



CITY OF KIRKLAND

Department of Public Works

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MEMORANDUM

To: Kurt Triplett, City Manager

From: David Godfrey, Transportation Manager
Kathy Brown, Public Works Director

Date: July 1, 2015

Subject: LETTER TO SOUND TRANSIT REGARDING ST3 DRAFT PRIORITY PROJECTS LIST

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the City Council reviews a draft of the enclosed letter to the Sound Transit Board of Directors (Attachment A) prior to sending the letter. The letter provides additional formal input to the Sound Transit 3 (ST3) Long Range Plan (LRP) and Priority Project List (PPL). More detailed descriptions of Kirkland's interests was recommended by Sound Transit staff and Eastside Sound Transit Board members. The letter has been reviewed by the Transportation Commission and their suggestions have been incorporated.

BACKGROUND DISCUSSION:

Sound Transit is currently conducting public outreach to finalize their PPL. Projects from this list will be used to develop a System Plan which, pending additional revenue authority from the State Legislature, will go to the voters as an ST3 ballot measure as early as November 2016. This letter builds upon the previous letter sent by the Council and clearly articulates which projects the City wants on the PPL, as well as changes the City would like to see to projects already on the PPL. It is important to comment on the PPL because only those projects can be considered for the System Plan.

Formal letters with comments from jurisdictions are due July 15, 2015 with the Sound Transit Board of Directors refining and finalizing the PPL at their August 27th, 2015 Board meeting.

Staff have worked with Bellevue, Redmond and Issaquah to develop a Joint Interest Statement.

Summary of Comment Letter

Add Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) between Totem Lake and Issaquah via Bellevue to the PPL.
Addition of this project to the PPL provides flexibility and ensures that all HCT options can be considered when developing the System Plan. The transit network should be optimized around this investment, including rerouting buses to improve access to Kirkland.

Requests specific elements of AC-5: I-405 BRT between Lynnwood and SeaTac in HOV/Managed lanes where possible.

In the draft letter, the City of Kirkland strongly requests that a NE 85th Street Station and high-quality connection to Downtown Kirkland be a part of any I-405 BRT project. The letter also requests that creative solutions for improving access to I-405 BRT in Totem Lake be included in this project.

Modify project AC-6: Light Rail from Totem Lake to Issaquah via Bellevue.

Modifications include addition of a Downtown Kirkland station, additional stations in Totem Lake and a station in Downtown Bellevue.

Adds detail to project ES-6: ST Express interim supporting bus service, including capital and operating elements.

The letter requests specific capital and service improvements that increase access to and quality of SR 520 bus service.

Adds detail to project PR-1: System Access Program

General changes and city specific projects that should be added to the system access program are identified. This includes general bus-rail integration planning, mitigation planning for Route 255, and pedestrian/bicycle access investments.

Adds detail to project PR-3: Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Program

Kirkland is requesting participation and financial support from Sound Transit on City TOD priorities, including redevelopment of Kingsgate and Houghton Park and Ride. The draft letter also requests that Sound Transit participate and support transportation and land use planning near stations such as the Totem Lake Mall.

Modifies PR-6: Northern Lake Washington HCT Crossing Study

The City is requesting an expanded study scope that includes both near- and mid-term improvements to cross-lake travel between Kirkland and Seattle.

States support for PR-2: Innovation & Technology Program

The letter simply states support for the program.

States support for SP-3: Light Rail extension from Overlake Transit Center to SE Redmond to Downtown Redmond

The letter states support for this project as key ST3 priority.

Joint Interest Statement

The ST3 Joint Interest Statement was developed to communicate the shared vision of Kirkland, Bellevue, Redmond and Issaquah in a clear and unified voice. The interest statement is structured along five unifying principles:

1. *Fund Eastside needs.* Eastside communities have growing transportation challenges and an ST3 must fully fund the investments necessary to keep our communities moving.
2. *Connect regional growth centers within the Eastside.* As the Eastside grows and becomes denser, HCT is needed to maintain mobility between Eastside centers. Extension of East Link to Redmond is key. Light rail between Totem Lake and Issaquah

via Bellevue is critical, but if that investment cost exceeds the financial capacity of ST3, BRT should be explored.

3. *Connect the Eastside with the region.* Implementation of I-405 BRT and expansion of regional ST Express service is important for maintaining connections with the rest of region.
4. *Provide an integrated regional transit system with access enhancements.* Passengers should be able to easily get to HCT by bus, on foot, on bike or by private automobile. Integrated planning around station siting, bus circulation and TOD are important early steps. Shared financial commitment to pedestrian and bicycle access improvements are also important.
5. *Support system expansion.* Support facilities and planning for future investments are required for ongoing and future delivery of service.

ST3 Draft Priority Projects List Development 2015 Timeline:

- June 4 – July 8: Public Comment/Public Meetings (Online Survey; ST Board Meetings; and five Subarea Public Meetings)
- July 15: City Letters with comments of Draft Priority Projects List are due
- August: Sound Transit Board advances Priority Projects List, based on public outreach and jurisdictional input
- October: Financing templates available
- Fall/Winter: Evaluate projects and create templates

Next Steps

Staff will finalize the letter, incorporating feedback from Council, for submittal to Sound Transit. With Council approval, the Joint Interest Statement will also be transmitted to Sound Transit. A motion to approve both the letter and the Joint Interest Statement will authorize the Mayor to sign the documents and send them to Sound Transit.

Attachment A: Draft Kirkland letter commenting on Draft Priority Projects List

July 8, 2015

King County Executive Dow Constantine
Chair, Sound Transit Board of Directors
c/o Board Administrator
Sound Transit
401 S Jackson St.
Seattle, WA 98104

RE: City of Kirkland's Comments on the ST3 Priority Project List – 2nd Letter with Details

Dear Executive Constantine,

I am writing to provide you, as Chair of the Sound Transit Board of Directors, with more input on the Sound Transit 3 (ST3) Priority Project List (PPL). As a follow-up to my June 9, 2015 letter, this letter is intended to provide you and the Board with a brief summary of the City of Kirkland's priorities, along with more detailed input on the PPL. Sound Transit staff advised City of Kirkland staff that this follow up letter, with more detail on concepts for specific projects, would be helpful to the Board in its review of the PPL.

First, I would like to thank you and the Board for providing the opportunity to comment on the list of priority projects that the Board is advancing for further study. It is exciting to plan for projects that will eventually become part of the System Plan, and the City of Kirkland looks forward to a set of investments that will meet our city's needs and achieve the regional goals of Sound Transit's long range planning efforts. The City would like to work collaboratively with Sound Transit to identify creative transit solutions where existing ideas don't fully address city goals. City of Kirkland staff and I understand the regional nature of Sound Transit's service and our goal is to ensure Kirkland's residents, employees, and visitors have access to that service. Our suggestions are not intended to prescribe specific project scopes; rather, our intent is to provide ideas for achieving outcomes that will meet our common goals.

I am optimistic that the final PPL will include projects in and around Kirkland, improving mobility to our residents, employees, and visitors, and inspiring Kirkland voters to support the upcoming ST3 ballot measure. In keeping with regional planning strategies, the City of Kirkland is planning for growth of 7,000 new households and 22,000 new jobs over the next 20 years. Mobility provided by Sound Transit will play an important role in accommodating that growth.

In reviewing the PPL, the City of Kirkland has worked closely with our neighboring cities on the Eastside. The Cities of Bellevue, Redmond, Issaquah, and Kirkland have identified our common interests for our subarea of the Puget Sound Region. These common interests are expressed in the enclosed Joint Interest Statement.

Review of June 9th Letter

As a brief reminder, my June 9, 2015 letter (attached for your convenience) outlined our city's high-level goals for ST3. Below is a summary of those priorities:

- Delivering Sound Transit 2 (ST2) Commitments: Completing I-405 Bus Rapid Transit (BRT), with Kirkland access at NE 85th Street and the Totem Lake Urban Center is a key priority for Kirkland. The extension of the East Link to Redmond and High Capacity Transit (HCT) connecting Issaquah and Bellevue are also high priorities for the Eastside.

- Connecting downtown Kirkland to regional transit service on I-405.
- Connecting Kirkland's major employment centers (such as Evergreen Hospital in the Totem Lake Urban Center, and Google on the 6th Street Corridor) to regional transit service on I-405. Considering Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) as well as light rail along the Eastside Rail Corridor between Totem Lake and Bellevue, with a connection to Issaquah. At a minimum, BRT connecting these Eastside hubs should be added to the PPL.
- Supporting Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) in the Totem Lake Urban Center.
- Investing in an integrated transit network.
- Identifying the financial capacity of the Eastside Subarea.

In the following months, Sound Transit will be developing "project templates" that document the ridership, costs, and other performance measures of each project. Below are comments that Kirkland Transportation staff and I view as critical to the appropriate development of these project templates. Additionally, we have noted where details of some PPL projects should be enhanced or changed, and we would like to express our support for other projects as they have been proposed.

A number of community stakeholders have joined us in support of a future ST3 plan and we are pleased to attach their letters of support. Finally, Kirkland has worked closely with the cities of Bellevue, Issaquah, and Redmond to identify common interests, which have been compiled into a Joint Interest Statement for ST3, which is also attached to this letter. We hope you find this joint statement of particular value given the broad support it represents.

Alignment of Goals

The Sound Transit Board established seven criteria, against which various system expansion scenarios were weighed to guide the formation of ST3. Kirkland's transit priorities and actions are in line with those criteria, as outlined below:

1. **Completing the Spine.** Kirkland supports investments in East Link as well as additional HCT corridors that complement the spine, such as I-405 BRT and HCT between Totem Lake, Downtown Kirkland, Downtown Bellevue and Issaquah.
2. **Ridership.** Currently 22 bus routes serve Kirkland, with a combined daily ridership of approximately 24,000 passengers. The Route 255 represents 26% of this ridership with routes 245, 532, and 535 representing an additional 30% of riders. Kirkland supports a ridership focused package that balances HCT investments to dense areas like Downtown Kirkland and Totem Lake, while also investing in high ridership commuter oriented ST Express service to Bellevue and Seattle.
3. **Designated Centers.** Totem Lake is one of four regional growth centers in the central Eastside. Totem Lake currently has one-third of Kirkland's employment and will grow to nearly one-half of all Kirkland employment by 2035. In addition to existing medical, educational and business centers, Totem Lake will see redevelopment of a major mall site. Another important consideration is a number of recent rezoning approvals that have significantly increased development capacity

directly adjacent to the Cross Kirkland Corridor.

4. **Transit supportive land use.** Currently Kirkland is the 4th densest city in King County thanks to its dense historic core and increasingly dense Totem Lake area. Employment densities in the 6th Street corridor, where Google is now doubling its footprint, is a growing transit market with transit supportive land uses. Increased service and connectivity is critical to this area.
5. **Socio-economic equity.** Kirkland has aggressive policies and regulations for the creation of affordable housing. These policies have led to numerous new affordable housing units, including those at the South Kirkland Park and Ride. In 2014, Kirkland became a signatory to the Growing Transit Communities Pact.
6. **Additional transit integration.** Because King County Metro provides much of Kirkland's transit service, the City is keenly interested in working with Sound Transit to improve integration of the transit system. Kirkland's transit centers in downtown and Totem Lake were both funded through Sound Move and we look forward to building on those investments.
7. **Multi-modal access.** Kirkland has worked for decades to improve multi-modal transportation mobility, with the acquisition and development of the Cross Kirkland Corridor clearly illustrating the City's commitment to non-motorized transportation. Many of Kirkland's bike lanes date back decades, and Kirkland is leading the way on enhanced crosswalks using in-road flashing beacons for bicycle and pedestrian safety. In 2006, Kirkland became the first community in Washington State to adopt a complete streets ordinance. Multimodal access, and connectivity to non-motorized networks are essential elements of Kirkland's Transportation Master Plan.

Detailed Comments on the PPL

To add specificity to the high-level comments provided in my June 9 letter, below are more detailed comments on the draft PPL.

In general, Kirkland, like Sound Transit, is interested in connecting people with transit. In many cases, this might result in an expensive connection, bringing a transit line to a new station located off the main route and causing delays for passengers using the main line. Another option would be to instead build a more reasonably priced connection to bring passengers to that main route using a connector that does not slow the main system down with additional stops. It is this second concept that Kirkland is recommending in several cases. Sound Transit's street car connection to the Capitol Hill light rail station is an example of this concept in operation.

Request for a new project:

"AC-6 BRT": Add Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) from Kirkland (Totem Lake) to Issaquah via Bellevue to the PPL

Kirkland is strongly supportive of light rail between Totem Lake and Bellevue, however the City wants to ensure other options are available when developing a System Plan, should light rail not move forward. A BRT version similar in alignment to the proposed light rail should be added to the PPL as an alternative.

- This project should be similar to alternative C2 from the South Transit [Kirkland-Bellevue-Issaquah Corridor Report](#). Project C2 consists of BRT from Totem Lake to Issaquah via the Cross Kirkland Corridor, Downtown Bellevue, Richards Road and I-90. The alignment primarily consists of exclusive busway (with grade separation at key locations) or HOV lanes. (See Figure 1 below)
- Analysis of this project should assume that BRT service between Totem Lake and Seattle is also provided on this corridor because the major capital components (excluding buses) are included in project C2 as described above. Project B1a from the Sound Transit [University District-Kirkland-Redmond Corridor Report](#), illustrates this overlap. Routing in Seattle should be determined at a later date. (See Figure 2 below)
- Working with Metro, Sound Transit should determine how this investment can be leveraged and integrated with other bus service. Areas of investigation should include:
 - How can bus service on I-405 and SR 520 be routed along this corridor to better serve Kirkland?
 - How can local and express routes use this corridor?
 - How can this investment fit into the broader eastside transit network? (e.g. Bellevue, Redmond, Issaquah, Seattle and Kirkland (BRISK) concept from Seattle Transit Blog)
- The alignment should have a station in -- or high-quality connection to -- Downtown Kirkland, as well as 2-3 stations in Totem Lake.
- The "project template" should be consistent with the Cross Kirkland Corridor Master Plan, including a paved multiuse trail.
- In order to properly scope and evaluate this project, Kirkland staff should work in close coordination with ST and consultant staff on project template development and assumptions.

Comments about projects already on the PPL:

AC-5: I-405 Bus Rapid Transit from Lynnwood to SeaTac in HOV/managed lanes where available

Kirkland is supportive of this project contingent on a NE 85th Street station with high-quality connection to Downtown Kirkland and access improvements in Totem Lake. A station in the vicinity of NE 85th Street should be included in any I-405 BRT project template.

- Full direct access ramps to NE 85th Street as assumed in alternative A2 of Sound Transit's [I-405 Bus Rapid Transit Corridor Report](#) is a reasonable baseline assumption for this station. An inline station on I-405 should be studied as an alternative.
- Any station in this vicinity must have high-quality, fixed guideway (or functional equivalent) connection between the new station, Downtown Kirkland, the Cross Kirkland Corridor and the 6th Street corridor. For comparison purposes, a bus-based connection should also be explored, however any connection must be fast, frequent and reliable.

- Creativity should be used with regard to the routing and modal choices studied in the project template so that the capital and service investments Sound Transit should make in order to facilitate this connection can be fully understood and evaluated.
- The First Hill Streetcar is a good example of a creative approach to improving access to regional transit. A similar approach could be used along NE 85th Street to connect the I-405 BRT with downtown Kirkland.
- This BRT route must do more than simply access the Totem Lake Urban Center at the NE 128th Street direct access ramp. Instead, there must be multiple stops in the Totem Lake Urban Center, including in the vicinity of NE 116th Street. Again, creativity should be used with regard to the routing and modal choices studied by Sound Transit in the project template so that the capital and service investments of various connection alternatives can be fully understood and evaluated.
- The trunk and branch service pattern, with multiple routes combining on I-405 as they head towards Bellevue, is preferable because it would increase the frequency of buses passing through Kirkland and provide more routing flexibility. This project serves multiple Sound Transit subareas and thus the cost should be appropriately shared. In order to properly scope and evaluate this project, Kirkland staff should work in close coordination with ST and consultant staff on project template development and assumptions.
- This project must access Downtown Bellevue and seamlessly connect with the wide range of transit service that is available there.
- Although planning efforts now focus on BRT, the City of Kirkland would like to better understand why Light Rail on I-405 has not been considered as an alternative to BRT on I-405.

AC-6: Light Rail from Totem Lake to Issaquah via Bellevue

Kirkland is strongly supportive of this project, with several changes to alignment and station locations:

- Rename this project to Light Rail from Kirkland (Totem Lake) to Issaquah via Bellevue. Using Kirkland in the title will help citizens better understand the nature of the project.
- The alignment should have a station in -- or high-quality connection to -- Downtown Kirkland as well as 2-3 stations in Totem Lake.
- The "project template" should be consistent with the Cross Kirkland Corridor Master Plan including a paved multiuse trail.
- Kirkland encourages Sound Transit to study how access to Downtown Bellevue can be improved.
- In order to properly scope and evaluate this project, Kirkland staff should work in close coordination with ST and consultant staff on project template development and assumptions.

- Study the possibility of using streetcar technology, rather than light rail technology for some connections, which could make it easier to serve downtown Kirkland.

ES-6: ST Express interim supporting bus service, including capital and operating elements

Kirkland is supportive of this project, including how access to service can be improved for Kirkland residents and employees. The addition of capital investments and more detailed discussion of ST Express service as an integrated part of the regional transit system is critical.

- ST Express bus service is a key part of the transit serviced provided by Sound Transit on the Eastside now and into the future. The City would like the words "interim supporting" to be removed from project name to reflect this fact.
- This project should address current overcrowding issues on ST Express service along I-405 in the short term through increase peak hour service or additional routes.
- Improve access to bus service on I-405 per City's comments on AC-5.
- Improve access to bus service on SR 520 as well as improve service across SR 520.
 - Include a full direct access ramp with bus stops at SR 520 and 108th Ave NE. This will allow passengers to access service on SR 520 from the South Kirkland Park and Ride as well as local bus routes.
 - While the proposed changes to Route 540 makes service to UW more frequent and reliable in the morning (Houghton P&R has significant excess parking capacity while South Kirkland is over capacity making it difficult to find parking), this change makes it more difficult for Route 540 riders to get home during off-peak periods. The City would like Sound Transit to increase off-peak span of service Route 540 to address this issue.
- Identify and make capital investments that support future bus-rail integration at UW Station.
- Evaluate the ST Express bus service changes that are necessary to serve future growth in the Totem Lake Urban Center, including connections to the growing employment center at South Lake Union.

PR-1: System Access Program to fund research, analysis and implementation of facilities for one or more modes, including pedestrians, bicyclists, transit and private vehicles, to improve access to the HCT system.

Kirkland is supportive of this program and would like to ensure specific details are included in the project template.

- Rename this project to "System Access and Integration Program." This change broadens the scope and brings it into alignment with current integration initiatives.
- Increased emphasis should be placed on rail-bus integration. For example, identification, planning, and implementation of mitigation measures should removal of Route 255 from the

Downtown Seattle Transit Tunnel be necessary.

- Sound Transit should work with cities to identify and fund pedestrian and bicycle access improvements up to ½ mile and 2 miles respectively from ST stations.
- Because more riders will be accessing Sound Transit by bicycle, the extra demand must be quantified and capacity for carrying bicycles on Sound Transit must be set to meet the increased demand.
- Update station design standards with an emphasis on how to develop high-quality, seamless transfers between Light Rail and buses.
- This program should include both future HCT stations as well as existing HCT stations.

PR-3: Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Program to fund planning and due diligence of transit-supportive land use activities

Kirkland is supportive of this program, however a broader scope including both active participation and support of TOD planning and implementation are desired. The City of Kirkland encourages Sound Transit to take the following steps:

- Partner with WSDOT and the City of Kirkland to develop TOD at the Kingsgate and Houghton park and rides with the goals of increasing ridership, increasing park and ride capacity and advancing socio-economic equity.
- Actively participate in and support City of Kirkland planning initiatives around existing and future HCT stations, including land use and transportation planning, especially in the Totem Lake area.
- Locate HCT stations in TOD supportive places such as Downtown Kirkland.
- Work with The Village at Totem Lake LLC on how mall redevelopment and HCT investments can complement one another.

PR-6: Northern Lake Washington HCT Crossing Study

Kirkland would like the scope of this study expanded to include near- and mid-term investments that would improve cross-lake travel between Kirkland and Seattle. Investments could include improvements to existing bus service, new direct access ramps, HOV to HOV flyover ramps between SR 520 and I-405, etc.

PR-2: Innovation & Technology Program: Program to fund research, analysis and implementation of innovative best practices, partnerships, and technologies to increase ridership, improve service and enhance regional mobility outside of new investments in large capital projects.

Kirkland is very supportive of developing innovative ways in which technology can increase the use of transit. This includes tools such as Pronto Bike Share or real-time parking availability information at Transit Centers and Park and Rides. Improvements to rider facilities such as improved lighting, shelters and next bus arrival information should also be included in this project.

SP-3: Light Rail extension from Overlake Transit Center to SE Redmond to Downtown Redmond (Per the Record of Decision)

This project is the final extension of the East Link spine and Kirkland is supportive of this project as a key ST3 priority.

Once again I would like to thank you and the Sound Transit Board for the opportunity to comment. The City of Kirkland looks forward to continued collaboration between our organizations, particularly during this critical time when potential projects are being scoped and evaluated. Working together in partnership between Sound Transit, King County Metro Transit, and subarea cities, I believe we can create a project list that voters will support to meet our region's long-term public transportation needs.

Sincerely,

Amy Walen
Mayor, City of Kirkland

cc: Sound Transit Board of Directors
Kirkland City Council
Kurt Triplett, City Manager, City of Kirkland
Kathy Brown, Public Works Director, City of Kirkland
Bellevue City Council
Redmond City Council
King County Council

Figure 1:

Exhibit ES-1: Level 2 Evaluation Alternatives

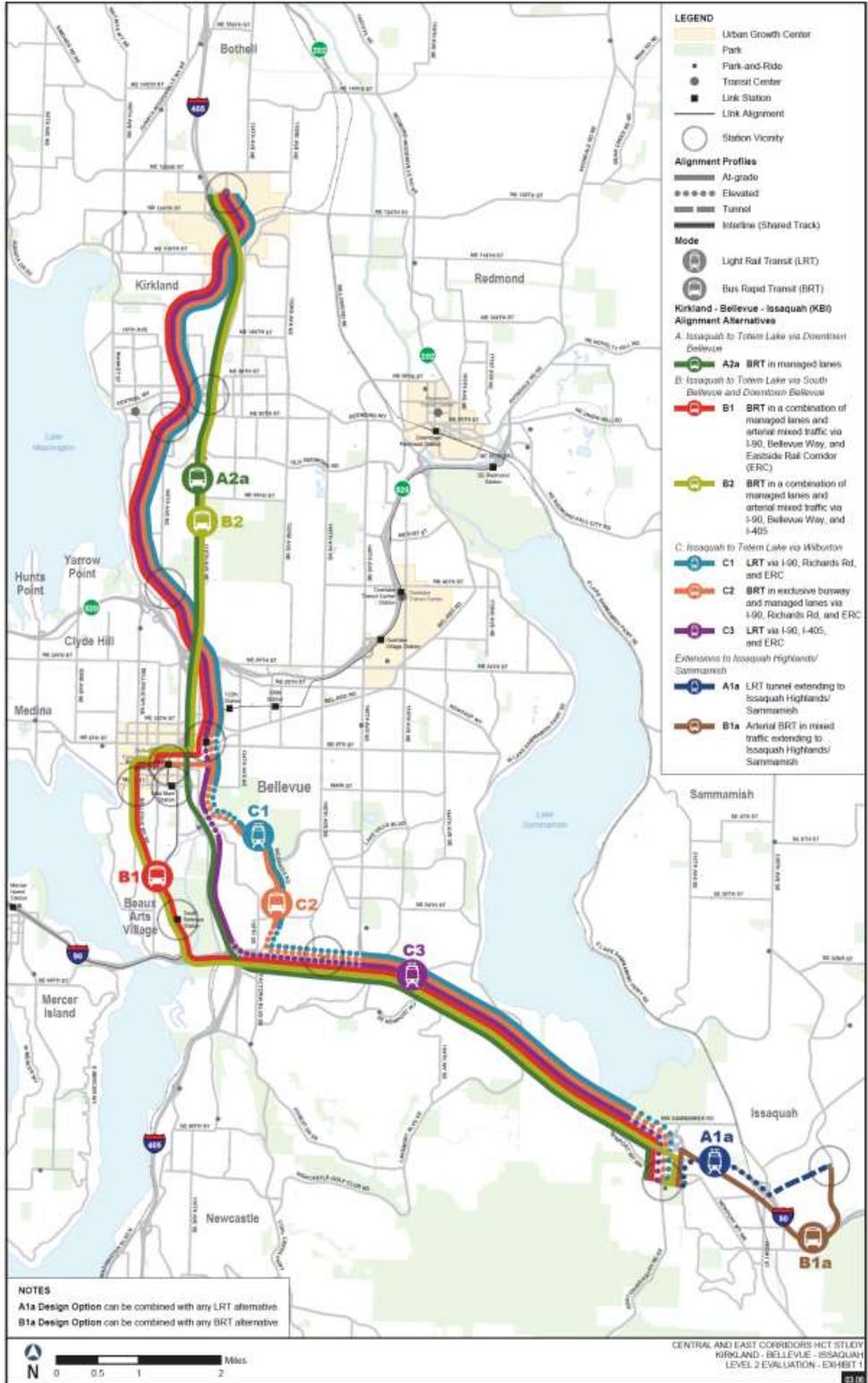
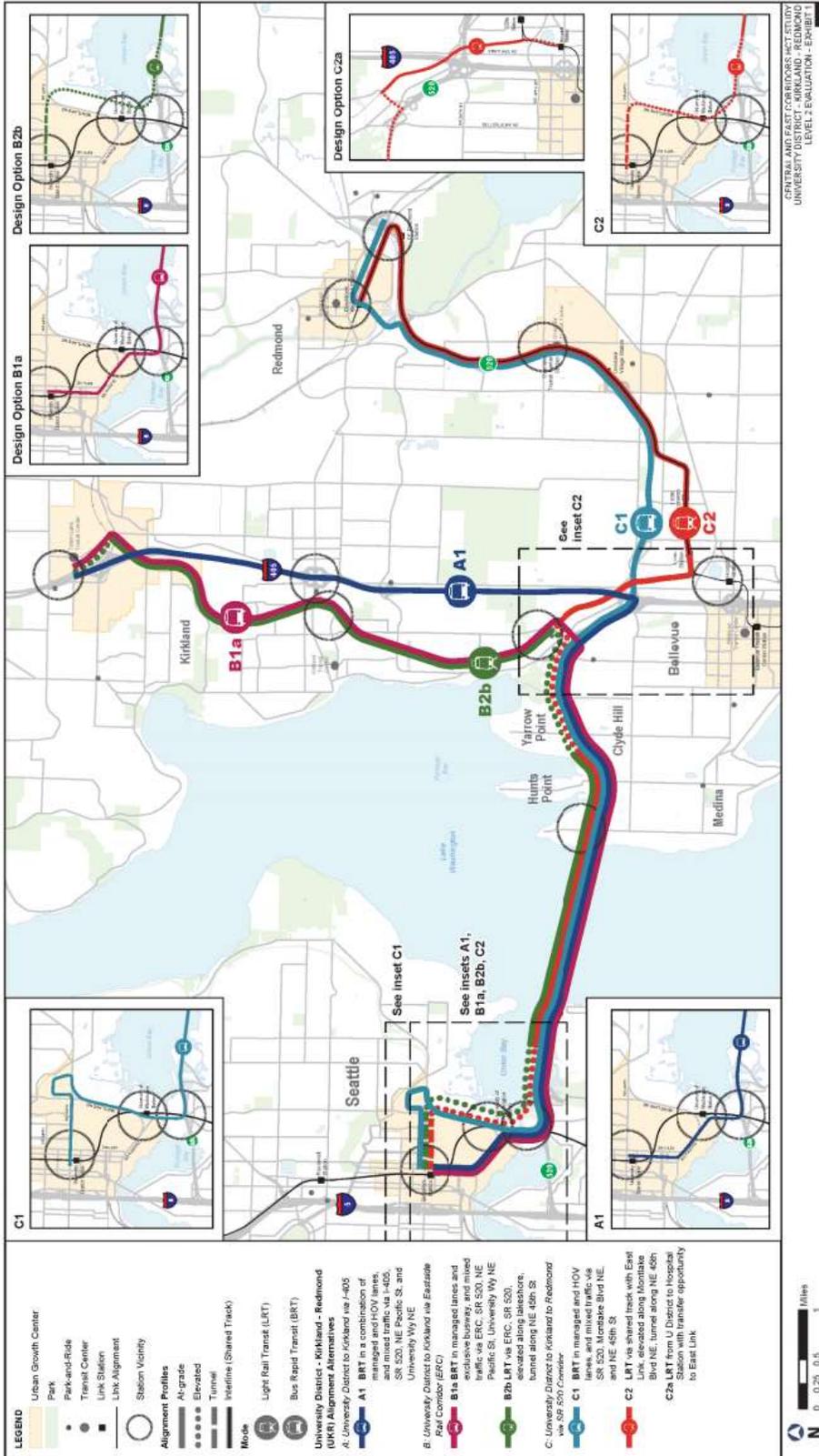


Figure 2:

Exhibit 4. Level 2 Alternatives



Letters of Support:

DRAFT

Joint Interest Statement:

**Sound Transit Phase 3 (ST3) System Plan Joint Interest Statement
Cities of Bellevue, Issaquah, Kirkland, and Redmond
[FINAL REVIEW DRAFT]**

The cities of Bellevue, Issaquah, Kirkland, and Redmond share the following interests in the Sound Transit Phase 3 (ST3) System Plan. These shared interests are in addition to city-specific interest statements or comment letters that may be provided to Sound Transit.

Fund Eastside needs – ST3 must fully fund investments necessary to meet Eastside transit needs throughout the duration of the ST3 System Plan. The regional transit system must provide viable alternative travel options within the Eastside and connect the Eastside with the region.

Connect regional growth centers within the Eastside – Eastside cities have many common interests and goals and are interconnected both economically and geographically. We are boldly reshaping our regional growth centers and downtowns into dense, mixed-used, urban centers. Much of the Eastside transit demand is for travel among Eastside centers and ST3 must invest in service to meet that travel demand.

- Complete the East Link spine to Downtown Redmond; this should be a primary goal of any ST3 package.
- Build light rail from Totem Lake to Issaquah via Bellevue to connect these Eastside regional growth centers with fast, frequent and reliable transit service; delivering this connection within the ST3 timeline is imperative. If light rail is beyond the financial capacity of the Eastside in ST3, then other HCT connections such as Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) should be implemented instead.
- Invest in High Capacity Transit (HCT) and additional Regional Express Service (REX) to ensure that people can travel within the Eastside and beyond.

Connect the Eastside with the region – ST3 should continue the legacy of strengthened connections between the Eastside and Snohomish County, South King County and Seattle.

- Implement high-quality BRT along I-405, consistent with but not limited to capital and operational investments identified in the I-405 Master Plan; improved access to I-405 BRT, including “last mile” connections and transit connections to activity centers must also be provided.
- Invest in enhanced and expanded REX service between Eastside cities and the region, including adding service to overcrowded and high ridership routes and implementing capital investments that improve the quality of these services including BRT type investments.

Provide an integrated regional transit system with access enhancements – Sound Transit, King County Metro, and cities must work together to develop a fully integrated regional transit system with enhanced access that supports local and regional plans.

- Integrate all Sound Transit and King County Metro transit service into a regional network that seamlessly connects light rail, bus rapid transit, regional express and local bus service regardless of which agency is providing the service.
- Invest in Transit Oriented Development (TOD) to support High Capacity Transit by becoming an early and active partner in TOD and participate in subarea planning as part of ST3.
- Fund non-motorized station access improvements, such as pedestrian and bicycle facilities, in ST3 and identify them early in project planning and design.
- Advance performance-based initiatives in ST3 that maximize the utilization of existing Park-and-Ride lots and provide increased capacity where appropriate.

Support system expansion – Provide operational services, capital improvements and future planning to support the expanded regional transit system.

- Provide facilities and services necessary to operate and maintain the expanded regional transit system, with facility and service planning completed early in the process.
- Lay the foundation for the next phase of regional transit investments by funding studies of future system upgrades and extensions as part of the ST3 System Plan.

June 9, 2015



Sound Transit Board Chair
King County Executive Dow Constantine
c/o Board Administrator
Sound Transit
401 S Jackson St.
Seattle, WA 98104

RE: City of Kirkland's Comments on the Sound Transit 3 (ST3) Priority Project List

Dear Executive Constantine,

I am writing to you in your role as Chair of the Sound Transit Board, as well as in your role as King County Executive, providing regional leadership in transit planning. The City of Kirkland has been tracking the ST3 Long Range Plan updates process with interest and appreciates that Sound Transit staff has engaged the City of Kirkland and other stakeholders throughout the process. In December 2014 the Sound Transit Board adopted an updated Long Range Plan (LRP), which is a required element of Sound Transit's authorizing legislation.

I would like to take this opportunity to provide you with input on the ST3 Project Priority List (PPL). The LRP is a blueprint for the long-term vision of the region's High Capacity Transit (HCT) network. In and around Kirkland, the LRP identifies transit on the following corridors:

- **SR 520:** Regional express bus and/or HCT from the Seattle side of SR 520 to Redmond
- **I-405:** Regional express bus, bus rapid transit (BRT), and/or light rail (LRT)
- **Eastside Rail Corridor:** HCT from SR 522 to SR 520 serving the Totem Lake Urban Center and South Kirkland Park and Ride
- **SR 522:** Regional express bus and/or HCT from I-5/NE 145th Street to I-405

The LRP update leveraged corridor studies, which included studies of the Eastside Rail Corridor (LRT, BRT, and commuter rail), I-405 BRT, Kirkland-Bellevue-Issaquah (LRT and BRT), and University District-Kirkland-Redmond (LRT and BRT).

Currently the Sound Transit Board is developing a draft Priority Project List, which begins to narrow down the corridors and modes that will be considered for an updated System Plan. The System Plan could then be taken to the voters as an ST3 package in November 2016. A staff draft of the PPL was presented to the Sound Transit Executive Committee on May 7th and included completion of LRT to downtown Redmond, I-405 BRT and LRT from Totem Lake to Issaquah via the ERC and I-90.

Over the next months the City of Kirkland will engage with Sound Transit, as well as other Eastside cities, to suggest potential additions or changes to the PPL. Once the PPL has been developed, the City of Kirkland would like to actively work with Sound Transit to further refine projects on the PPL to ensure the best possible projects are considered for the System Plan.

The City of Kirkland eagerly looks forward to supporting an ST3 package that delivers improved transit service to the City's residents. Kirkland has long supported regional transit investments including Sound Move and ST2 because transit is key to the Kirkland's land use, economic development, livability, and

sustainability goals. Kirkland has a long tradition of investing in the quality of life of its communities, and a ST3 package that meaningfully advances HCT service through Kirkland would provide a much needed alternative to driving.

The City of Kirkland looks forward to increased transit oriented development (TOD), especially in the Totem Lake Urban Center where HCT investments could be a catalyst for development. Currently roughly one-third of Kirkland's employment is in Totem Lake and as the City grows, a greater share of housing and employment growth must occur in Totem Lake. By 2031 nearly half of Kirkland's employment is planned for the Totem Lake Urban Center.

ST3 Priority Project List Comments

City of Kirkland staff has synthesized its major comments on the PPL in the list below. This list does its best to present the City's priorities in a brief and simple way. City of Kirkland staff and I look forward to working directly with the Sound Transit Board and the Sound Transit staff to discuss these priorities. Kirkland staff will also be developing additional details to be presented at future points in the public process.

- **Identify the Financial Capacity of the Eastside.** The City would like to understand the financial capacity of the East Subarea under both the House and Senate proposals as this will influence the City's priorities moving forward. Kirkland understands there is a limit to the dollars that can be allocated to the eastside and will prioritize projects based on financial realities.
- **Advance ST2 Investments.** Deliver on investments and planning from Sound Move and ST2. Completing investments in I-405 BRT is a key priority of the City with improved access for Kirkland residents at NE 85th Street and the southern portion of the Totem Lake Urban Center. The extension of East Link to downtown Redmond should also be a strong priority, as should an HCT connection from Issaquah to Bellevue.
- **Connect Downtown Kirkland, Google, and the 6th Street corridor to regional transit service on I-405.** Downtown Kirkland is one of the densest and most established historic downtowns on the Eastside and development projects are underway that will bring thousands of new jobs and hundreds of new housing units to Downtown Kirkland and the 6th Street within the next five years. ST3 must provide a high-quality connection between these areas and regional transit service on I-405. Fixed guideway connections or people movers to the corridors are potential solutions. The City would like to work with Sound Transit to identify ways in which access to regional transit service can be accomplished.
- **Consider BRT as well as LRT along the Eastside Rail Corridor between Totem Lake, Bellevue and Issaquah.** The City would like to see both BRT and LRT included in the PPL, with one of these two HCT projects included in a final ST3 package. The potential revenue constraints to funding LRT along the ERC makes it prudent to keep lower cost options like BRT on the table. The city requests that Sound Transit work with the City to better develop these concepts including routing through Downtown Kirkland and the Totem Lake area.
- **Support TOD in the Totem Lake Urban Center.** The City sees Transit Oriented Developments (TOD) as essential for its continued growth and economic development, with the Totem Lake Urban Center at the heart of this goal. This includes both TOD on publically owned land, such as the Kingsgate P&R, but also TOD on privately owned land. Improved access to HCT, beyond that provided by the Totem Lake Freeway Station, could help catalyze development in the Totem

Lake area. Recommendations of the Growing Transit Communities partnership (of which Kirkland is a member) should guide these investments.

- **Provide additional detail for some projects on the priority project list.** It is hard for the City to respond to the bus based aspects of the PPL due to the lack of detail. Even with a build out of the HCT system a variety of Eastside corridors will still have Express Bus service. For example the City would like AC-5 (I-405 BRT) to be better defined in the PPL including capital investments and service patterns. Project ES-6 (ST Express service) is another project in which additional detail in the PPL is important for the City. The City will provide more detailed feedback on these projects at a later date.
- **Invest in an integrated transit network.** Much of the City's transit service is provided by King County Metro. As the region's HCT network grows, change to some of Kirkland's core routes, particularly the 255, could be made. The City requests that Sound Transit, Metro and other partners work together to better detail these potential changes and identify investments that can be made as part of ST3 to develop a seamless and integrated transit network in the future. Capital investments such as freeway stations, direct access ramps, transfer station improvements, and speed/reliability improvements should all be considered.

Sincerely,



Amy Walen
Mayor, City of Kirkland

cc: Sound Transit Board
King County Council
Bellevue City Council
Kirkland City Council