

June 19, 2018



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

RE: I-405 Bus Rapid Transit, NE 85th Street Interchange and Inline Station

Dear County Executive Somers and Board members,

The City of Kirkland is very pleased with the progress Sound Transit and the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) have made in developing and identifying a preferred design concept for the NE 85th St Interchange and Inline Station. Thank you for taking Kirkland's objectives and priorities into consideration throughout the early stages of this project. **As currently proposed, the City of Kirkland strongly supports the Separated Transit Interchange Concept as the best option for moving into the next phase of the project.**

We asked Sound Transit and WSDOT to be bold and creative in developing a concept that addresses the following Items of Importance identified at the August 2017 design charrette:

- Transit connectivity
- Non-motorized mobility/connectivity
- Kirkland vision
- Compatibility with master plans
- Vehicular traffic operations/interchange performance
- Cost

Of the more than 24 design concepts developed by the design team, the Separated Transit Interchange Concept is by far the most effective at addressing all of the Items of Importance. The City of Kirkland greatly appreciates Sound Transit and WSDOT's willingness to be innovative in their design approach, as well as the team's outreach to our community.

The City of Kirkland also looks forward to working collaboratively with Sound Transit and WSDOT as the project continues to move forward towards construction. As Sound Transit and WSDOT continue design of the interchange and inline station, please resolve the following comments that were raised by the community, City Transportation Commission, and City Council:

**Connection and Connectivity** – This project has the potential to create a viable transit connection and hub for Kirkland's downtown and the NE 85<sup>th</sup> St corridor. We look forward to working with Sound Transit, WSDOT and King County Metro to develop further details regarding connectivity with Downtown Kirkland and along NE 85th Street, and walking and biking access to the Cross Kirkland Corridor and surrounding neighborhoods.

**NE 85<sup>th</sup> St and 114<sup>th</sup> Ave NE Intersection** – We also would like to express our concern regarding the roundabout that was shown at this intersection on the Separated Transit Interchange Concept. We are very concerned that if this intersection is not properly designed, it will create a significant barrier for pedestrians and cyclists attempting to access the improved interchange from the surrounding area. We would like other design options to be evaluated, including potential pedestrian/bike grade separation.

**Station Area Scale and Environment** – As the project moves forward, the team will need to explore creative solutions that address concerns raised by the community, including creating a human scale environment at the inline station level of the interchange with enhancements that slow vehicles, are safe for pedestrians and bicycles, provide weather protection, include ample bike parking, and allow for some convenient pick-up and drop-off.

**Clarify Project Benefits** – We look forward to developing coordinated messages that all agencies can use to communicate to our community the value of this investment, especially when considering the potential for significant construction impacts. These benefits are likely to include improved transit access, the potential for growing transit ridership, improved freeway operations, reduced congestion, enhanced/safe pedestrian and bicyclist access, and improved air quality. Clear and concise information related to these benefits helps everyone understand the value of this investment.

**Construction Impacts** - NE 85th Street is Kirkland's busiest principal arterial, and any extended construction closure will have significant impacts on the I-405 and SR 520 corridors, as well as the surrounding local street network. We understand construction for this project will be complex and extensive. Developing ways to accelerate construction, while maintaining access for the traveling public, will be a significant challenge and critical to successful implementation of the project.

**Repurposing Adjacent Residual Land** - The reduced interchange footprint, and resulting residual land, provides us with the opportunity to make the project even better. We look forward to collaborating with WSDOT and Sound Transit to determine how to repurpose this land in ways that complement the project. Some potential opportunities are enhanced connections for pedestrians and bicyclists, pick-up and drop-off zones, transit-oriented development, integrated commuter parking if possible, and enhanced environmental and gateway features. These would all further increase the value of this investment.

We appreciate the great work that the Sound Transit and WSDOT team have done so far and their commitment to working with us. We look forward to continuing this partnership through environmental review, design and construction. We are committed to supporting this effort with our staff and look forward to working with Sound Transit and WSDOT through realization of this project.

Sincerely,

Kirkland City Council



Amy Walen, Mayor

Cc: Kim Henry, WSDOT I-405 Program