



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.

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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



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