



Kristi Rennebohm Franz,
Chair
Adam Bartz, Vice-Chair
Merlin Rainwater, Vice-Chair
Don Brubeck, Secretary

Jeff Aken
Jed Bradley
Steve Kennedy
Riley Kimball
Phyllis Porter

June 1, 2016

To: Sound Transit Board
401 S. Jackson St.
Seattle, WA 98104
via email to soundtransit3@soundtransit.org

Re: **Sound Transit ST3 Comments**

Dear Sound Transit Board:

The purpose of this letter is to provide input from the Seattle Bicycle Advisory Board (SBAB) to Sound Transit on the draft ST 3 package related to bicycle improvements and funding. We understand the Sound Transit Board is currently taking comments on the draft ST 3 package and is scheduled to decide in June 2016 on the package of improvements to go on the November 2016 ballot to voters in the Sound Transit district. We understand the total cost of the package over a 25 year period would be about \$50 billion (in year of expenditure funds).

Our comments consist of three main areas: provision of adequate bicycle and multi-modal access to stations; provision of bike facilities at stations; and inclusion of needed bike facilities for specific proposed ST projects in Seattle.

Access Improvements

Sound Transit's ST 3 system access program would fund access improvements for Sound Transit stations and facilities including non-motorized access, bicycle parking and facilities, bus transit access and expanded pick-up and drop-off, as needed. The program includes a mode of access data collection program and station area access studies. Funds would be prioritized per Sound Transit's System Access Policy. The program would provide funding in addition to the non-motorized access funds included for individual projects.

Access improvements to and around stations are critical for people getting to and from the stations by bikes and walking, and avoiding use of a car to drive to and park at the station. To the extent feasible, priority for walking, biking, and transit access, including access to train platforms and trains, should be integrated into the station planning and design. Access improvements for bikes can include signed and protected/separated bike lanes, bike signals, speed humps, flashing beacons, signage, overpasses, traffic calming design features, and other improvements. It is important that such improvements provide safety as well as connectivity to surrounding neighborhoods and communities for some distance from the station. It is also important that the facilities are designed for all ages and abilities (AAA) to the

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- City Council
Resolution 25534



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maximum extent possible, and provided in neighborhoods with environmental justice populations (minority and low income groups) consistent with Race and Social Justice Initiative Goals.

Sound Transit should differentiate between urban and suburban stations and facilities. For suburban areas, a mix of bike/ped and vehicle access may be important while urban stations should prioritize access and storage for bikes and pedestrians (in addition to adequate feeder bus connections).

SBAB understands that the draft ST 3 package would include a Non-Motorized Access Allowance of \$270 million which would be the total for all projects in the ST 3 package. This would be used for non-motorized access improvements for all of the new stations. The ST 3 draft package also includes a System Access Fund, geared to improvements around existing stations, of \$100 million. In addition to Sound Transit funding, local jurisdictions such as SDOT can and should contribute funds to access improvements. Grant funds can also potentially be obtained and leveraged. While these access funds may appear to be a large allocation, the System Access Fund and Access Allowances at each station in ST 3 are for all ST 3 projects over a 25 year time period. The Seattle Bike Blog reports that the proposed ST 3 budget for car parking at stations in the ST 3 package is double the budget for biking and walking access improvements to those same stations. SBAB supports the Cascade Bicycle Club proposal which calls for improving system access to an aggregate of \$500 million. Biking and walking modes need to be prioritized as high, or higher, than car access and parking at stations. SBAB also strongly supports charging people to park cars at stations. Parking should not be free. Parking at stations for HOVs (high occupancy vehicles such as van pools) compared to SOVs (single-occupant vehicles) should be prioritized and cost less to encourage HOV access to light rail stations. Charging for parking has several important benefits: providing incentive for people to access the stations by other modes (bikes, walking, or bus); creating additional revenues, which could potentially be used to fund local access improvements around the stations; and managing parking demand at stations.

Bike Facilities at Stations

SBAB believes Sound Transit should prioritize the provision of secure bike facilities at all stations. While unsecured bike racks outside stations are helpful, secure facilities such as bike lockers and especially bike cages as have recently been installed at the Beacon Hill and Tukwila stations allow bike users much greater peace of mind and assurance their bike will be there when they return. Secure bike facilities will increase bike use and access to stations which could reduce traffic congestion around stations, as well as free up passenger capacity on trains if people feel they can safely leave their bikes at secure facilities before boarding. The new bike cages are accessed by key code and currently cost \$50 per year, as do bike

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lockers at stations. Furthermore, key code access at one station should provide access to bike cages at all stations. This will result in seamless access across the entire Sound Transit system. The newest stations at Capitol Hill and University of Washington do not have secure bike facilities, and we urge Sound Transit to provide those as soon as possible.

Recommendations on Bike Facilities for Specific Proposed ST 3 projects

SBAB has recommendations for several projects in the ST 3 draft package. The proposed Downtown to Ballard light rail line is a much needed project that is projected to have a huge ridership. We believe the project should be grade-separated (likely an elevated guideway) to the greatest extent possible, especially along 15th Avenue W. This will improve travel times, and reduce light rail conflicts with cars, buses, bikes, and pedestrians. The Ballard Bridge and its approaches have been a major safety and access problem for bike and pedestrians. Little or nothing has been done to improve this situation despite the concerns of many bridge users, community groups, and the Seattle Bike Advisory Board over many years. The Downtown to Ballard project must include safe and adequate new bike facilities over the Ship Canal at Salmon Bay. This would either be on a new bridge for light rail, bike, and pedestrians, or if a tunnel option under Salmon Bay is selected, a new bridge in the same area for bikes and pedestrians only. Other options, which could involve a Sound Transit/City of Seattle partnership and grant funds, would be to provide funding for widening of the existing Ballard Bridge for adequate bike/ped paths, or a new, replacement Ballard Bridge with the same. The opportunity to finally fix a glaring safety problem for cyclists and pedestrians, and provide connectivity to surrounding areas, must not be missed.

In regard to the Downtown to West Seattle proposed light rail project, there is currently a good protected bike lane over the Duwamish River on the Spokane St. Bridge and a workable one on the First Avenue South Bridge. What is needed is for the East Marginal Way South multi-modal corridor and Chelan intersection flyover to become a priority to make it a great bicycling route all ages and abilities (AAA) from Downtown/Pioneer Square to West Seattle.

Finally, while we appreciate the ambitious, forward-thinking draft ST 3 transit package currently proposed, we urge Sound Transit and local jurisdictions including SDOT to adequately prioritize, fund, and construct bicycle facilities in and around stations that reduce auto dependence to access the system, and that provide safe and convenient bike connectivity and access to the stations for all ages and abilities.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide comments.

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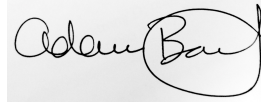
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Sincerely,



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Secretary

Cc: Mayor Ed Murray
Councilmember Mike O'Brien
SDOT Director Scott Kubly
Andrew Glass-Hastings, Office of the Mayor
Darby Watson, SDOT
Nicole Freedman, SDOT
Rebecca Roush, Sound Transit
Ric Ilgenfritz, Sound Transit PEPD;
Karen Kitsis, Sound Transit PEPD;
Chris Rule, Sound Transit PEPD;
Katie Flores, Sound Transit Board Administration

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