The NE 112<sup>th</sup> Street location gives the potential for good access from the CKC and a pedestrian bridge across the I-405 that serves the portions of the Totem Lake Urban Center to the east of I-405. Because of the street network, the Par-Mac area is difficult to serve with transit and the NE 112<sup>th</sup> Street stop would mitigate this problem. If HCT on the CKC is more than 25 years in the future, this stop would provide important transit access to the South Totem Lake Urban Center.

- Transit Oriented Development at Kingsgate Park and Ride  
The City of Kirkland and Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) have expressed mutual interest in developing Transit Oriented Development (TOD) at the Kingsgate Park and Ride in Kirkland (Attachment B). TOD at the Kingsgate site is expressed in City's Totem Lake Business District Plan. Although the Draft System Plan includes a net increase of 800 new parking stalls at the Kingsgate Park and Ride, the Plan does not include a TOD at this location. A TOD project at this location could be a partnership between WSDOT, Sound Transit, King County Metro, the City of Kirkland and A Regional Coalition for Housing (ARCH). Adding a TOD project to the Draft Plan would help further the City's and the region's policy goals regarding affordable housing. WSDOT owns this site and has indicated an interest in TOD here.

***Review of potential ST3 projects: March 24<sup>th</sup> letter from Sound Transit Board Chair and the Eastside Board members***

Attachment A is the March 24, 2016 letter from the Sound Transit Board Chair and Eastside Board members, summarizing their understanding of Kirkland projects in the ST3 Draft System Plan, and making an offer to explore the inclusion of additional projects in ST3, beyond those currently identified in the ST3 Draft System Plan. The letter states, in part:

In the past few days, there have been discussions regarding extending light rail from Bellevue to the South Kirkland Park and Ride. We have not had the opportunity to fully study this option, or to conduct the analysis and consultation needed before releasing the draft ST3 plan today. With the draft plan out for public comment and review, we will undoubtedly be hearing from many citizens and stakeholders on how to refine the plan. If the City of Kirkland is interested in the South Kirkland connection, we would welcome the opportunity to work with you and members of the Kirkland City Council during the next two months to identify the scope of the proposal and determine whether it is feasible within the ST3 finance plan.

...we are also focused on opportunities to create strong connections for Kirkland residents to the new BRT stations on I-405...This will involve joint discussions with King County Metro...We are interested in discussing potential bike and pedestrian access improvements to better connect Kirkland to the I-405 BRT.

There are three major areas proposed for discussion in the letter:

- 1) Extension of Light Rail Transit (LRT) from Bellevue to the South Kirkland Park and Ride. The Board members also invite the Kirkland Mayor and Council to work with Sound Transit to define the scope of this project, presumably beyond the connection itself.
- 2) Improved transit connections to I-405 BRT (and, presumably to the South Kirkland Park and Ride LRT, should that project move forward).
- 3) Bicycle and pedestrian access improvements to I-405 BRT (and, again, presumably to the South Kirkland Park and Ride LRT, should that project move forward).

The following list of projects flows from these 3 elements:

*Extension of LRT to the South Kirkland Park and Ride*

- Extend light rail north to the South Kirkland Park & Ride from Wilburton Station  
This concept was specifically suggested in the Sound Transit Board members' March 24<sup>th</sup> letter. Light rail would extend north from the Wilburton Station in Bellevue to a station at the South Kirkland Park and Ride. This extension would allow light rail connections to

Downtown Seattle via Bellevue; to Redmond via the Spring District and Overlake; and to Issaquah via Eastgate. It would also provide the following advantages:

- Help prepare the CKC as a future HCT corridor.
- Provide meaningful connectivity improvement to Factoria, Bellevue College, Issaquah, and Spring District with faster travel times and more reliability than is available with buses in mixed traffic.

The South Kirkland Park and Ride provides good bus transfers to routes that serve all of Kirkland's core destinations. Addition of a rail connection would support increased development densities in the Yarrow Bay Area. The extension would provide marginal access improvements to Downtown Bellevue. There may be little or no improvement for riders who already take a bus heading into downtown Bellevue; further work on service patterns would be needed.

- Parking at South Kirkland Park and Ride  
Although expanded parking was not specifically called out in the Sound Transit Board members' March 24<sup>th</sup> letter, it would be a logical consideration when constructing a new light rail station, should that project move forward. This concept would build on the scope of LRT to the South Kirkland Park and Ride with the construction of a parking garage on the existing surface parking. Parking occupancy is currently near or at 100% during peak periods, and would be further pressured by a light rail connection. However, extra parking may encourage driving to the Park & Ride instead of access by transit, biking or walking. A brief review of the site indicates that several hundred stalls could be provided, but more work is necessary for a more accurate estimate, and to evaluate the pros and cons of expanded parking from a multimodal transportation perspective.
- Improve access to LRT at the South Kirkland Park and Ride  
This project would construct bike/pedestrian access on the CKC between 6th Street and the South Kirkland Park and Ride, including a new bridge at NE 68th Street. It would improve access to transit at the South Kirkland Park and Ride by connecting to a major employment center. Note that the Draft System Plan includes consideration for access to LRT stations in each project; this would be a major access project.
- Capital improvements to Metro Route 255  
This project would serve as a Metro Rapidride style precursor to HCT from the South Kirkland Park and Ride north to Totem Lake. Speed and reliability of the route would be increased. Metro has begun developing a set of projects for potential future conversion of Route 255 to Rapidride that could be used to refine the scope elements.

*Improved transit connections to I-405: bicycle and pedestrian access improvements to I-405 BRT.*

- Pre-design service plan for I-405 BRT & NE 85<sup>th</sup> bus service

This effort would specifically coordinate planning for capital improvements at NE 85<sup>th</sup> Street and associated service, which would, according to the Draft System Plan, be provided by King County Metro. Coordinating the planning of service and capital construction will improve the ability for the facility to operate effectively.

- Improve bicycle and pedestrian access to the NE 85th Street access point at I-405  
The NE 85<sup>th</sup> Street/I-405 interchange is difficult to access. ST staff has indicated that sidewalks are included along the transit lanes in the Draft System Plan, and are included in the bus stop area. This proposed item would also include improvements on a section of the CKC between, for example, 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Kirkland Avenue, and access improvements between the CKC and the NE 85<sup>th</sup> interchange.
- Bicycle and pedestrian access improvements to I-405 BRT in Totem Lake  
For the NE 112<sup>th</sup> Street access, this could include improvements on a section of the CKC between, for example, NE 112<sup>th</sup> Street and a trail that extends to Forbes Creek Drive. It should also include pedestrian and bicycle improvements on surface streets in the vicinity of the NE 128<sup>th</sup> Street BRT stop. The NE 124<sup>th</sup>/NE 124<sup>th</sup> Bridge at the CKC should also be included for improved access to I-405 BRT at Totem Lake.

### **STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS:**

Given the relatively short comment period, staff is providing recommendations to help start the Council discussion. Staff recommends the following:

- The City Council accept the March 24<sup>th</sup> offer to work with Sound Transit to define the scope and benefit of a potential LRT extension to the South Kirkland Park and Ride for consideration during the public comment period for the ST3 Draft System Plan;
- Request extension of transit lanes of NE 85<sup>th</sup> to 132nd Avenue NE as proposed in the March 24<sup>th</sup> letter from Sound Transit Board Members;
- Work with Sound Transit to explore transit connections and access opportunities to Sound Transit facilities within Kirkland;
- Request funding of a Transit Oriented Development at the Kingsgate Park and Ride;
- Finally, that the City Council respond to the March 24<sup>th</sup> letter from the Sound Transit Chair and Eastside Board members, with a formal letter articulating Kirkland's interests moving forward. Kirkland's communication could include any or all of the items listed above, or other items Council members wish to suggest.

### **CONCLUSION:**

The Draft System Plan includes several requests from the City of Kirkland. These include in-line BRT station on I-405 at NE 85<sup>th</sup> Street, and a bus-only connection between downtown Kirkland and the NE 85<sup>th</sup> Street station. The Draft Plan also includes a parking facility at Kingsgate. On the CKC, the Draft Plan does not propose the Light Rail solution that Council opposed, but has included a study to determine the future high capacity transit mode along the CKC to improve mobility in the city. The public comment period between now and the end of April is an opportunity for Kirkland residents and elected officials to engage with Sound Transit staff and board members to refine the final plan. Staff and the Council's Ad-Hoc Work Group are seeking full Council direction on next steps, or whether the Council needs additional information first.

Figure 1: Map of Draft ST3 System Plan





March 24, 2016

The Honorable Amy Walen  
Mayor  
City of Kirkland  
123 Fifth Avenue  
Kirkland, Washington 98033-6198

Dear Mayor Walen:

Thank you for your thoughtful engagement and feedback on the development of the draft Sound Transit 3 plan, including your most recent letter of March 16. As members of the Sound Transit Board, we have been pleased to work closely with you and members of the Kirkland City Council to understand the interests and priorities of the City and your citizens.

Today the Board released for public comment a draft ST3 plan, and we believe it reflects most of the City's priorities identified in your March 16 letter. One of the centerpieces of the draft ST3 plan is the proposed Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system along I-405 which will provide new high capacity transit service to the residents of Kirkland, with connections to the regional light rail system. To provide a seamless connection between this new service and downtown Kirkland, the draft ST3 plan includes the \$260 million you requested for an in-line station at Northeast 85th Street in Kirkland as well as the \$45 million you requested for new bus-only lanes along Northeast 85th Street to connect I-405 to the downtown Kirkland Transit Center and 132nd Avenue Northeast. The proposed I-405 BRT investment will also serve the existing Totem Lake in-line station in Kirkland, and the draft plan includes \$40 million to expand access and parking at the Kingsgate Park and Ride which connects to the Totem Lake station. The I-405 investment will provide buses every 10 minutes at Northeast 85th and Totem Lake to connect Kirkland riders to destinations throughout the region.

At the City's request, the draft plan also includes funding for the analysis and environmental work necessary to determine which type of high capacity transit would be appropriate to use in the transit easement on the Eastside Rail Corridor, including the Cross Kirkland Corridor. This study will examine alternatives to connect Kirkland, Bellevue, and Bothell, potentially resulting in a decision on an investment to propose and implement in a future system expansion. We look forward to engaging with you and Kirkland residents during this study.

While the draft plan includes investments requested by the City, it does not fund trail improvements to the Eastside Rail Corridor. As you know, Sound Transit has no authority to do so absent a high capacity transit investment, consistent with the letter sent to the City by Sound Transit General Counsel Desmond Brown on March 15.

**CHAIR**

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*King County Executive*

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*Everett Councilmember*

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*King County Councilmember*

**CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER**

**Peter M. Rogoff**

In the last few days, there have been discussions regarding extending light rail from Bellevue to the South Kirkland Park and Ride. We have not had the opportunity to fully study this option, or to conduct the analysis and consultation needed before releasing the draft ST3 plan today. With the draft plan out for public comment and review, we will undoubtedly be hearing from many citizens and stakeholders on how to refine the plan. If the City of Kirkland is interested in the South Kirkland connection, we would welcome the opportunity to work with you and members of the Kirkland City Council during the next two months to identify the scope of the proposal and determine whether it is feasible within the ST3 finance plan. The Board will be considering refinements to the draft plan that you and others across the region propose as we prepare to adopt the final ST3 plan in June.

At the same time, we are also focused on opportunities to create strong connections for Kirkland residents to the new BRT stations on I-405, and to move passengers east and west between Totem Lake, downtown Kirkland and downtown Redmond. This will involve joint discussions with King County Metro about creating service that is the right scale, frequency and reliability for the needs of Kirkland residents, workers and businesses. We are interested in discussing potential bike and pedestrian access improvements to better connect Kirkland to the I-405 BRT.

Thank you again for your engagement and interest in the expansion of regional high capacity transit. We look forward to continuing our positive collaboration with the City of Kirkland in the weeks ahead.

Sincerely,



Dow Constantine  
Chair



Fred Butler  
Boardmember



Claudia Balducci  
Boardmember



John Marchione  
Boardmember

cc: Members of the Kirkland City Council  
Members of the Sound Transit Board of Directors  
Peter M. Rogoff, Sound Transit Chief Executive Officer



October 8, 2015

Secretary Lynn Peterson  
Washington State Department of Transportation  
P.O. Box 47316  
Olympia, WA 98504-7316

**RE: City of Kirkland's Interest in Developing TOD at the Kingsgate Park and Ride**

Dear Secretary Peterson,

On behalf of the City of Kirkland, I write this letter to express the City's interest in developing Transit Oriented Development (TOD) at the Kingsgate Park and Ride. The City will assist WSDOT in its work with USDOT on any work/research that might need to be done to advance this interest.

We are grateful that you and your staff took time to visit Kirkland in June of this year to tour several sites, including the Kingsgate Park and Ride with myself, Deputy Mayor Sweet, Representative McBride and our City Manager, Kurt Triplett.

The Kingsgate Park and Ride is owned by WSDOT and operated by King County Metro Transit. It is located just east of I-405 at NE 130<sup>th</sup> Street, adjacent to the Totem Lake Urban Center. Sound Transit's Totem Lake Freeway Station is located across the street from the site, as are the NE 128<sup>th</sup> Street direct access ramps for northbound and southbound HOV lanes on I-405. King County Metro's Totem Lake Transit Center is located five blocks east on the southwest corner of the hospital campus of EvergreenHealth. Totem Lake, is Kirkland's largest employment center and is the focus of significant economic revitalization. By 2035, Totem Lake is expected to double its housing units to approximately 12,000 units. Employment is expected to increase from today's 13,000 employees to approximately 52,000 employees.

The City continues to invest in significant multimodal connectivity capital projects in anticipation of connection to the I-405 high capacity transit spine and Kirkland has prioritized pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure investments around access to transit facilities. WSDOT's willingness to work with the City on its interest in developing a TOD at the Kingsgate site left us hopeful for the future of maximizing the livability of the Totem Lake area.

We appreciate the enormous responsibility you carry as the Secretary of Transportation and look forward to working with your staff on next steps. The City's point of contact for this is Dorian Collins at (425) 587-3249 or email [dcollins@kirklandwa.gov](mailto:dcollins@kirklandwa.gov).

Sincerely,

KIRKLAND CITY COUNCIL



By Amy Walen, Mayor  
City of Kirkland

Cc: Lorena Eng, Northwest Region Administrator  
Allison Camden, Intergovernmental and Tribal Relations Director  
Kirkland City Council  
Kurt Triplett, City Manager  
Eric Shields, Director, Planning and Building Department  
Dorian Collins, Senior Planner, Planning and Building Department  
Lorrie McKay, Intergovernmental Relations Manager



**Washington State  
Department of Transportation**

Lynn Peterson  
Secretary of Transportation

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February 1, 2016

**RECEIVED**

**FEB 04 2016**

**CITY OF KIRKLAND  
CITY MANAGER'S OFFICE**

The Honorable Amy Walen  
City of Kirkland  
123 Fifth Avenue  
Kirkland, WA 98033-6189

Dear Mayor Walen:

Thank you for your October 8<sup>th</sup> letter regarding the City's interest in developing Transit Oriented Development (TOD) at the Kingsgate Park and Ride in Kirkland. Please accept our apology for the delay in our response.

With Kingsgate being the City's priority for TOD, we look forward to working with USDOT and the City to determine the steps necessary to make this happen with the state owned Park and Ride lot.

Please feel free to contact Dylan Counts, of our Public Transportation Division at (206) 464-1232 or email [countsd@wsdot.wa.gov](mailto:countsd@wsdot.wa.gov), with questions you may have.

Sincerely,

Lynn Peterson  
Secretary of Transportation

cc: Lorena Eng, Northwest Region Administrator  
Allison Camden, Intergovernmental and Tribal Relations Director  
Kirkland City Council  
Kurt Triplett, City Manager  
Eric Shields, Director, Planning and Building Department  
Dorian Collins, Senior Planner, Planning and Building Department  
Lorrie McKay, Intergovernmental Relations Manager