



CITY OF KIRKLAND
Department of Public Works
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MEMORANDUM

To: Kurt Triplett, City Manager

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

Date: April 14, 2016

Subject: LETTER TO SOUND TRANSIT BOARD REGARDING ST3

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the City Council review, edit, and approve the attached letter addressed to the Sound Transit Board of Directors concerning ST3. The letter, if approved, will serve as the City of Kirkland's public comment on the ST3 Draft System Plan. The letter also responds to a letter dated March 24th, 2016 to Kirkland Mayor Amy Walen from Sound Transit Board Chair Dow Constantine and the three Eastside Board Members.

BACKGROUND DISCUSSION:

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

The Kirkland elements of the Draft System Plan were reviewed in the April 5th, 2016 Kirkland City Council meeting. Additionally, the above-referenced March 24th letter from the Sound Transit Board Chair and Eastside Board Members was reviewed and considered by the City Council. Based on the outcome of its review of the Draft System Plan and the March 24th letter, the City Council authorized its ST3 Ad Hoc Work Group to prepare a draft response letter to the Sound Transit Chair and Eastside Board members for review and approval by the full Council at its April 19, 2016 City Council meeting. The attached draft letter, prepared under the guidance of the ST3 Ad Hoc Work Group, incorporates the feedback and direction received in the April 5th City Council meeting.

April 19, 2016

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

Dear Sound Transit Board;

1 This letter provides the City of Kirkland's response to both the Draft ST 3 System Plan released on March
2 24 by the Sound Transit Board, and the March 24 letter to Kirkland sent by Board Chair Dow Constantine
3 and the three Eastside Board Members.

4
5 We understand and respect the challenge faced by the Sound Transit Board in putting together a regional
6 transit package that must serve the needs of a three-county region. We acknowledge that it is not
7 possible for the Board to fund all the projects requested by the communities in the Sound Transit taxing
8 district. However, we are disappointed that the Sound Transit Board did not support the "light rail with
9 flexibility" project proposed by the City in January linking the Totem Lake Urban Center to Bellevue and
10 the region. Of all the candidate projects that Sound Transit examined over the past ten months, the
11 transit on the CKC is unique in that it is the only project that runs directly through densely populated
12 neighborhoods. Every other HCT project proposed in the draft plan is aligned on main arterials, elevated,
13 or in tunnels. While there are residents that don't want any type of transit on the corridor, there are
14 many residents who recognize the value of the CKC as a dedicated right of way and wish to see it used to
15 improve mobility on the eastside. The "light rail with flexibility" concept fully funds a light rail line to
16 Totem Lake but allows the flexibility for a different mode such as Bus Rapid Transit to be selected after
17 an extensive conversation with the community.

18
19 Kirkland is a smart growth city that has taken the land use actions necessary to create a progressive,
20 transit-friendly city zoned for urban densities. Current and planned growth is dependent on regional
21 transit service. The development is arriving at an overwhelming pace. Google just cut the ribbon on a
22 new building that has doubled the size of its campus. Two massive mixed-use developments, Kirkland
23 Urban and the Totem Lake Mall recently broke ground in 2016. Kirkland has 3600 residential units,
24 350,000 square feet of university expansion, and 1.4 million square feet of commercial development
25 resulting in nearly 4000 jobs in the permit pipeline today. The growth is here and to be sustainable,
26 Kirkland requires regional transit connections.

27
28 With such a compelling case for transit, it is difficult for our Council and our residents to understand why
29 Sound Transit decided not to serve this growth with High Capacity Transit on the Cross Kirkland Corridor.
30 This decision is especially perplexing when significant revenues will be generated by Kirkland over the life
31 of the proposed plan and the current investments proposed by Sound Transit for Kirkland come nowhere
32 near the value of those revenues.

33 It is our hope that the Sound Transit Board will reconsider the level of investment in Kirkland and the
34 Eastside and we therefore offer the following suggested changes to the Draft System Plan:

35
36 **High Capacity Transit on the Cross Kirkland Corridor (CKC)**

37
38 First, and most importantly, Kirkland requests that Sound Transit add High Capacity Transit service on
39 the CKC as our top priority in the final ST 3 System Plan. The Kirkland City Council voted in January in

40 support “light rail with flexibility” on the CKC, with the mode choice to be decided over time after more
41 study and community input. Including High Capacity Transit service on the CKC as “light rail with
42 flexibility” will allow the City of Kirkland to work together with Sound Transit and our residents and
43 businesses to determine the most appropriate type of service for this corridor and our community.
44

45 **HCT Environmental Study from Bothell to Bellevue via Kirkland**

46
47 Kirkland appreciates that Sound Transit included a study of HCT options on the CKC leading to a Record
48 of Decision in the ST 3 draft plan. If no service is provided in the measure, the study does demonstrate
49 Sound Transit’s commitment that there should eventually be transit on the corridor. Kirkland requests
50 that the scope of this study also clearly identify light rail on I-405 from Bellevue to Totem Lake as one
51 alternative option to be evaluated.
52

53 In addition, Kirkland also requests that a new study be included in ST 3 that evaluates light rail from
54 Downtown Redmond along Willow’s Road and connecting to the Totem Lake Urban Center.
55

56 **NE 85th Street Inline Station on I-405**

57
58 Kirkland wishes to thank the Sound Transit Board for including the inline station at I-405 and NE 85th
59 Street and transit lanes from the station to Downtown Kirkland as we requested. The Sound Transit
60 staff description of this project has transit lanes only extending west from I-405 to Downtown. But the
61 March 24th letter from the Board Chair and the Eastside Board Members states that the transit lanes
62 would continue east towards Redmond, ending at 132nd Ave NE. Kirkland requests that transit lanes
63 extend east along NE 85th as far as is feasible given the constraints of the roadway.

64 Kirkland also requests a significant additional investment in bicycle/pedestrian access funds to the NE 85th
65 Street inline station to ensure safe and convenient access to the transit lanes, to the station access point,
66 and connections to the CKC at NE 85th Street to encourage as many transit riders as possible to access
67 the new station.
68

69 **Totem Lake/Kingsgate Park and Ride**

70
71 Kirkland believes that the Kingsgate Park and Ride is an ideal location for a Transit Oriented Development
72 (TOD). The TOD will be served by the new Bus Rapid Transit on I-405 as well as the nearby Totem Lake
73 Transit Center. The Park and Ride is surrounded by multi-family residences and is near the redeveloping
74 Totem Lake Mall and also Evergreen Health, Kirkland’s largest employer. The City is committed to
75 implementing any land-use and regulatory steps necessary to support the TOD development. Therefore
76 Kirkland requests that Sound Transit designate the Kingsgate Park and Ride as a preferred location for a
77 Transit Oriented Development (TOD) and take whatever actions are appropriate to facilitate a TOD
78 project there.
79

80 In addition, there are safety concerns at the existing Sound Transit inline station at NE 128th. Pedestrians
81 and cyclists must cross several busy lanes of traffic to catch Sound Transit and Metro buses. To help
82 make this location much more bicycle and pedestrian friendly, and to bring non-motorized travelers to the
83 transit service, Kirkland requests robust bicycle/pedestrian access funds to create connections from the
84 CKC and Totem Lake Urban Center to the Sound Transit service at the Kingsgate Park and Ride.

85 **South Kirkland Park and Ride Light Rail Extension**

86
87 Finally, as communicated earlier this month via email, Kirkland wishes to accept the offer in the March 24
88 letter from Chair Constantine and the Eastside Board Members to explore an extension of light rail from
89 the Wilburton Station to the South Kirkland Park and Ride (SKPR). This connection could have benefits to
90 both Bellevue and Kirkland, but the value of this potential link must be understood before either Kirkland
91 or the Sound Transit Board can decide whether to support this investment.

92 As part of the initial scope, Kirkland requests that an additional parking garage be included in the project
93 and that the traffic impacts of a light rail connection be considered as part of the SKPR light rail
94 evaluation.

95
96 Kirkland also requests that robust bicycle/pedestrian access funds and transit access improvement funds
97 be included as part of the SKPR light rail evaluation. If done appropriately, a light rail station could be a
98 major terminus for non-motorized access and bus service from Kirkland.

99
100 If Sound Transit elects to include light rail service from Bellevue to the South Kirkland Park and Ride,
101 Kirkland may also want to explore whether alternative transit investments to the NE 85th Inline Station
102 could better utilize the station and better serve Kirkland and the region.

103
104 We look forward to working closely with the Sound Transit Board to finalize an ST 3 System Plan that can
105 be supported by both the region and Kirkland.

Sincerely,
Kirkland City Council

Amy Walen
Mayor

Cc: Sound Transit Board
Kirkland City Council