

Seattle Times, 2/10/16

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Feds offer big grants for Puget Sound-area transit projects

Originally published February 9, 2016 at 8:19 pm Updated February 9, 2016 at 10:02 pm

The Federal Transit Administration has offered grants to a First Avenue streetcar line, Community Transit's Swift 2 bus-rapid transit line, and Northgate-Lynnwood Link light rail. The grants would have to be approved by Congress first, but history suggest that will happen.

by [Mike Lindblom](#)

Seattle Times transportation reporter

Uncle Sam is offering to contribute \$1.2 billion toward Sound Transit's light-rail line from Northgate to Lynnwood, according to the president's proposed budget — just one of three huge transit gifts in the pipeline for Puget Sound travelers.

The proposed First Avenue streetcar line could win another \$75 million in federal money, which suddenly places Seattle's third streetcar corridor on the political fast track.

And the feds want to give an additional \$43 million toward Community Transit's Swift 2 bus-rapid transit line connecting Bothell, Mill Creek, Everett's McCollum Park and Paine Field.

The three awards, and many others proposed around the country by the Federal Transit Administration, must still be ratified by Congress in its transportation budget.

Each represents at least half the capital cost, and would stoke the transit-construction frenzy under way throughout the region.

Sound Transit is already building a new Northgate Station, to open in 2021, followed by plans to reach North Seattle, Shoreline, Mountlake Terrace and Lynnwood with another 8½ miles of track by 2023, for a total \$2.35 billion. The local share of the money comes mostly from sales taxes, approved by voters in 2008.

Estimated ridership in the Northgate-Lynnwood extension is 50,500 daily passengers the first year, and 67,100 trips by 2035, [an FTA summary says](#).

Despite budget skirmishes between Democratic President Obama and a Republican-majority Congress, history suggests the transit grants have a high likelihood of happening.

The Federal Transit Administration's Small Starts and New Starts programs rolled along under Republican administrations before Obama. The projects are sprinkled around many regions and congressional districts, and they tend to fly under the radar. In 2006, the [George W. Bush administration supported](#) \$750 million for Sound Transit's Capitol Hill Tunnel, and in 2003 the initial Seattle-Tukwila route won \$500 million [despite open criticism from some House conservatives](#), who said that light rail won't reduce traffic congestion.

"It's never a done deal, until it's done," said Sound Transit spokesman Bruce Gray. But he pointed out that U.S. Sen. Patty Murray, D-Wash., has often [looked out for the projects](#) on committees where she serves.

Sound Transit has previously won more than \$1.3 billion in light-rail grants from FTA. Last month Peter Rogoff, who headed the FTA, moved to Seattle to become CEO of Sound Transit — which can only help it compete for future grants.

If it arrives, a \$1.2 billion grant would far exceed the \$600 million or so that Sound Transit assumed the feds might provide, when voters in 2008 approved a tax increase for three suburban routes.

It's too early to know whether a huge grant could free up cash for other Snohomish County lines and stations.

What it does provide is more assurance the Lynnwood line will be delivered as promised, said Everett City Councilmember Paul Roberts, vice chairman of Sound Transit's governing board.

"We're happy to be on track at this time," he said.

Maggie Fimia, a longtime critic of Sound Transit, said the award isn't surprising given the agency's political lobbying clout.

"That's \$1.2 billion that could have gone to local transit agencies, and it's not serving anywhere near the majority of transit users. Even by 2040, 90 percent of the transit rides will be on buses," said Fimia, a member of the Coalition for Effective Transportation Alternatives.

Seattle's streetcar line, also known as the Center City Connector, would start at McGraw Square (Westlake Avenue at Stewart Street), turn toward the waterfront, then run on First Avenue to Pioneer Square. That route connects the 2007 South Lake Union streetcar to the just-opened First Hill line, though a fraction of users would travel the entire loop.

A big question is where the city can find another \$60 million or so to complete the \$135 million budget for construction and trains.

A local funding plan will be released later this year, said Rick Sheridan, spokesman for the Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT).

Streetcars are divisive enough politically that Mayor Ed Murray didn't include them in the recently passed \$972 million Move Seattle levy, which focused mainly on street rebuilds and safety.

Sheridan said the SDOT does not intend to use Move Seattle funds. To supplant property-tax money, and spend it on streetcars, would require an 8-1 City Council vote, under last year's ballot ordinance.

Learning from the past, the City Council has resolved that any First Avenue line would run predominantly in its own transit lanes, instead of bogging down in slow general traffic like the first two lines.

Nonetheless, streetcar critics argue that new-generation trolley buses are equally comfortable at a lower cost, and that other transportation methods such as sidewalks, pavement or general bus service are more important.

Operating costs are also a potential headache. [The South Lake Union line](#) has needed three infusions of city loans in its first eight years, as operating costs outpace fare and advertising revenues.

In its application for federal money, the SDOT said a full three-line network could be linked by 2019 and serve as many as 25,000 daily passengers. Those include niche markets of tourists, sports fans, and commuters using the Marion Street footbridge to the state ferry terminal.

The planned Swift 2 line, similar to RapidRide within King County, would crisscross the Swift 1 line that now serves Highway 99, as promised in a sales-tax measure that barely passed last fall. Swift buses offer new mobility options to thousands of residents, especially those at apartment clusters that surround Snohomish County's main boulevards.

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Will Sound Transit 3 bring the relief Snohomish County needs?

Within the coming weeks, we'll know the rough draft of what the future of light rail might look like with the proposed Sound Transit 3 ballot measure and whether it will help more people living north of Seattle.

Josh Green, KING 5 News 6:40 p.m. PST February 29, 2016



(Photo: KING 5 News)

SEATTLE – Some transportation planners believe light rail is one of the answers to Western Washington's traffic gridlock. Within the coming weeks, we'll know the rough draft of what the future of light rail might look like with the proposed Sound Transit 3 ballot measure and whether it will help more people living north of Seattle.

"My day of just traveling is about 5, 6 hours," said Michael Mealing about his round-trip commute every day from Arlington to Seattle.

Though most people don't have to deal with that long of commute from Snohomish County, sitting on Interstate 5 has become part of the grind.

"We are creating a significant amount of congestion for Seattle and King County," said Everett mayor Ray Stephanson. "When I took office in 2003, about 15,000 people commuted out of Snohomish County to Seattle and King County every day. That number is now 40,000."

Everett City Councilmember Paul Roberts, a vice chair of the Sound Transit Board, has a more colorful description.

"We have a joke up here. You can get there early, you can get there late, but you can't get there on time," said Roberts.

Roberts, Mayor Stephanson, and many other elected officials are championing an effort to connect Everett, Seattle and Tacoma with light rail. It's something called "the spine."

"We've been waiting a long time," said Roberts. "The first resolution passed that said 'Everett, you're next' was in 1994. I think the people here want to

get the connections made to the centers."

But linking the region and getting light rail to densely populated areas of Seattle like Ballard and West Seattle won't be cheap. At least \$15 billion.

"None of us, including me, want to pay more taxes," said King County Executive Dow Constantine. "On the other hand, I am sick and tired of wasting big chunks of my day sitting in this gridlock and it is not going to get better with mere incremental changes."

He says there's another important factor at stake.

"There has definitely been a shift where people are having to move farther and farther away from the places where the jobs are in order to afford housing," said Constantine.

\$15 billion sounds like a lot of money but it's not enough to do everything transit planners want to do.

One of the biggest decisions is whether to spend about \$700 million and swing light rail away from I-5 out toward Paine Field where Boeing and other industry lives. Stephanson and others believe the detour is worth it to serve the 55,000 who work near the airport. That number is expected to grow.

"It really has to meet the needs of Everett-Snohomish County for me to be able to tell my citizens that this is a ballot measure worth supporting," said Stephanson.

A draft of what the plan will look like will be out in a matter of days. Public comment then shapes what the final ballot measure will look like.

"If we think about the history, we made decisions in the late 60s and early 70s not to build this system," said Roberts. Today that system operates in Atlanta and in Atlanta, Georgia, this morning, they had a better commute than we did. Tonight, they'll have a better commute home."

It would be the biggest investment voters will decide this year -- whether Sound Transit 3 is worth being a part of our future or not.

There will be months of public comment to come on ST3 before the board shapes a plan this summer for the November ballot.



This fall, King, Pierce and Snohomish counties will vote on a \$15 billion transportation plan. King County Executive and Sound Transit Board Chair Dow Constantine joined KING 5 to talk about Sound Transit 3. KING

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Seattle Times editorial, 3/19/16

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Sound Transit 3: Cars are still a reality in a mass-transit future

Originally published March 19, 2016 at 4:04 pm Updated March 18, 2016 at 4:48 pm



Whatever Sound Transit ends up building, it must include parking.

By
[Seattle Times editorial board](#)

A MAJOR voter decision is looming — besides choosing the next president.

In the coming months, the Puget Sound region will consider whether to make a breathtaking investment in Sound Transit's rail and bus system, potentially spending up to [\\$48 billion over the next 25 years](#).

The agency expects to present its [Sound Transit 3 plan](#) Thursday and gather public input in April.

At this point, one principle is clear: Whatever is built must include parking.

This seems obvious to most people in King, Pierce and Snohomish counties who will be asked to pay for a laundry list of transit projects with sales, property taxes and car-tab fees.

Yet parking remains a friction point, with some Seattle-based environmentalists lobbying the agency to [minimize or eliminate parking facilities](#) from its planned stations.

The need for parking is crystal clear, especially to commuters vying for the 14,000 spaces now provided at regional park-and-rides. Most spots are full by 8 a.m. Parking scarcity is one of the top complaints received by Peter Rogoff, Sound Transit's chief executive.

This shows demand is growing for alternatives to commuting on the region's clogged and unpredictable roadways.

Sound Transit must avoid the ideological planning that has skewed policy decisions in Seattle.”

It also demonstrates that commuting remains multimodal, even as mass-transit increases. People use a mix of vehicles and their routines vary depending on personal circumstances and the options at hand.

Sound Transit must avoid the ideological planning that has skewed policy decisions in Seattle.

Pragmatism is especially important at Sound Transit, which will continue to provide a variety of options to the diverse area it serves. For many residents, cars are the only reasonable option to access transit.

Even in dense, urban areas, Sound Transit should plan for continued use of the automobile despite the anti-car zealotry in vogue at Seattle City Hall. At a minimum, transit stations need places for cars to drop off passengers.

Transit-oriented development efforts that cluster growth near stations should also serve surrounding areas by including commuter parking and drop-off locations.

Someday, all people might have enough transit options that none of them will need to drive. At that point, space used for parking can be repurposed. That's far easier and cheaper than adding parking later, if it's needed after all.

Yes, cars contribute to climate change. But cutting transit parking won't help. As the park-and-ride situation shows, people who need cars and can't park near transit will just drive all the way to work.

Besides, car emissions will be drastically reduced and perhaps eliminated — through efficiency improvements and the spread of electric cars — by the time Sound Transit finishes its projects. People will still use cars decades from now, so why not accommodate that reality?

Rogoff, a former federal transit chief hired in November, is refreshingly practical. Risking scorn of Seattle-area transportation officials, Rogoff admits he has actually commuted by car on days when his children had soccer games.

Sound Transit is [starting to experiment](#) with ways to better manage parking, such as using ORCA transit cards to verify spots are used by commuters.

Agency staff also made an excellent suggestion to the board recently: Build parking facilities in advance, rather than wait for rail stations farther along the schedule, so bus riders can begin using them. It's cheaper to build before prices increase further, Rogoff said, and more parking capacity increases ridership and improves commuters' experiences.

The coming discussion of Puget Sound's transit and traffic options would be more productive if officials continue offering such realistic and economical options.

Editorial board members are editorial page editor Kate Riley, Frank A. Blethen, Ryan Blethen, Brier Dudley, Mark Higgins, Jonathan Martin, Thanh Tan, William K. Blethen (emeritus) and Robert C. Blethen (emeritus).

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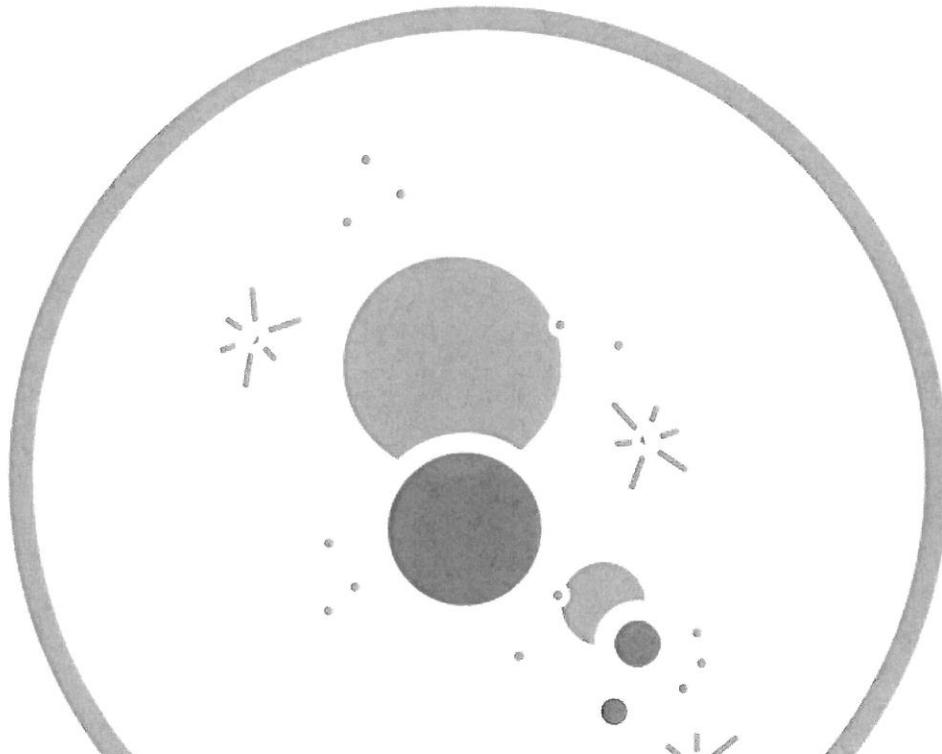
MORNING FIZZ

Clinton in Seattle, Investigation at SDOT, and Costs in the Suburbs

Murray introduces Clinton in Sanders-friendly Seattle, city takes serious look at Kubly ties to Pronto, and Sound Transit review panel notes suburban costs.

BY JOSH FEIT AND JOSH KELETY • 3/23/2016 AT 9:33AM

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1. KING 5 reported last night that the city has hired an outside attorney to investigate Seattle Department of Transportation Director Scott Kubly's relationship with Motivate, the bike share operator that contracted to run Pronto. Pronto is the bike share nonprofit that Kubly's SDOT helped keep afloat last year by providing three payments to Motivate totaling \$305,000 that were not specifically approved by the council; Kubly used to head up Alta Bikes, which was subsequently bought out by Motivate. Last week, SDOT won council approval to buy out Pronto, something Kubly had been executing since May 2015.

“

Hopefully, the outside investigator, who signed a \$20,000 contract with the city to look into the matter, won't just grill Kubly, but will ask the mayor why he himself didn't follow standard ethics policy.

”

Learn to trust the Fizz: Last week, after the council passed the Pronto buyout, Morning Fizz went with this headline: “Council Approves Pronto Deal, Ethics Questions Linger.” Following up on the \$305,000 news, I confirmed that Kubly never presented the required letter to the city's ethics department from the mayor drawing up safeguards to protect the city's interests when there are potential conflicts and explaining why putting Kubly in charge of the Pronto buyout was necessary. Such a letter is required when a city employee is heading up city business with a company they formerly worked for within the last year. Kubly worked for Alta Bikes right up until July 2014 when he took the job as SDOT director, and he began overseeing the city's efforts to buy Pronto in May 2015. Kubly's relationship with Alta was hardly a secret. The mayor hyped it when he hired Kubly and Kubly highlights it as a bonus as the city gets into the bike share business.

himself didn't follow standard ethics policy by presenting the required letter to the ethics department. The ethics rules put the burden of presenting the required letter on the employee's supervisor. Kubly's supervisor is Mayor Murray.

2. Four days in advance of the Democratic caucuses on Saturday, March 26th, former secretary of state and Democratic presidential primary frontrunner Hillary Clinton made a one-day swing through the I-5 corridor and Seattle yesterday.



IMAGE: JOSH KELETY

After a [stop in Everett](#) at a Boeing machinist union labor hall, a [fundraiser](#) at the Medina home of Costco co-founder Jeff Brotman (\$2,700 to attend), a meeting in Puyallup with [native American tribal leaders](#), Clinton ended the day with a rally with a diverse crowd of roughly one thousand supporters—with more stuck outside due to a slow security clearance process for attendees— Seattle's Rainier Beach High School gym.



supporting either candidate, [endorsed Clinton](#) the morning of her visit, saying she “understands big-city issues” and supports Seattle’s progressive initiatives and goals.

“When I see Hillary Clinton’s agenda I see Seattle’s agenda,” he told the crowd. “I see an agenda that calls for quality pre-k, that calls for raising the minimum wage. We need a progressive partner in the White House who can get things done.”

But in [hyper Sanders-friendly](#) lefty Seattle (a Sunday Sanders rally at Key Arena drew crowds of [thirty thousand](#)), Murray’s Clinton endorsement feeds the narrative that Murray is [‘the man’](#) in a progressive city. When asked if he was concerned about this perception, he told the *Seattle Times*: “I hope folks don’t judge me on one endorsement.”

We asked Murray’s office if the mayor’s skittishness was an acknowledgment that he’s out of sync with the city he governs; [the Seattle Times crunched the numbers](#) and found that Seattle has “contributed more dollars to [Sanders’s] campaign, per capita, than any other large city in the country.” His aggravated spokesman, Viet Shelton, wouldn’t comment. Murray did pay tribute to Senator Sanders during his introductory remarks at the rally. “I’m glad we’ve had two [Democratic] candidates who have discussed the issues seriously with respect.”

Clinton first thanked local Washington elected officials like King County Executive Dow Constantine and Washington state senator Kevin Ranker (D-40, Orcas Island) for their endorsements. And gave a shout out to Rainier Beach High’s successful basketball and [International Baccalaureate programs](#). (Ranker, who apparently met with Clinton briefly backstage, was giddy and in state of shock when he walked past reporters).

And then she got into her standard stump speech, gearing it toward the general election and Seattle. Clinton stroked the crowd, praising the region’s aerospace machinists while promising to restore American manufacturing jobs. She also gave a shout out to Seattle’s \$15 minimum wage; though Clinton has does not support a \$15 minimum wage nationally, while Sanders does.



behind free community college, Obamacare, paid family leave, and lowering interests for student loan debt. She frequently slammed Trump and his runner-up, Texas Senator Ted Cruz, as incompetent, divisive bigots who use racism and play off economic insecurities of voters for their political gain. (Editorializing again here, but [Cruz's call to "patrol and secure Muslim neighborhoods" in the U.S.](#) was a chilling display of his fascist leanings.)

Denouncing the other extremist in the race, Clinton said: "The stakes [in this election] get higher every day," Clinton said. "This is a contest between fundamentally different views of our country, our values, and our future. We can't let a demagogue incite violence."

With the exception of noting Sanders's calls for free college tuition at four-year public colleges, Clinton didn't waste much time catering to likely Sanders supporters; after last night's Clinton win in Arizona, she has a [300 plus pledged delegate lead](#). "I do differ with my esteemed opponent who says free tuition for everybody," she said. "I want to concentrate on middle class families, working families, poor families. Personally I think that if you can afford to send your child to college like Donald trump we should not pay for you to send your child for free."

A few anti-Clinton protesters showed up outside the rally condemning her "super predators" remark in the 1990's and her ties to Wall Street. Socialist council member Kshama Sawant—an outspoken Sanders fan—made an appearance as well holding a sign reading, "[I'm not with her.](#)"

The Sanders camp announced last night that he'll be holding a rally at the 50,000 thousand person capacity venue of Safeco field Friday.

3. The Sound Transit board is set to approve ST3, a \$30 to \$40 billion light rail ballot measure they'll send to voters at their Thursday meeting. But there's a bit of data that the agency's own expert review panel laid out in a letter to Sound Transit that raises a fundamental question about the decision to prioritize building out a super regional

The projected cost per rider on new projects in Seattle are in the \$2 range while suburban projects are in the \$5 to \$9 range, with some projects spiking at \$16 to \$17 per rider.

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Published: Thursday, March 24, 2016, 6:05 p.m.

Transit plan would extend rail to Everett — in 2041

ST3 Draft Plan Map - PROPOSED



Sound Transit

A map of projects that might comprise the Sound Transit 3 ballot measure.

By [Noah Haglund](#)
Herald Writer

[@NWHaglund](#)

SEATTLE — Snohomish County’s political leaders had mixed reactions Thursday when Sound Transit

unveiled light-rail plans that [would reach Everett](#) via the industrial area around Paine Field, but not for another 25 years.

Light-rail spurs to Seattle neighborhoods, meanwhile, would materialize up to eight years earlier.

If those plans come to pass, they'll end up leaving Everett-area voters with a 45-year wait from the time they agreed to raise taxes for regional transit until the first light-rail trains would roll into Everett Station.

"I'm very happy and relieved that the proposal includes Paine Field and the southwest Everett jobs center. I do have some concerns about timing and schedule," said Snohomish County Executive Dave Somers, a Sound Transit board member.

The plans emerged at Thursday's regular Sound Transit board meeting. Decisions about light-rail routes are needed for board members to craft a tax measure [known as Sound Transit 3](#) for the November 2016 ballot. Known as ST3 for short, the board must finalize the ballot measure in June.

The new proposal does satisfy a major demand from leaders in Snohomish County: It would reach the Boeing plant and Paine Field, rather than going straight up I-5. However, the line to downtown Everett — promised as part of the 1996 ballot measure called Sound Move — wouldn't be built out until 2041.

Put another way, a 30-year-old who voted for the original measure would be 75 by the time Sound Transit makes good on the promise.

Leaders in Snohomish County argue it makes little sense to put the residential areas of Ballard and West Seattle so far ahead of Washington's largest concentration of manufacturing jobs in the aerospace-intensive industrial zone of southwest Everett. More than 55,000 people work at or around Paine Field and Boeing's Everett plant.

Edmonds Mayor Dave Earling was one of the original board members in 1993 for the Regional Transit Authority, which became Sound Transit. Earling, who remains on the board, appreciated the commitment to build out the light-rail spine, but wants it to happen faster.

"I want to shorten up, candidly, the 25-year projection for us," he said during Thursday's meeting.

Everett Mayor Ray Stephanson vowed to work toward that goal. He encouraged his constituents to let Sound Transit know what they think about the plans.

"I'd be hard-pressed to recommend that waiting 25 years is acceptable," Stephanson said. "I want to preface that by saying that I appreciate the fact that the Sound Transit board recognized that getting to the jobs center was a priority. That wasn't always the case."

Plans are already underway for light rail to reach the Lynnwood transit center by 2023.

Under the ST3 plans, light rail wouldn't get to 128th Street in south Everett before 2036. The next northward expansion to downtown Everett via the southwest Everett industrial area wouldn't happen until 2041.

Elsewhere in the region, new service would open in 2033 to West Seattle and Tacoma. It would reach Ballard by 2038 and Issaquah in 2041.

The plan also provides for additional rapid transit bus service on I-405 and added parking for Sounder commuter trains in Edmonds and Mukilteo.

State lawmakers last year authorized Sound Transit to raise up to \$15 billion in new taxes to support ST3 through a combination of sales tax, property tax and car-tab fees.

Sound Transit conducted an online survey and held workshops last year to gather commuters' thoughts on what kinds of service the new round of expansion should provide.

The current plans would bring the light-rail system only as far north as Everett Station. A proposed segment to the area of Everett Community College and Providence Regional Medical Center Everett has been dropped from ST3.

To pay for the expansion, voters in Sound Transit's service area would be asked to approve the maximum allowed increases in sales tax, car-tab fees and property tax.

Sales tax would rise by 0.5 percent, car-tab fees by 0.8 percent and property taxes by 25 cents per \$1,000 of assessed value. The average taxpayer would have to pay an additional \$200 per year.

The total cost over a quarter century would be \$50 billion.

That's far higher than the \$15 billion that state lawmakers authorized Sound Transit to raise through new taxes over the next 15 years. The plan outlined Thursday also includes money from fares, grants and other sources.

Sound Transit plans to open a formal comment period for ST3 in April. [An online survey](#) and a series of public meetings are in the works as well.

Once complete, the Link light rail system would extend for 108 miles and include 75 stations, Sound Transit CEO Peter Rogoff said. That will put the central Puget Sound region's light-rail network roughly on par with the BART system in San Francisco-Bay Area and the Washington, D.C., Metro. It would be about twice as large as Atlanta's MARTA.

The opening of new light-rail stations in the University District and on Capitol Hill on Saturday marked the first expansion of Link light rail north of downtown Seattle.

The line is on schedule to serve [Northgate by 2021](#) and [Lynnwood two years later](#). Trains would stop at the Mountlake Terrace Transit Center, Northeast 185th Street in Shoreline and 145th street in Seattle. The line is predicted to carry up to 74,000 riders each weekday by 2035, with a Lynnwood-to-Seattle trip taking an average of 28 minutes.

Also by 2023, the system is projected to be serving Bellevue, Overlake and the Kent-Des Moines area.

More info: www.soundtransit3.org.

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King5 TV, 3/24/16

<http://www.king5.com/news/local/sound-transit-releases-list-of-st3-projects/100718174>

Sound Transit releases list of ST3 projects

Sound Transit unveiled its major expansion plans Thursday, saying it could take light rail across the three-county area if voters approve a tax measure this fall.

Chris Daniels, KING 9:39 PM. PDT March 24, 2016



(Photo: KING)

SEATTLE - Sound Transit has "ambitious" plans for the next phase of light rail.

That's how King County Executive and Sound Transit Board Chair Dow Constantine described the unveiling of the agencies draft list of projects to be included in ST3.

It includes light rail to Tacoma and Everett, and on the eastside to Issaquah and Redmond. It also includes two lines, from Ballard and West Seattle to downtown.

Sound Transit says it would take \$50 billion and 25 years to complete the list. It now goes to the public for month of review, before the final list is crafted and presented to voters this fall.

The Ballard and West Seattle lines drew a fair amount of attention on Thursday, because of their timelines. If approved by voters, Sound Transit says it will build a rail online bridge over the Duwamish River for the line, which wouldn't be complete until 2033.

The Ballard line, would involve another tunnel through the lower Queen Anne neighborhood and would not be completed until 2038.

Constantine and Sound Transit CEO Peter Rogoff said the timelines are based on past performance and the complex financing mechanism involved in such an expansion. Constantine added that the expansion would create a network of 108 miles of light rail, comparable with cities across the country.

Sound Transit says it would cost an adult \$200 annually to build the expanded network in its current form. Most of the initial feedback, from board members and interested parties, was generally positive.

Tacoma Mayor Marilyn Strickland, who is vice chair of the board, says the plan, which would connect Tacoma with Sea-Tac Airport and Seattle, would be "really, really damn good."

Tukwila's City Hall was also beaming about the proposed new station near Boeing Access Road on the existing Central Link. It had lobbied extensively for it.

"We are delighted that the agency recognizes the important need for transit options in the north Tukwila area, and the large ridership base that exists today around the proposed station," said Tukwila spokesperson Rachel Bianchi. "A large and diverse coalition of residents, employers, cultural organizations and public agencies worked very hard on this issue, and we want to recognize the great work of our partners who helped us achieve this great milestone."

But a statement released Seattle Mayor Ed Murray seemed to say there was room for improvement.

"This proposal is a great start, but we know it is not perfect. Now it is up to Seattle residents to help us refine this vision for the future of transit in our region," said Murray.

Snohomish County Executive Dave Somers, along with the mayors of Mukilteo and Everett, were not thrilled about the timeline and released a joint statement after they left the board meeting:

"Connecting job and population centers by completing the Link Light Rail 'spine' has always been a consensus priority of Sound Transit. Having reviewed the Sound Transit 3 proposal, we appreciate that these commitments have been recognized by including both the job center near Paine Field and Everett in the plan. We are encouraged that the overall goal of completing the "spine" is met in the draft proposal. We are concerned that the draft proposal currently states that it will take 25 years for Link Light Rail to Everett to be completed. In 20 years, an additional 200,000 people will have moved to Snohomish County, adding even more gridlock to I-5 and I-405. This gridlock slows commerce for the entire region and will affect job centers in King, Pierce, and Snohomish counties. We will work with our regional partners to move the completion of the "spine" forward to an acceptable timeframe."

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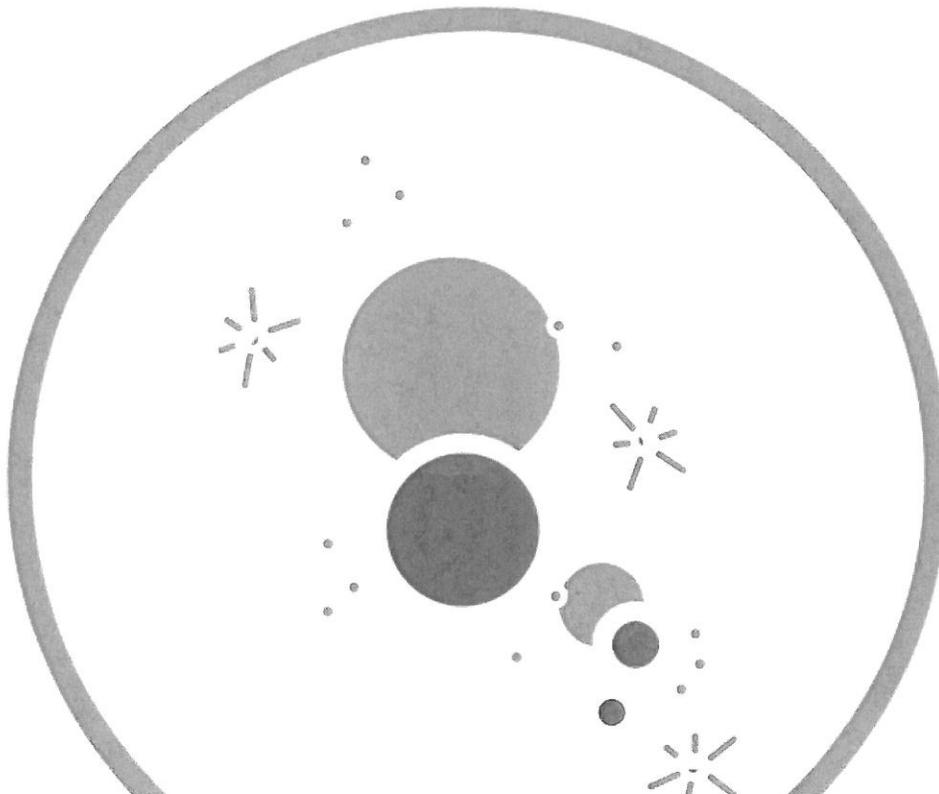
MORNING FIZZ

Sound Transit Expansion Plan Likely to Include Large Investment in Parking Facilities

ST3 on table, Starbucks under scrutiny, and SDOT in new light.

BY [JOSH FEIT](#) • 3/24/2016 AT 9:18AM

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1. Last December, when Sound Transit presented potential options for ST3—the proposed super regional light rail package to extend the current plan from Lynnwood to Everett, from Redmond to Kirkland, and from Federal Way to Tacoma, with new lines within Seattle such as Ballard to downtown and West Seattle to Downtown—one jarring element of the presentation was \$1 billion (out of the estimated \$30 billion in projects) for expanded parking facilities.

Given that Sound Transit’s regional mission is to reduce the Puget Sound’s future reliance on car travel, I wrote at the time, you had to wonder if \$980 million for 18,000 cars—at \$52,000 per stall —was the best proposed investment.

Overall, according to my review of the ST3 proposal at the time, ST3’s parking component considered: 11 parking projects in the Southern portion of ST3 for roughly 8,400 new stalls, four projects in the East corridor for roughly 4,600 new stalls, six projects in the Northern portion for 3,513 new stalls, and two projects in the central corridor for about 1,300 new stalls.

Sound Transit spokesman Geoff Patrick said at the time that there was indeed a high demand for park and rides in the suburban corridors, but he also took issue with my assumption that ST3 was considering spending \$1 billion total on parking. “Your headline is not really accurate in saying ‘Sound Transit Three Assumes Nearly \$1 Billion for New Parking Stalls,’” he said. “Not all of the candidate projects can be built, and the study results are to inform further narrowing of priorities to shape a ballot measure of as-yet undetermined scale. Once the board identifies a draft plan you will be able to analyze how much parking is assumed.”

That official draft plan is coming out today at ST’s 1:30 board meeting; the public will vet it over the next few months and the board will send some final version of ST3 to voters this summer for a November vote.

billion.

I'm also hearing that the parking allocation is, indeed, \$1 billion.

2. In addition to hearing a live set from Alicia Keys at yesterday's Starbucks annual meeting, Starbucks shareholders and execs heard from 19-year-old Rainer Ave and MLK Way Starbucks barista Darrion Sjoquist.

Sjoquist stood up and asked CEO Howard Schultz if the company planned to address the emergent issue of "secured scheduling"—the new labor cause to prevent management from upending hourly workers' lives with unpredictable weekly schedules and oftentimes, scaled back hours.

Watch the YouTube of Sjoquist and Schultz at yesterday's meeting below:

Starbucks barista Darrion Sjoquist talks to Starbucks CEO H...



Schultz said the company was well aware of the issue and—facing a challenge of scheduling two groups of workers, some who want part time work and some who want



Sjoquist, whose initial specific question to Schultz had been whether employees like Sjoquist who “feel the effects of scheduling...could talk to you about it,” pressed Schultz after the CEO’s initial cordial response.

Sjoquist followed up:

“The one voice I really feel is missing are the partners [Starbucks store staff] themselves, the employees. I think they have a lot of useful things to say, and I think if you let them, they’ll talk a lot.”

Schultz concluded the conversation saying: “Okay. Thank you very much for that. Thank you,” as the audience broke out into applause.

3. My latest article for the magazine is out and, go figure, it’s about the city council’s recent vote to allow the Seattle Department of Transportation to buy out Pronto. More specifically, though, the story strays from the media narrative that Pronto itself was a disaster and takes [a tougher look at SDOT’s own screw ups that hastened the bike share nonprofit’s troubles.](#)

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Sound Transit 3: Meet Your 25-Year Transit Expansion Package

March 24, 2016 at 4:30 pm By [Zach Shaner](#)



Angle Lake Construction in 2014 (Atomic Taco – Flickr)

Unofficial Graphic by the Author ([click here for a longer \(7 second\) animation](#))

This afternoon Sound Transit released its long-awaited Sound Transit 3 (ST3) Draft System Plan, the first complete draft of what will be on your ballot this fall. We'll have much more in the coming days and weeks, but here's the gist.

Responding both to enormous demand for better transit and public appetite for a large package amidst a healthy local economy, Sound Transit has chosen to go big: ST3 will be a **25-year, \$50 billion transit package**. It would build light rail to Everett, Tacoma, Redmond, Issaquah, Ballard, and West Seattle **in 5 distinct phases**, alongside other projects such as I-405 BRT, SR 522 BRT, and Sounder Improvements.

When preparing yourself for the long phasing of these projects, it's probably helpful to think of ST3 being an extension of ST2, with the agency in constant and concurrent construction between 2008-2041. Here's what the Draft Plan offers you:

Early Wins

In an effort to show early value despite the long timelines for rail projects, ST3 would offer a number of small projects early in the life of the package. They include:

- Implementing shoulder-running for express buses
- Providing unspecified capital improvements to RapidRide C and D
- Providing a capital contribution to improving Pierce Transit's Route 1 on Pacific Avenue
- Providing better connections to Sumner Station, including new Sounder Connectors, presumably from East Pierce County cities such as Orting
- Parking, parking, parking. The plan would also construct new parking early in the package in Kenmore, Lake Forest Park, Bothell, Kingsgate, and along North and South Sounder. It would also construct [Renton's requested new Park & Ride at I-405 and SR 167](#).

2024: I-405 and SR 522 Bus Rapid Transit (BRT)

I-405 BRT would use a modified low-capital option to run from Lynnwood to Bellevue, timed to coincide with WSDOT's extension of HOT lanes along the full length of I-405. The NE 85th Street interchange in Kirkland would be completely rebuilt, permitting center access and dedicated exits for buses. Buses would serve the new South Renton Park and Ride and terminate in Burien after serving Tukwila Int'l Boulevard via an inline stop on SR 518.

SR 522 BRT from Woodinville to 145th Street Station would also open in 2024, one year after 145th Street Station.

2028: Redmond and Federal Way

The first ST3 capital projects to come on line would be the twin extensions from Overlake to Redmond and Kent/Des Moines to Federal Way, with 4 new stations.

2033: West Seattle and Tacoma

West Seattle: Curiously, West Seattle would be built before Ballard, with a short stub line from Alaska Junction to either Stadium or the International District opening in 2033. The line would be at grade in a presumably rail-only and quadruple-tracked Sodo transitway, transitioning to elevated over a new fixed bridge over the Duwamish River, then entering a tunnel portal for a short underground trip to Alaska Junction. Presumably, this project would be done first because Sound Transit believes it to be operable prior to a second Downtown subway tunnel, unlike a Ballard line.

Tacoma: The first portion of the spine to be complete would be Tacoma, with the extension from Federal Way opening in 2033 with stations in South Federal Way, Fife, East Tacoma, and Tacoma Dome. Trains would presumably run from Tacoma-Lynnwood as the Red Line until the Ballard line opens.

2036: North Lynnwood, Graham Street, and Boeing Access Road

3 years after West Seattle Link opens, the spine would be extended to North Lynnwood with 3 new stations (Alderwood, Ash Way, and Mariner). In addition, Graham Street and Boeing Access Road would be fully funded by ST3 and open the same year.

2038: Ballard, Queen Anne, South Lake Union

Five years after West Seattle opens, the new downtown subway would open. At this point, West Seattle trains would switch to the Downtown Seattle Transit Tunnel and run to Mariner in North Lynnwood. Tacoma and Rainier Valley trains would become the Green Line and would switch to the new tunnel, serving Downtown, South Lake Union, Queen Anne, Interbay, and Ballard. From Westlake, trains would run underground to Queen Anne with stations at Denny Way, Harrison Street, and Seattle Center. From there trains would emerge and run at-grade through Interbay, with stations at Smith Cove, Interbay (likely at Dravus Street), and terminate at an elevated station at 15th/Market in Ballard. The train would cross the ship canal in a new drawbridge that would only open in off-peak hours, with ST working with the Coast Guard to limit openings as much as possible.

2041: Everett, Paine Field, and Issaquah

Everett: the Red and Blue lines would be extended from North Lynnwood to Everett via Paine Field, though **using SR 99 from Paine Field to Everett.**

Issaquah: showing that Kirkland lost its chance, a new line would be built from Bellevue to Issaquah (possibly via East Main Station), with new stations at Factoria, Eastgate, and Issaquah.

Sounder

Sound Transit would have an unspecified sum to negotiate new Sounder easements, with options ranging from expanded peak service to hourly all-day service. Platforms would also be extended to 8 cars, and **service would be extended to DuPont in 2036.**

Future Studies

Future studies would include Ballard-UW, Sand Point-Kirkland, Bellevue-Kirkland-Bothell, West Seattle-Burien, and Sumner-Orting.

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SLOG

NEWS

Sound Transit Unveils \$50 Billion Light Rail Package Including Lines to Ballard and West Seattle

by Heidi Groover · Mar 24, 2016 at 4:20 pm

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KEY

PROPOSED ST3 PROJECTS

- Link Light Rail
- Bus Rapid Transit
- Sounder Rail
- Proposed shoulder-running buses, speed and reliability improvements
- Environmental study
- Future investment study

CURRENT AND PLANNED SERVICE

- Link Light Rail
- Sounder Rail
- ST Express Bus

STATIONS

- New station
- New station / added parking / improved station
- Major rail transfer

NOTE: All times and station are approximate.



[Click here to see the full draft ST3 map.](#) SOUND TRANSIT

The Sound Transit Board today unveiled a visionary **\$50 billion light rail package** Puget

Sound voters will be asked to approve this fall. The package, while imperfect, would extend light rail in the region to 108 total miles, comparable (at least in length) to San Francisco's BART. Getting there will take decades.

The Sound Transit 3 (ST3) plan "delivers on the promise of a truly regional mass transit system for generations to come," King County Executive and Sound Transit Board Chair Dow Constantine said today. "It is an ambitious plan for an ambitious region."

The Sound Transit Board reviewed the plan at its meeting today, but detailed documents about the projects included in the plan won't be online until next week. **Here is the map** and **here is the project list** they handed out today.

Here's the overview:

- The ST3 draft is a 25-year plan to raise **\$27 billion in new taxes**. Combined with existing taxes and expected federal funding, the package would total \$50 billion.
- Sound Transit says this equals about **\$200 in new taxes per adult per year**. The funding comes from several sources: existing taxes currently going toward other Sound Transit projects and new sales taxes, Motor Vehicle Excise Taxes (MVET), and property taxes. Sound Transit also plans to sell bonds for some construction costs and use fares for ongoing operations costs. More specifics on all this **here**.
- Among the notable projects: New light rail lines in Seattle to **Ballard** and **West Seattle** as well as extensions north to **Everett**, east to downtown **Redmond** and **Issaquah**, and south to **Tacoma**.
- The projects Seattle is most excited about—Ballard and West Seattle, via two lines crisscrossing through a new downtown tunnel*—**won't come online for a very long time**. West Seattle would be scheduled to open in **2033** and Ballard would come online in **2038**. Suburban projects would begin coming online in 2028, starting with extensions from the Redmond Technology Center to downtown Redmond and from Kent to Federal Way. Others, including an extension to Tacoma Community College and Issaquah wouldn't come online until **2041**.

According to Sound Transit, this is due to limitations on how much money the agency can borrow at once, not due to construction issues. Several board members said they want to speed up these timelines, though it's unclear exactly how. "The timelines give me pause," Seattle Mayor Ed Murray, also a member of the Sound Transit board, said today. "But it's important we've made those commitments."

(Seattle Transit Blog has helpfully organized their explanation of ST3 **chronologically based on when projects will open**, if you want to see all of this another way.)

- Two important lines—one **between Ballard and the University District** and another between the West Seattle Junction and Burien—are included in the plan only as studies. They would not be built with ST3 funding.

- Sound Transit will finally build a long-awaited station in Seattle at **Graham Street** on the existing light rail line through South Seattle—but not until 2036. Another station considered for 130th Street in North Seattle only made it in the draft plan as a "provisional" project, meaning it won't be built unless there's leftover money after other projects are built.

When I asked Constantine about what the package does to address social justice—what does it offer diverse and low-income communities?—he pointed to the Graham Street station. He also argued that running light rail to the suburbs, particularly to community colleges, will help serve people currently being pushed out of Seattle.

- Smaller projects like **bus improvements, parking lots, and bike and pedestrian infrastructure** would begin opening between 2019 and 2024. Several new suburban parking lots are identified in the plan, but a spokesperson for Sound Transit said he didn't know how much money total was being dedicated to parking lots. We'll know more on Tuesday.

On the issue of parking, Seattle Mayor Ed Murray seemed to indicate support for charging for parking, as the Sierra Club has called for, so Sound Transit's parking lots pay for themselves. That's currently not the case for most of the lots in the plan, according to Sound Transit.

- **Kirkland** will get no light rail in this plan. That comes after Kirkland city officials supported bus service over rail, despite some transit advocates' belief that Kirkland should be connected to the larger rail system.

- Kirkland would be served by **Bus Rapid Transit** instead (as well as an environmental study for eventual rail). This plan would fund BRT along I-405 between Burien and Lynwood with stops in Kirkland as well as on SR 522 between 145th Street in Shoreline and Woodinville.

The board will take public comment over the next few months and plans to vote on a draft plan in June. **Send feedback to emailtheboard@soundtransit.org.**

*Just to nip this in the bud: It may seem clever to say, "Sure, another tunnel downtown! What could go wrong!" But that's some lazy bullshit. The state-run SR 99 tunnel project underneath downtown (Bertha) is an **unmitigated disaster**. But that has nothing to do with Sound Transit's plan to build a new bus and rail tunnel as part of ST3. This tunnel would be smaller and Sound Transit has a track record of successfully digging tunnels. More importantly: The alternative to a tunnel for these light rail routes would be to run rail at-grade (alongside traffic) through downtown. That would be a mistake. At-grade routes sink reliability and speed and therefore ridership. Don't conflate WSDOT's massive underground fuckup with this proposed Sound Transit project.

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Seattle P-I, 3/25/16

<http://www.seattlepi.com/local/transportation/article/Sound-Transit-releases-draft-25-year-transit-7044751.php>

Sound Transit's 25-year plan: \$50 billion lean into light rail

By DANIEL DEMAY, SEATTLEPI.COM STAFF

Updated 5:38 pm, Thursday, March 24, 2016

ST3 Draft Plan Map – PROPOSED



Updated: 3/24/16

Photo: Courtesy Sound Transit

This map, included in the draft Sound Transit 3 proposal, shows existing, planned and proposed transit lines around the region.

This map, included in the draft Sound Transit 3 proposal, shows existing, planned and proposed transit lines around the region.

Sound Transit's board Thursday presented a draft proposal for Sound Transit 3, a 25-year plan for mass transit in the region, including plans to connect light rail to Everett, DuPont, Issaquah, West Seattle and Ballard at a cost of \$50 billion.

If completed, the plan would leave the region with 108 miles of light rail, along with significant expansion of bus rapid transit and other bus service, as well as the addition of Sounder rail service from Lakewood to DuPont.

"(This plan) delivers on the promise of a truly regional mass transit plan for years to come," said Dow Constantine, Sound Transit board chair and King County executive, before a packed meeting room at Union Station. "This region has debated whether to have mass transit for more years than most people in this room have been alive. That debate is over. Light rail is here."

Voters will have to approve a final proposal this fall, and the initial draft puts \$23 billion of the total price on taxpayers via three tax hikes.

The proposal comes less than a week after the [University Link light rail extension opened for service](#) Saturday from downtown to Capitol Hill and the University of Washington.

Seattle Mayor Ed Murray, who is a member of the board, pointed out during comments that he was alive when Seattle rejected a mass transit system in 1969 and 1970. The opening of the University Link extension last Saturday was a part of saying "yes" to mass transit, Murray said.

"With this proposal, I hope that we will have finally changed and answered 'yes' for the entire region," he said. "We, as a region, can't afford not to have it."

The board chose a host of candidate projects to study last August, and wrapped up the study of those projects in December.

Sound Transit will gather public comment from March 29 to April 29 and will hold public meetings around the region to present the proposal and take input.

[See the proposal and submit your comments online here starting March 29](#) (a summary is available now).

To pay for the expansive project, the draft proposal would have voters approve a 0.5 percent sales tax hike, a 0.8 percent motor vehicle excise tax hike and a property tax increase of 25 cents per \$1,000 of assessed value.

Murray urged good publicity for the funding proposal.

"Whether we are in Seattle or outside Seattle, this costs, and the public needs to understand what they are buying," he said.

Taxpayers would continue paying existing Sound Move and Sound Transit 2 taxes, while federal funding, bonding and other revenue would make up the rest.

Aside from vast expansion of light rail, the proposal calls for a bus rapid transit system along the Interstate 405 corridor from Lynnwood to Burien, as well as between the 145th Street rail station and state Route 522, and other improvements or expansions of bus rapid transit around the region.

The huge expansion is the region's solution to an ongoing commuter crisis, Constantine said in a press conference after the meeting.

"I cannot emphasize enough that this is our one way out of this mobility crisis," he said. "We don't have an alternative to building this system."

He said the proposal had gone through significant "refinement" already, but would likely see some changes based on public comment and further discussion among board members and other stakeholders, including the potential to speed up the timeline for some portions of the plan.

The board will try to have a final draft of the plan ready in June, according to the proposal outline.

Daniel DeMay covers Seattle culture, business and transportation for seattlepi.com. He can be reached at 206-448-8362 or danieldemay@seattlepi.com. Follow him on Twitter: [@Daniel_DeMay](https://twitter.com/Daniel_DeMay).

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Seattle Times, 3/25/16

http://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/transportation/sound-transit-proposal-includes-2nd-downtown-seattle-tunnel/?utm_source=The+Seattle+Times&utm_campaign=09e7f129b6-Morning+Brief+3+24+2016&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_5beb38b61e-09e7f129b6-120294717

Long road ahead for new \$50 billion Sound Transit plan

Originally published March 24, 2016 at 2:52 pm Updated March 25, 2016 at 7:13 am



Commuters ride a light-rail train into Seattle. (Bettina Hansen / The Seattle Times)

The tax request would be nearly \$400 a year for an average household for the Sound Transit 3 package. Voters in King, Snohomish and Pierce counties could see the proposal on the November ballot.

By
[Mike Lindblom](#)
Seattle Times transportation reporter

This fall's Sound Transit 3 ballot measure would deliver light rail to Ballard as late as 22 years from now, while Everett would wait 25 years, under a draft the agency's governing board issued Thursday.

The costs, engineering challenges and construction work to reach the entire urbanized area are that big.

The plan, released at an agency board meeting Thursday, calls for \$50 billion in new projects and services, funded by \$27 billion in new tax collections through 2041, along with existing taxes, long-term debt and federal grants.

The tax rates

If approved by voters, Sound Transit 3 would boost an average household's taxes by \$400 per year. The increases:

- Property tax, \$25 per \$100,000 of assessed value, each year.
- Sales tax, 50 cents per \$100 purchase
- Motor-vehicle-excise tax, \$80 per \$10,000 of vehicle value, each year.

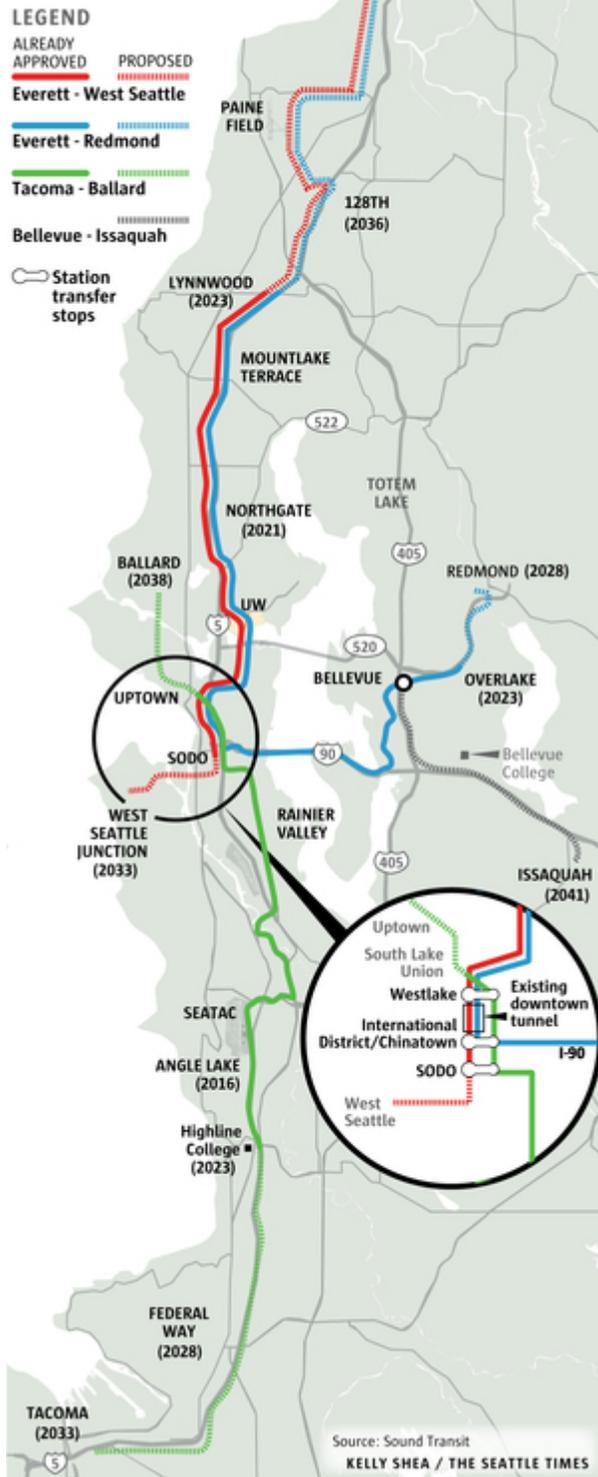
The agency now collects 90 cents sales tax per \$100 purchase, a car-rental tax of 80 cents per \$100 fee, and a \$30 vehicle tax per \$10,000 value. The \$30 rate expires in 2028 because of Tim Eyman's Initiative 776, so the total rate would drop in 2028 from \$110 to \$80 per \$10,000.

“The debate over light rail is over. We are building a system north, south, east and west,” declared CEO Peter Rogoff. The full network would provide 108 miles of light rail, comparable to Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) or the Washington, D.C., Metro system, he said.

The proposal amounts to a campaign kickoff. Several weeks of public forums, as well as [online outreach](#), will take place in Snohomish, King and Pierce counties before the board in June approves a final ballot package for November.

Sound Transit hired Rogoff away from the Federal Transit Administration, to replace the retired Joni Earl — and use his national perspective to get this massive plan off to a running start. Years ago, he signed the \$813 million grant to help deliver Seattle's new \$1.8 billion Capitol Hill Tunnel.

Sound Transit's light-rail buildout



If voters approve a likely November ballot measure, light rail would include 75 stations over a 108-mile network. Among the highlights of the proposal released Thursday: Downtown Redmond would see a Sound Transit 3 extension in 2028, connecting to Marymoor Park and Overlake. West Seattle Junction would get its connection to Sodo and downtown in 2033 — before the Uptown-Ballard line, envisioned for 2038. Bellevue College and Issaquah would get service in 2041. Service to Paine Field and Everett would happen by 2041, winding past Highway 99 instead of tracking along I-5.

A full system would include 70 to 75 Link light-rail stations, aiming to serve 500,000 daily passengers, said Ric Ilgenfritz, head of the agency's system planning division. Bus-rapid transit lines would include 19 or 20 stops. Sounder commuter rail, which now goes south to Lakewood, would stretch all the way to DuPont.

Chairman Dow Constantine called it “an ambitious program for an ambitious region.”

The centerpiece would be a second downtown Seattle transit tunnel, just east of the existing one. There would be one spine from West Seattle to Everett, and its twin from Tacoma to Ballard — crossing like a helix just north of Westlake Station.

The new taxes equate [to \\$392 per year for a typical household](#), the agency says. That covers not only light rail but bus-rapid transit, Sounder commuter trains, park-and-ride garages, operating subsidy and a long-term maintenance fund. The increases are in addition to the Sound Transit taxes that voters approved in 1996 and 2008, which average \$330 per household, and would continue being collected.

There would be no sunset date on the taxes, as long as they go to build and operate voter-approved service.

This week is an auspicious time to announce an [ambitious project plan](#). The University of Washington and Capitol Hill stations opened last weekend to huge and receptive crowds, and an Angle Lake park-and-ride station is scheduled to open in SeaTac in September. Link [light-rail ridership has grown by 20,000 or so passengers](#) this week, to a total 57,000 on Tuesday, leading Sound Transit to add some longer, three-car trains to serve demand between UW and the Seattle-Tacoma International Airport.

[The project map](#) and timeline offer many highlights and surprises, compared with earlier versions:

- Downtown Redmond and Federal Way would be the first to gain ST3 light rail, in 2028.
- West Seattle Junction would see its light-rail connection to Sodo and downtown in 2033 — before the Uptown-Ballard line, envisioned for 2038. Transit-board Chairman Dow Constantine, the King County executive, is a lifelong West Seattle resident.

From a technical standpoint, West Seattle comes first because of the severe complexity of building a tunnel and six stations from Westlake Station to Uptown (Lower Queen Anne), a part of the Ballard line, transit staff say. Challenges include a second Westlake station two stories lower than the current one. “It’s the most technically difficult part of the entire program,” Rogoff said, waiting to catch transit to his new residence in Uptown.

- Bellevue College and Issaquah are proposed for Link service in 2041. The agency set aside for environmental study the controversial Cross-Kirkland Corridor, a former freight-rail route that’s been converted to a walk-bike trail.
- Service to both Paine Field and Everett Station would start by 2041, winding past Highway 99 instead of tracking along Interstate 5.

But trains would arrive by 2036 at 128th Street Southwest, a crucial crossroads in South Everett close to Swift bus-rapid transit, along with the Mariner and McCollum Park park-and-rides.

- A bus-rapid transit crescent, mainly on freeways, would wrap from Burien to Renton, Bellevue and Bothell before branching to both Lynnwood and Seattle’s Lake City. Its usefulness hinges on whether the state effectively provides free-flowing carpool lanes, including the politically embattled Interstate 405 express toll lanes.
- Many interim and stopgap measures are proposed from 2019-2024, including “bus on shoulder routes” for I-5, I-405, Highway 518 near the airport and Southcenter, and Highway 167 in the Green River Valley. The plan also would invest in Highway 522 bus lines through Bothell, Kenmore and Lake Forest Park, and to improve the RapidRide C and D lines serving West Seattle and Ballard.
- New or expanded park-and-ride sites are proposed at four stations between Highline College and Tacoma; and for bus or rail stations at Boeing Access Road, South Renton, Issaquah, southeast Redmond (near Sammamish), Totem Lake, Mariner and downtown Everett.

No park-and-ride areas would be added within Seattle, though the previously approved Northeast 145th Street Station in 2023 will include a car garage.

The full plan will be posted [at soundtransit3.org](http://soundtransit3.org) by Tuesday, and portions are being published in the meantime, Rogoff said.

The tax request prompted state Sen. Reuven Carlyle, D-Seattle, to say he is neutral for now, and to call for sober reflection among leaders and voters.

“It consumes the oxygen in the room, regarding the larger questions of what we want to invest in,” he said. In particular, education has historically depended on property taxes, and ST3 adds competition for those, he said.

And if lawmakers choose later to boost property taxes — to meet the McCleary court order for adequate school funding — there might not be enough tax capacity within legal limits to fund parks or local services, said Carlyle, whose district includes Ballard.

“My district is rabidly pro-transit, pro-transportation. But every school in my district is packed to the gills, and using portables,” he said.

Snohomish County’s three Sound Transit board members and Everett Mayor Ray Stephanson praised the plan overall, but criticized the 25-year wait to reach downtown Everett. In a statement, they said they would work toward “an acceptable time frame” to serve the expected 200,000-plus new residents who are expected to arrive before then.

The \$27 billion in new taxes almost doubles the highly publicized \$15 billion figure that met temporary resistance in Olympia, until lawmakers in July 2015 passed a bill giving Sound Transit the tax authority it wanted for ST3.

Sound Transit finance director Brian McCartan said that number was just “shorthand” for tax rates that would collect \$15 billion in the first 15 years.

Campaign organizations have yet to form, though advocacy groups and nonprofits such as the [Transportation Choices Coalition](#) have been rooting for expansion plans. Detractors at the [Coalition for Effective Transportation Alternatives](#), including express bus and smart-car boosters, have stepped up their critiques on social media.

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News Tribune (Tacoma), 3/25/16

<http://www.thenewstribune.com/news/local/traffic/article68171787.html>

March 24, 2016 6:50 PM

Several Pierce County projects in \$50 billion Sound Transit plan

Sound Transit unveils 25-year expansion plan

Proposal would connect Tacoma to Sea-Tac Airport via light rail by 2033

Voters would have to approve tax hikes in November



Light rail would connect Tacoma to Sea-Tac Airport and points north by 2033 under a a 25-year spending plan Sound Transit unveiled Thursday. PETER HALEY Staff file, 2013

By Adam Lynn

Light rail would connect Tacoma to Sea-Tac Airport and points north by 2033 under a 25-year spending plan Sound Transit unveiled Thursday.

The proposal, which likely will be tweaked before being put before voters in November, calls for the light-rail line to be extended to Tacoma Community College by 2041.

Other Pierce County projects in the proposal, called Sound Transit 3, include:

- Extending the Sounder commuter train line to DuPont with an additional station in Tillicum.
- Improving bus service along Pacific Avenue in Tacoma.
- Studying the feasibility of extending commuter rail to Orting.

Billions of dollars in the project would be spread from Everett to Issaquah and Bellevue to Ballard under the proposal, which King County Executive Dow Constantine, who chairs the Sound Transit board, called “an ambitious plan for an ambitious region.”

Details of each project, including how much it would cost and the timeline for building it, were not available Thursday. Sound Transit said that information should be posted on its website by Tuesday.

If approved by voters and constructed, the light-rail network would connect 17 cities with 108 miles of track and more than 70 stations.

“In this proposal, we go big,” Constantine said. “We go big because the need is big.”

The price tag also is big: An estimated \$50 billion.

Sound Transit would raise the money by raising the sales tax in Pierce, King and Snohomish counties by 0.5 percent, increasing the motor vehicle excise tax by 0.8 percent and adding 25 cents per \$1,000 valuation to local property taxes.

The regional transit agency estimates the tax hikes would raise about \$27 million. The remaining money would come from “other revenues,” most likely federal grants earmarked for light rail.

Planners said the proposal would cost the average adult about \$200 per year.

Sound Transit now will embark on an outreach campaign to gather public input before finalizing the proposal in June.

Pierce County elected officials who sit on the Sound Transit board called the proposal a good one.

County Executive Pat McCarthy, who was instrumental in beginning the planning process for Sound Transit 3, gave the draft plan her endorsement Thursday.

“From Pierce County’s perspective, at least from this Pierce County resident’s perspective, I’m thrilled that we’re finally going to get light rail through to Pierce County,” McCarthy said.

While Tacoma has a Link light-rail line now, it serves only the Dome District and downtown.

Tacoma Mayor Marilyn Strickland also gave her support to the proposal.

Strickland, vice chairwoman of the Sound Transit board, said it is not a perfect plan but called it “damn good.” Connecting Tacoma to Seattle-Tacoma International Airport and improving bus service along Pacific Avenue “are huge things,” she said.

“I didn’t get everything I wanted. I didn’t get it as soon as I wanted,” Strickland said. “But this will be a true regional system.”

King County Councilman Dave Upthegrove of Des Moines said Sound Transit 3 includes projects across all three of Puget Sounds major counties and would promote smart land-use policies and affordable housing by encouraging developers to build homes and shopping centers near rail lines.

“This proposal fairly shares the benefits through the region,” Upthegrove said.

Some horsetrading might be in the offing in the coming months as the board works to hone the final ballot measure.

Seattle Mayor Ed Murray and Snohomish County Executive Dave Somers expressed concerns that light rail wasn’t reaching some areas of their jurisdictions as quickly as they would like.

King County Councilman Peter von Reichbauer of Federal Way said the transit agency must be clear and concise about what it intends to build and when.

“Some people in my district are worried about a bait-and-switch,” von Reichbauer said. “They want to know, not what they’re promised, but what they’re getting.”

Adam Lynn: [253-597-8644](tel:253-597-8644), [@TNTAdam](https://www.instagram.com/TNTAdam)

Pierce County projects

- Connect Tacoma to Seattle-Tacoma International Airport and points north via light rail by 2033.
- Extend Tacoma’s light-rail line to Tacoma Community College by 2041.
- Extend the Sounder commuter line to DuPont, with a new station in Tillicum, by 2036.
- Improve bus lines in East Pierce County and along Pacific Avenue in Tacoma between 2019-2024.
- Provide money to study feasibility of extending Sounder commuter rail to Orting.

Source: Sound Transit

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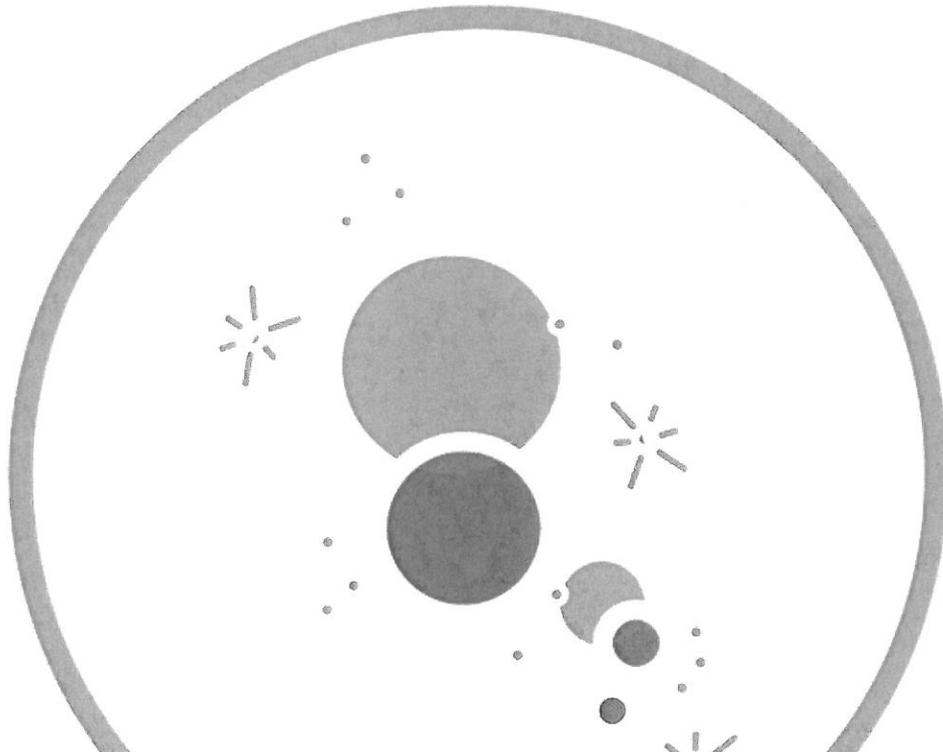
MORNING FIZZ

Sound Transit Proposes \$50 Billion Regional Light Rail Expansion

Seattle to Everett to Issaquah to Tacoma transit proposal includes new lines in Seattle and \$1 billion in new parking infrastructure.

BY [JOSH FEIT](#) • 3/25/2016 AT 9:31AM

299



1. Sound Transit rolled out a \$50 billion proposal yesterday to expand light rail beyond the current ST1 line that voters approved in 1996 and the ST 2 line voters approved in 2008.

The ST1 line opened in phases, first in 2009 from SeaTac to downtown and then last weekend from downtown to Capitol Hill and the Husky Stadium. (The \$3.9 billion 1996 ballot actually authorized an ST1 project to go as far as Northgate, but cost overruns forced the agency to scale that back.) The \$17.8 billion ST2 line will extend the line north to the U. District proper at Brooklyn & 45th, to Roosevelt at 65th & 12th Ave NE, and to Northgate by 2021—and from Northgate to Lynnwood by 2023. ST2 will also extend the line south from SeaTac to Highline Community College by 2020 and to Federal Way by 2023, and east from Westlake to Rainier Ave. at I-90 over the water to Bellevue by 2020—and to the Overlake Transit Center near Microsoft by 2021.

KEY

PROPOSED ST3 PROJECTS

- Link Light Rail
- Bus Rapid Transit
- Sounder Rail
- Proposed shoulder-running buses; speed and reliability improvements
- Environmental study
- Future investment study

CURRENT AND PLANNED SERVICE

- Link Light Rail
- Sounder Rail
- ST Express Bus

STATIONS

- New station
- New station / added parking
- Improved station
- Major rail transfer

NOTE: All icons and station names are representative.



Seattle Met



“

The Sound Transit board stressed yesterday that there are some “early wins” to address immediate transportation needs—and presumably to get voters excited about something that’s happening sooner than your grandson’s bris.

”

The new proposal—with super regional ambitions—would expand the line to Everett to the north, Tacoma to the south, and Issaquah and downtown Redmond to the east, while also adding new lines (including a second downtown tunnel) within Seattle: with one line going from Ballard through South Lake Union to downtown and another line going from West Seattle to downtown. The West Seattle line would open in 2033 (that’s 100 years after King Kong was already upending subway trains in New York City) and the Ballard line would open in 2038.

The Sound Transit board stressed yesterday that there are some “early wins” to address immediate transportation needs (and presumably to get voters excited about something that’s happening sooner than your grandson’s bris) such as improvements on the Rapid Ride lines.

Like with any massive infrastructure project, questions and criticisms emerged



percent sales tax and an .8 percent motor vehicle excise tax (on top of the current sales and MVET taxes that are paying for ST1 and ST2) along with a new .25 cents property tax.

ST says the package will cost \$200 per adult annually, though that estimate does not cover the ST1 and ST2 taxes that will eventually be shifted over to help covers ST3 once they are done paying off their respective projects.

My criticism has to do with the heavy parking expenditures—\$1 billion worth on things like park and rides. When ST leaders such as King County executive Dow Constantine and mayor Ed Murray wax eloquent about regionalism the implication is that the project is laying the foundation for a green megalopolis, not for enhancing car oriented sprawl by building 11 parking projects in the Southern portion for roughly 8,400 new stalls, four projects in the East corridor for roughly 4,600 new stalls, six projects in the Northern portion for 3,513 new stalls, and two projects in the central corridor for about 1,300 new stalls.

At least ST board member Mayor Murray pressed ST staff on this issue during yesterday's presentation by asking staff if the parking would be paid parking. **"There's a considerable amount of parking in this project, is that going to be paid?"** he asked—which would be a departure from the status quo. Staff noted that that the paid parking component on the revenue side was "minimal." They bashfully added that private parking facilities adjacent to some light rail stations "have no trouble getting people to pay..."

At the press conference after the presentation, I asked new ST executive director Peter Rogoff if the policy would change to paid parking. He said: "There is an assumption of some parking revenue, but not a robust amount. The board has yet to take a firm position on paid parking all across the system." He noted that there are some pilot paid parking projects and added: "We would love to use our Orca system as a way not only to get people to pay seamlessly for parking if the board approves it, but it has the added benefit of being able to provide Orca Lift benefits for low-income individuals so they



Sound Transit board member and Bellevue King County council member Claudia Balducci said paid parking “is a hard discussion to have because people are not used to paying for parking,” but added that “it should be something we put on the table and talk about.”

Meanwhile, new Seattle city council member and new ST board member Rob Johnson floated the idea of scaling back the ST3 park and ride expenditures by partnering with existing facilities.

2. On a completely separate note (it's Friday): Go see “Rodney King,” the jaw-dropping, one-man play at the Langston Hughes Performing Arts Institute. It's playing tonight at 7:30 p.m. and Saturday at 2 p.m. and 8 p.m. Langston Hughes is located at 104 Seventeenth Avenue South.

The one man is veteran Hollywood and TV actor Roger Guenveur Smith, and his free verse spliced monologue is a human cacophony of tragic history. It is not to be missed.

[Buy \\$25 tickets online](#) or call 1-877-784-4849.

Filed under

[Morning Fizz](#), [Sound Transit](#), [Politics](#)

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Tacoma News Tribune, 3/28/16

<http://www.thenewstribune.com/news/local/news-columns-blogs/matt-driscoll/article68682777.html>

March 28, 2016 2:26 AM

Matt Driscoll: Inching ever closer to Tacoma's transit future

Preliminary details of Sound Transit's November ballot measure unveiled last week

It came five days after the agency opened its latest rail stations in Seattle

It's long past time for Tacoma to experience mass transit excitement



Commuters catch Sound Transit's light rail trains in the Capitol Hill station in Seattle on March 28. Peter Haley
phaley@thenewstribune.com

By Matt Driscoll

mdriscoll@thenewstribune.com

There was confetti. The city's mayor was there, smiling for the cameras.

Residents who'd been waiting for this moment for years arrived by the thousands, eager to take a first trip on the light rail line that promises to forever alter the way many commute.

This was the scene March 19 in Seattle, as Sound Transit cut the ribbon on two new light rail stations, connecting Capitol Hill and the University of Washington campus.

In a city desperate for new transit options, the grand opening was a momentous occasion.

And Tacoma should take note.

Eager to finally move closer to our own transit future — beyond express buses, limited Sounder service and a Link light rail that serves only downtown and the Dome District (slated to reach

Hilltop in the next five years) — we should file away the excitement in our collective memory bank.

We should remember exactly how the unveiling of the project looked and felt.

We're due for our own light rail triumphs, and last week we inched incrementally closer to celebrating some.

Just five days after Sound Transit opened its latest rail stations in Seattle, the agency's board [unveiled the preliminary details of this fall's Sound Transit 3 ballot measure.](#)

Touted as “an ambitious program for an ambitious region,” by King County Executive and Sound Transit Board Chairman Dow Consantine, the \$50 billion (*gulp!*), 25-year spending package aims to deliver substantial projects across the region — including connecting a light rail network that would feed 17 cities with 108 miles of track.

For Tacoma, the plan means the long-awaited connection between here and Sea-Tac Airport by 2033, the extension of light rail to Tacoma Community College by 2041 and a bolstering of bus service along Pacific Avenue.

For Tacoma, the plan means the long-awaited connection between here and Sea-Tac Airport by 2033, the extension of light rail to Tacoma Community College by 2041 and a bolstering of bus service along Pacific Avenue.

Hopefully, by the time the dust settles, it'll mean significantly increased Sounder service.

For the South Sound region, it likely means the extension of the Sounder to DuPont and a feasibility study of taking commuter rail all the way to Orting.

For all of us, it means a chance to finally realize the kind of functional mass transit system we deserve.

It's worth noting that the details of the plan Sound Transit will take to voters in November are preliminary; specifics won't be solidified until June, and the agency now embarks on an outreach campaign to gather public input.

Meanwhile, behind closed doors, the elected officials on Sound Transit's board will ramp up the maneuvering and horse trading — all trying to deliver the biggest and quickest bang for their constituents' would-be tax bucks. That's what politicians do.

But even with tweaks to come, Tacoma Mayor Marilyn Strickland — a vice president on the Sound Transit board — tells me, “I don't expect much to change,” for Pierce County.

Strickland says we've already waited long enough, and it's hard not to agree. Plus, the fall ballot measure will need at least reasonable support from our area to succeed, so Pierce County's needs can't be completely ignored.

Of course, the preliminary sketch has garnered some immediate critics, which is to be expected with a plan of this magnitude..

In Tacoma and every other Sound Transit jurisdiction, people want their projects delivered faster. Tough to blame them. Waiting another 17 years to see light rail connect Tacoma to the north is a hard pill to swallow, and waiting 25 years to see a light rail reach TCC sounds almost comical.

And then there's the money.

The \$50 billion worth of new projects and services, to be paid for — in part — by \$27 billion in new sales, vehicle excise and property taxes over the next 25 years, does have the ability to consume the oxygen in the room, as state Sen. Reuven Carlyle, D-Seattle, [aptly described it](#).

Still, at this point, what is the alternative? Building light rail isn't getting any cheaper or less complicated, and traffic isn't getting any better.

We owe it to our region to deliver these projects as soon as possible. What is not acceptable is for us to get overly frustrated ... and to do nothing. That's a sure-fire way to keep sitting in traffic and stalling the economy. Doing nothing is not the answer. Tacoma City Councilman Ryan Mello

“We owe it to our region to deliver these projects as soon as possible,” Tacoma City Councilman Ryan Mello says. “What is not acceptable is for us to get overly frustrated ... and to do nothing. That's a sure-fire way to keep sitting in traffic and stalling the economy. Doing nothing is not the answer.”

He's right. We're stuck in gridlock because generations of the past failed us. We simply can't make the same mistake.

But let's not focus on the negatives. Instead, let's look toward the future, and the possibilities.

“This is pretty cool,” 39-year-old Mike Fields [told the Seattle Times on the day the Emerald City's newest mass transit option opened for business](#). He's hoping the new light rail will significantly shorten his wife's long commute.

It's time for Tacoma to know how that feels.

Or, as Strickland puts it: “When you look at great regions around the world, they have a few things in common. Having reliable, efficient transportation is so key to that.

“It's time for us to catch up with the rest of the world and have something that's remarkable.”

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Read more here: <http://www.thenewstribune.com/news/local/news-columns-blogs/matt-driscoll/article68682777.html#storylink=cpy>

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Seattle Times, 3/29/16

<http://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/eastside/king-county-executive-says-transit-not-freeways-is-growing-regions-only-option/>

King County executive says transit, not freeways, is growing region's only option

Originally published March 28, 2016 at 8:26 pm

Dow Constantine talks about the expansion of light rail and transit's importance to the region's growth and economy in his 2016 state-of-the-county address at Redmond City Hall.

By [Lynn Thompson](#)

Seattle Times staff reporter

Declaring the age of freeway building over, King County Executive Dow Constantine used his annual State of the County speech Monday to argue the case for a [\\$50 billion Sound Transit 3](#) proposal that will go to voters in November.

With the three-county region's population expected to grow by 1 million over the next 25 years, Constantine said transit is the only solution that can move a lot of people — 16,000 an hour, or the equivalent of 14 new lanes on Interstate 5.

“Even if we had the money, we lack the physical space to build enough lanes to build our way out of this crisis. There is simply no other option (than transit) that can add the kind of capacity we need to our transportation system,” Constantine told county officials, employees and regional elected officials at Redmond City Hall.

The executive, who chairs the Sound Transit Board, also called on the Legislature to give local jurisdictions greater taxing authority than the 1 percent property-tax increase allowed annually under state law.

He said governments across the state, from fire districts to cities to counties, cannot keep up as inflation and growth add to the costs of doing business.

He noted that when he took office, the county's operating costs were rising about 5 to 6 percent a year. Those increases have slowed to 3.3 percent, but with the county allowed to raise taxes only 1 percent, he said, it is facing a \$50 million deficit in 2017-2018.

“This is unsustainable,” Constantine said.

His speech got some of the biggest applause of the afternoon when he told the Legislature, “Do. Your. Job. ... Lift the arbitrary 1 percent cap that is eroding the ability of local governments throughout the state to meet the most basic needs of the people.”

The Sound Transit 3 plan calls for extending the central light-rail spine to downtown Redmond and Federal Way in 2028, West Seattle by 2033, Ballard by 2038 and Everett by 2041. Bellevue College and Issaquah would get a line in 2041, under the proposed plan announced by the Sound Transit Board last week.

A final ballot proposal is expected to be approved in June.

Regional officials on hand for the speech generally praised the preliminary plans.

“As we expand light rail, we can also extend the reach of bus service so transit is really accessible to people on the Eastside who don’t have that option today,” said Metropolitan King County Councilmember Claudia Balducci, the former mayor of Bellevue.

Council Chair Joe McDermott said the only pushback he’s heard on the ST3 proposal is from officials and residents concerned about the proposed timeline. Snohomish County representatives sent a letter to Sound Transit last week asking the board to consider a faster delivery date for the Everett service.

McDermott said he’s heard the same from his constituents in West Seattle.

“What I’m hearing is, ‘We want it sooner and we want more.’ There’s an obligation to build the spine out to Everett, but there’s also a pent-up demand to serve the city. We need to do it all,” McDermott said.

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[NEWS01](#)

Published: Wednesday, March 30, 2016, 12:01 a.m.

In letter, county legislators thump Sound Transit's timeline



Oran Virlyincy via Flickr / Creative Commons

A Sound Transit Link light-rail train in Seattle's Columbia City neighborhood

By [Chris Winters](#)
Herald Writer

[@Chris_At_Herald](#)

EVERETT — In the midst of approving a budget, Legislators from Snohomish County took the time Tuesday to send a message to [Sound Transit](#).

The message: You got it wrong.

[Last week, Sound Transit released its plans](#) for the Lynnwood-to-Everett “[Sound Transit 3](#)” light rail route. The route makes a stop at Paine Field, the center of one of the region's top employment centers.

But the planned extension into Everett wouldn't be completed until 2041, well after side lines to Seattle's residential neighborhoods of Ballard and West Seattle are built out. The letter said the time frame for serving Snohomish County's major employer is simply unacceptable.

“Waiting until 2041 also delays the stated core priority of completing the light-rail spine in favor of adding segments that are not part of that spine — Ballard and West Seattle — and completing them before getting to Everett,” the letter reads.

It concludes: “We strongly urge you to do what's best for the entire region and reprioritize the projects in ST3 to bring light rail to Everett and its manufacturing center substantially earlier than 2041.”

Sen. Steve Hobbs, a Lake Stevens Democrat, wrote the letter. As of Tuesday, he'd found at least 10 lawmakers from both parties in the county to co-sign it. The plan is to deliver it to Sound Transit later in the week.

It's about fairness, Hobbs said, and the fact that the manufacturing center surrounding the Boeing plant in south Everett is a regional amenity.

“We would like our share and a little bit of attention to the fact that we do have Boeing, and Boeing doesn't only serve workers in Snohomish County,” Hobbs said.

Boeing's planned 777X wing-manufacturing plant, and the expected growth in employment, will only increase the area's impact.

“If it stays stable, you still have all these people driving cars up and down I-5,” Hobbs said.

Sound Transit also released more details of the planned projects Tuesday. The 15.4-mile Lynnwood-to-Everett link is expected to cost up to \$4.3 billion and include six stops, including the manufacturing center on Paine Field, a stop at Evergreen Way and Highway 526, and the northern terminus at Everett Station. A trip from Everett Station to the Lynnwood Transit Center is estimated to take 31 minutes.

Two additional stops, at Highway 99 and Airport Road, and along northern Evergreen Way south of 41st Street, are not included in the estimated project cost or travel times.

Snohomish County leaders are pleased the manufacturing center is included, but they still don't think the timing of the project is fair.

They frequently cite the Regional Transit Authority, Sound Transit's earlier incarnation, which in 1994 approved a motion that explicitly stated its plans for Everett: “In order to complete the planned connections to the four major centers, extension of light rail service to Everett shall be a first priority in Phase II.”

That first vote in 1995 failed. Sound Transit's phased plan was the next iteration, and Everett got the Sounder commuter rail instead.

Sen. Kirk Pearson, a Monroe Republican, said that the early promise is reason enough to circle the wagons.

Pearson also signed the letter, even though he voted against the transportation bill in 2015 that gave Sound Transit the authority to raise taxes for ST3.

“They made it seem like they would get this at a much earlier date,” Pearson said. “Coming in 2041 — good Lord, I won't be around then and I don't think anybody here will. I don't think that's realistic.”

“We have to stand up for our county and our economic corridor, because we do matter here,” Pearson said.

The structuring of Sound Transit's projects is based on the five subareas that comprise the agency's taxing district.

Representatives of each subarea on Sound Transit's board of directors bring to the table those projects they deem will have the highest public benefit, said Geoff Patrick, an agency spokesman. That is intended to create "subarea equity" throughout Sound Transit's service area.

"What's of highest benefit is a policy question" that the board sets, he said.

The second phase of Sound Transit's expansion, which voters approved in 2008, also recognized the desire and intent to eventually reach Everett, he said.

"In the ST2 ballot measure virtually all the resources in North King County were allocated toward the northward extension of light rail to the county line and into Lynnwood," Patrick said.

But Paul Roberts, an Everett City Councilman and a vice-chairman of Sound Transit's board, said that the law doesn't require funding on the basis of subarea equity, and that the board's primary goal is to complete the spine of the regional network.

"We're funding on the basis of a Balkanized system," Roberts said.

Roberts emphasized that the ST3 plan is just a draft, and that the open comment period will be critical in order for the board to weigh the public's opinion in creating the final ballot measure.

The comment period opened Tuesday and runs until April 29.

The three Snohomish County representatives on the 18-member Sound Transit board also emphasize the need to work with the other regions in crafting a proposal acceptable to everyone, even as they are unanimous in wanting to accelerate the schedule to bring light rail to Everett.

Snohomish County Executive Dave Somers, who also sits on the board, said getting a better deal will be critical to getting voter support.

"It's got to be sooner or I think it's just not going to fly," Somers said.

Roberts noted that Snohomish County voters, who make up 14 percent of the total in the Sound Transit district, have generally supported past ballot measures.

Everett Mayor Ray Stephanson, who does not sit on the board, also sides with Roberts, Somers and Edmonds Mayor Dave Earling in seeking a better deal.

"We have played fair. We have tried to look at the big picture. We really need our peers across the region to have the same attitude," Stephanson said.

Chris Winters: 425-374-4165; cwinters@heraldnet.com. Twitter: [@Chris_At_Herald](https://twitter.com/Chris_At_Herald).

This story has been modified to correct two facts. Dave Somers is Snohomish County executive. And the expected time for a passenger to travel from Everett to Lynnwood on light rail is 31 minutes.

Public comment on Sound Transit 3

Sound Transit is seeking public input on the third phase of its plans, which include a light rail link to Everett by 2041. The comment period runs until April 29, and seven public meetings will be held around the region before that time period. The Everett meeting will be held from 5:30-7:30 p.m. April 25 at Everett Station. The last meeting will be held at 11:30 a.m. April 28 at Union Station in Seattle, immediately before the next Sound

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Seattle Met/Publicola, 3/31/16

<http://www.seattlemet.com/articles/2016/3/31/parking-component-of-sound-transit-proposal-smaller-than-originally-budgeted>

Sound Transit Plan Reins in Parking Costs

\$1 billion earmark for parking spaces cut in half.

By

[Josh Feit](#)

3/31/2016 at 5:17pm



There's a lot to be antsy about in the proposed \$50 billion Sound Transit Three project. For example, why is it scheduled further out than your grandson's bris?

But as opposed to initial signs, it turns out excessive spending on parking is not one of the red flags on the list.

Like everybody else in town, I'm thrilled about the recent light rail expansion. You know transit is working when it doesn't only help you get to and from work, but you also find yourself using it on the fly socially; try taking light rail to the International District and catching the water taxi at Pier 50 to Alki Beach for Saturday lunch at Marination Station. (Yum, sexy tofu tacos.)

But also like a lot of transit advocates in town, I'm concerned about the slave-to-the-spine mentality of the new \$50 billion ST3 proposal. It feels like King County Executive Dow Constantine and the ST board are chasing votes (with a must-please-everybody approach) more than they're taking notes—on how you actually build an efficient transit system.

Pro-tip: building from the core out, rather than creating some hybrid NYC subway/New Jersey Transit line all in one, is [the preferred planning option](#). I've been fretting about the dangers of sprawl oriented development ([an unintended consequence](#) of suburban transit lines) [since 2007](#).

However, one of the indicators of transit oriented sprawl is the rate at which transit agencies build parking stalls and garages along with their transit. And in the runup to the ST3 proposal debut, I was [hung up the \\$1 billion on roughly 18,000 new parking stalls](#). But now that the proposal is on the table, I've crunched the numbers and the money earmarked for parking facilities comes out to only \$470 million for 8,440 stalls. Out of the nearly \$20 billion in total capital costs, we're looking at just 2.3 percent of the budget. (By the way, the \$50 billion number—versus \$20 billion—reflects ongoing operations and maintenance costs, inflation, and debt service.)

Footnote: There were a few projects—the North Sounder parking program, the Rapid Ride C and D capital improvement project, and the South Sounder capital improvements project—that identified parking components, but notably didn't include a price tag. For example, [the planning document on "Early Deliverables"](#) notes: "This project would provide an early deliverable within the ST3 System Plan by providing additional parking at Mukilteo and Edmonds Sounder Stations," without ever flagging the actual parking costs.

Having said that, the Jolt's on me.

It's unlikely the unknown dollar figures for parking projects—smaller elements from a batch of larger projects that total about \$500 million overall—would ultimately jack the \$470 million identified for parking projects anywhere close to \$1 billion.

What's more: There's about \$350 million in bike and pedestrian access projects in the proposal. For example, there's \$4.7 million in non-motorized access for the new Graham Street station in Southeast Seattle; \$350 million versus \$470 million is not a freaky imbalance in favor of parking.

And meanwhile, some Sound Transit Board members—[see this morning's editorial](#)—are [thinking about changing ST policy and charging for parking](#). Perhaps that new revenue could be used to balance out the non-motorized access/parking equation even more.

Opinion

Approving and Improving Sound Transit Three

Ten recommendations for making ST3 even better.

By

[Rob Johnson and Joe McDermott](#)

3/31/2016 at 8:35am

The new Capitol Hill and Husky Stadium light rail extensions and the recent Metro restructures represent huge, exciting transit milestones for our city. ULink has seen incredible ridership in its operation just shy of two weeks, and today, many commuters in Seattle are getting on new feeder bus routes that didn't exist last week. But as the confetti is swept up, the oversized ribbon cutting



scissors are put away, and folks get used to their new commutes, we are setting our sights on our next investment that will go before voters in November.

We are both huge fans of the draft Sound Transit 3 plan—for many reasons. Overall, this plan brings an incredible system expansion of not only

light rail, but also rapid bus transit and Sounder commuter trains—a region-wide expansion addressing needs as our urban population and business centers continue to grow as well. One of the most important projects in the ST3 plan is a second downtown tunnel for light rail; high ridership on the current lines and projected ridership on future lines to West Seattle and Ballard necessitate this new tunnel capacity which could double our current capacity and ultimately carry several hundred thousand people per day. If passed and built, our system will achieve the size of BART in the Bay Area and Metro in DC. The building of light rail and a new tunnel will take time, and that is why this plan includes substantial near-term mobility improvements providing Seattleites relief in their commutes in the near future while we plan and construct the next phases of light rail.

This draft not only provides a vision for a great public transportation system, but a system that will provide more macro-level benefits for generations to come. For example, ST3 will generate thousands of good family-wage, union jobs aligning with our region's track record of supporting and building out the middle class. Second, with the crisis of climate change staring us in the face

and transportation [identified as the main source](#) of our state's greenhouse gas emission, building out more public transit represents one of the most effective things we can do to combat climate change. And third, the extension of our light rail directly correlates to the level of access to opportunities we can provide; transportation is one of the highest household costs and [studies](#) continue to identify access to public transportation as one of the most successful tools to help lift people onto the next rung of the economic ladder.

With all the incredible benefits ST3 will provide, there are still certain areas that still need our attention. For example, we need to look at funds earmarked for parking and increase funding for bike, pedestrian, and transit access. Knowing that some parking will be necessary, let's work with existing private parking garages to prevent us from building duplicative parking infrastructure, and to free funding we can direct towards improving access. Let's charge for parking and use those funds to help increase bus, bike, and transit connections to stations. And let's integrate paid parking with ORCA so that we can ensure our park and rides are being used by our riders and make sure that ORCA LIFT users aren't charged twice for parking and riding.

Also, we believe there are ways to speed up project delivery in order to meet current and future transit and housing demands. We must work with local governments to change land use near stations to increase density and opportunities for affordable housing and small businesses. We also need to make sure that the surplus property is offered to local non-profit housing developers to build out our regions affordable housing stock (retroactively applying that framework to ST2 projects too!). We need to engage on priority hire issues to ensure that people living in the poorest census tracts in our region are connected to family wage construction jobs. We need to make the 130th Street and Graham Street stations permanent in the first 10 years of the plan, not provisionally at the end of the line. And finally, we need to make the UW-Ballard and West Seattle-Burien light rail studies as close to shovel ready as we can, so that if funds become available we can start construction on those before ST4.

As we continue to refine the plan over the next three months, community engagement is key. Sound Transit staff and the Board welcome feedback from folks via public meetings and the current online survey at www.soundtransit3.org. But we also want to make sure that we are staffing up non-profit community based organizations to assist in the outreach necessary to hear the feedback of non-English speaking communities and communities of color. Many of these individuals may not have the access to our existing public comment opportunities, but their voices need to be heard to ensure this investment reflects the needs of all users.

Sound Transit is here and growing. Let's make sure we do this right.

Sound Transit board member Rob Johnson is a fifth-generation Seattleite. He is a Seattle city council member from Northeast Seattle's District Four and chairs the city council's land use committee.

Sound Transit board member Joe McDermott is chair of the King County council. He represents District Eight on the King County council which includes West Seattle, Burien, and North Highline.

<http://www.seattletimes.com/opinion/editorials/expanding-rail-bus-transit-is-tantalizing-but-questions-must-be-clearly-answered-first/>

Expanding rail, bus transit is tantalizing, but questions must be clearly answered first

Originally published April 2, 2016 at 4:01 pm Updated
April 4, 2016 at 9:10 am
Seattle Times illustration



Voters grappling with Sound Transit's request for \$50 billion need clear answers from public officials, not cheerleading.

By
[Seattle Times editorial board](#)
The Seattle Times

IN his opening pitch for Sound Transit's expansion, the agency's board chairman offered a tantalizing sound bite.

Light-rail trains can carry as many people as 14 additional lanes on Interstate 5 through Seattle, [King County Executive Dow Constantine said during a speech last week](#).

The implication is that voters in King, Pierce and Snohomish counties have no choice but to approve the [\\$50 billion](#), 25-year [program of transit construction](#) on November's ballot.

But that's not quite right, on several counts.

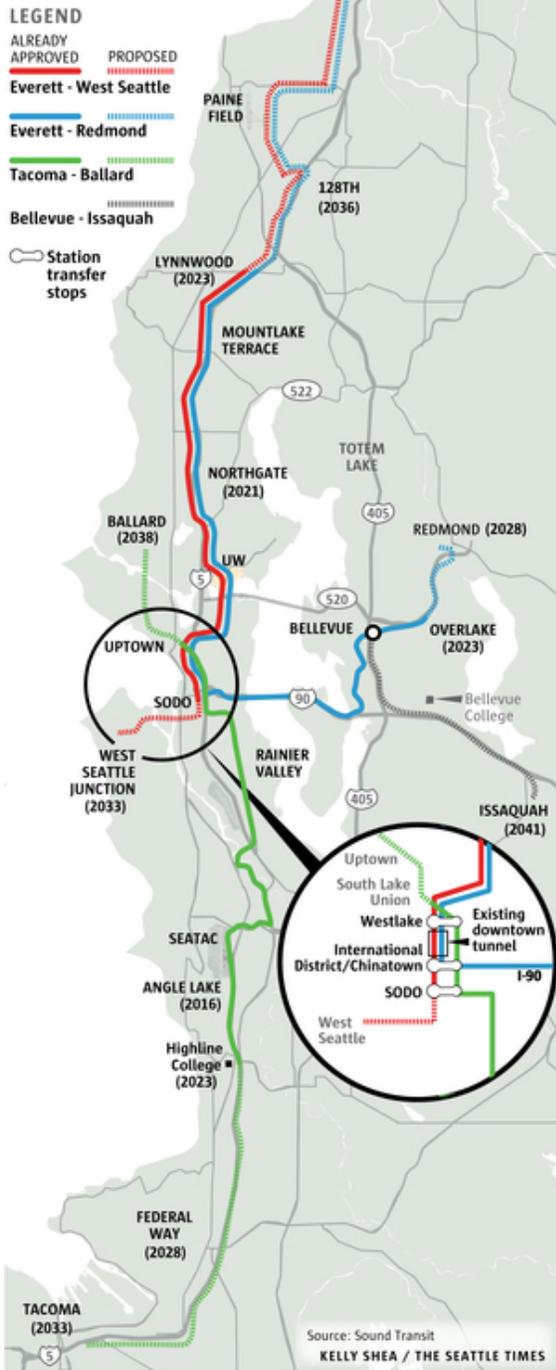
Constantine exaggerated, using Sound Transit numbers to present a best-case scenario for rail while grossly undercounting freeway capacity.

That may rally transit supporters, but it doesn't help the rest of us trying to get our heads around the staggering investment the third phase of Sound Transit could require.

Public officials cannot prematurely dismiss questions about whether there are better ways for the region to spend \$50 billion than the [slate of trains, buses and stations in Sound Transit 3](#) (ST3).

Since voters from Everett to Tacoma must now take a crash course on transportation before committing a large share of their future earnings to ST3, let's start with a quick examination of Constantine's factoid.

Sound Transit's light-rail buildout



If voters approve a likely November ballot measure, light rail would include 75 stations over a 108-mile... More

His assumption is that each freeway lane carries 2,280 people an hour. That's based on [standard estimates](#) that lanes may handle around 1,900 cars per hour and each car carries an [average of 1.2 people](#).

Seattle's different, though. Through Seattle, I-5 is already heavily used by buses carrying more people. The state estimates I-5 lanes at Northgate average 8,200 people per hour during peak periods if you count carpools and buses.

In other words, the capacity of I-5 is more than three times higher than what Constantine is saying, since lots of people ride buses. Perhaps we shouldn't be so quick to dismiss the utility of roads.

Sound Transit light-rail trains with four cars, running with 3-minute gaps between trains, can carry 16,000 people per hour, or 32,000 in both directions.

“The point is voters need their representatives to provide clear, objective explanations of ST3’s pros and cons, not cheerleading.”

If voters approve a likely November ballot measure, light rail would include 75 stations over a 108-mile network. Among the highlights of the proposal released Thursday: Downtown Redmond would see a Sound Transit 3 extension in 2028, connecting to Marymoor Park and Overlake. West Seattle Junction would get its connection to Sodo and downtown in 2033 — before the Uptown-Ballard line, envisioned for 2038. Bellevue College and Issaquah would get service

in 2041. Service to Paine Field and Everett would happen by 2041, winding past Highway 99 instead of tracking along I-5.

That's a lot of people. The reliability of light-rail trains far exceeds freeway travel. Rail service is already under way, increasing options for commuters in a fast growing region. Still, scrutiny is warranted.

In 2014, Constantine pointed voters down the wrong path when he pushed for a levy to “save” Metro from cutting 72 routes. The levy failed, and it turned out the [county didn’t need it after all](#).

The point is voters need their representatives to provide clear, objective explanations of ST3’s pros and cons, not cheerleading.

Costs and benefits of rail versus buses is one of several topics that must be clarified. Other questions include:

- Would suburbs get a fair return on their Sound Transit investment, especially compared to costly tunnels and spurs proposed for Seattle neighborhoods?
- Is the long project timeline reasonable and fair? Is it possible to build faster?
- What effect would at-grade rail and dedicated bus corridors have on roads? Would ST3 increase congestion by further reducing road capacity for cars, which will continue to be used for most travel in the region?
- If \$50 billion is committed to ST3, would that limit the region’s bonding capacity to fund other major needs that may arise?
- What would be the cumulative effects of transit funding on living costs, including the effect of ST3’s new property tax on rents and housing costs?
- This is the decision of a lifetime and we need to get it right. Should the vote be deferred until it’s fully vetted?

Former state Transportation Secretary Doug MacDonald [has estimated](#) ST3 would bring the overall transportation taxes and fees paid by the typical Seattle household to nearly [\\$2,800 per year](#).

On top of that, Seattle area households potentially might face an enormous tax increase in 2017 to help fix the state’s education-funding crisis.

The overarching question, though, is: What’s the best solution to improve mobility in a region expected to grow by 1 million people over the next 25 years?

Wading through this is a lot to ask of voters. So let’s not make it any harder by politicking.

Editorial board members are editorial page editor Kate Riley, Frank A. Blethen, Ryan Blethen, Brier Dudley, Mark Higgins, Jonathan Martin, Thanh Tan, William K. Blethen (emeritus) and Robert C. Blethen (emeritus).

Tell us your questions

What questions do you have about Sound Transit 3? Is there any one thing in the plan that gives you pause? [Add your thoughts here](#).

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Seattle Times, 4/3/16

http://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/sound-transit-pulls-survey-question-that-may-break-state-law/?utm_source=The+Seattle+Times&utm_campaign=e2768014f5-Morning_Brief_4_04_2016&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_5beb38b61e-e2768014f5-120294717

Sound Transit pulls survey question that may break state law

Originally published April 3, 2016 at 7:45 pm Updated April 4, 2016 at 5:43 am

The question in the online survey sought to gauge why people would be willing to support a ballot measure to fund more public-transit services. The Public Disclosure Commission says it may violate a law that bars using public funds for political purposes.

By

[Lewis Kamb](#)

Seattle Times staff reporter

An online survey seeking feedback about Sound Transit's planned expansion of public-transit services may have broken the law with a question that seeks to gauge why people would be willing to support this fall's ballot measure to fund it, according to a spokeswoman for the Washington Public Disclosure Commission.

After The Seattle Times asked the PDC to review the transit agency's public-outreach survey on Friday, commission spokeswoman Lori Anderson responded that part of the survey appeared to violate a state law that prohibits spending public funds for political purposes.

"In my opinion, the survey wording suggests that Sound Transit is trying to gauge what voters will approve, which would be an inappropriate use of their resources," Anderson said in an email Friday afternoon.

After the Times' inquiry, the PDC contacted Sound Transit, which late Friday removed the questionable question from the survey.

"The intent of the website is to promote public involvement in shaping the Sound Transit 3 final plan, providing input to the Sound Transit Board of Directors," Sound Transit chief spokesman Geoff Patrick said in an email late Friday. "While the question we removed was intended to help guide how we talk about the rationale for the plan, it was not necessary for informing the Board's upcoming decisions."

Patrick, who noted he specifically asked a consultant managing Sound Transit's outreach campaign for the so-called "ST3" project to include the question, told The Times he would ask

lawyers for the transit agency to review the survey and the [ST3 website](#) Monday “to assess whether there could be any other potential changes to talk about.”

The survey is a key component of Sound Transit’s “public involvement” phase for helping the agency’s regional board finalize an ST3 ballot measure to put to voters in November.

[Released last month](#), an ST3 draft plan calls for \$50 billion in new transit projects and services for King, Pierce and Snohomish counties, funded by \$27 billion in new tax collections through 2041, along with existing taxes, long-term debt and federal grants.

Public feedback on what elements should or shouldn’t be included on the ballot measure — garnered via the online survey, public meetings, written comments and other means — will be taken through April 29. The [18-member transit board](#) will decide on a final ballot package in June.

At issue with the 16-question survey is whether it crossed legal lines by using public money for political purposes. [Washington law](#) explicitly states “public funds shall not be used to finance political campaigns.”

Question #15, which drew most of Anderson’s concern, came near the survey’s end.

“Here are some reasons people have given for developing the ST3 Draft Plan,” it stated. “After each, please rate which makes you much more likely, somewhat more likely, somewhat less likely, or much less likely to support the ST3 draft plan.”

The question goes on to poll respondents about a variety of specific rationales for supporting ST3, with a range of numbered bubbles to gauge the strength of their support.

The question is similar to those polling firms use to help political campaigns determine which messages resonate with voters and are used to help get a measure approved or a candidate elected.

Anderson noted that while Sound Transit is able to conduct research to identify and prioritize transit needs, such “research should still be framed as assessing needs, rather than assessing what voters will approve.”

“I question the need for #15,” Anderson said. “It would be inappropriate for Sound Transit to use their research for message testing.”

[EnviroIssues](#), a Seattle consulting firm, put the survey together as part of public-outreach services provided under a three-year, publicly bid contract with Sound Transit to support development of ST3, Patrick said.

The consulting firm, initially hired under an \$800,000 contract in 2013, received nearly \$600,000 more in additional work late last year, including developing the ST3 website, online survey and other aspects of the transit proposal’s public outreach, Patrick said.

Patrick, who has worked for the Seattle consulting firm [Cocker Fennessy](#) and for the Washington State House of Representatives Democratic Caucus, said he directed EnviroIssues to include Question #15 on the survey.

“I was interested in seeing what was resonating with people; that’s why I asked EnviroIssues to include that,” he said. “I didn’t run it by our legal staff.”

Patrick noted that after he spoke with Anderson late Friday about the PDC’s concerns, he directed the question be removed from the survey even though Sound Transit has yet to review whether the question was legally inappropriate.

“The main thing she said was that Question 15 appeared to be more political in nature than related to informing board decisions about what to put in the plan,” he said. “I saw her point.”

Agency lawyers will review the survey and website this week and follow up with the PDC, Patrick said.

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OPINION01

Published: Sunday, April 3, 2016, 12:01 a.m.

In Our View / Sound Transit 3 light rail

Best chance at a regional Link



Oran Virlyincy via Flickr / Creative Commons

A Sound Transit Link light-rail train in Seattle's Columbia City neighborhood.

By The Herald Editorial Board

It's not like we haven't had to do this before, but those who live and work in Snohomish County, along with local officials and lawmakers, will need to make the case that our county is a major cog in the state's economy and must be served by a transportation system that meets the needs of workers, businesses, students and residents.

Voices were raised during the 2015 legislative session when Gov. Jay Inslee's proposed transportation budget outlined less than \$82 million to be spent over the next 16 years in the county. A lobbying effort made the case to legislators statewide to increase funding for Snohomish County road and transit projects; the result was a package that totaled \$670 million.

Many of the same arguments now need to be made to members of the Sound Transit board of directors after the regional transportation agency last week released its draft plan for ST3, the third phase of projects for its Link light rail system, launched 20 years ago to connect the cities of Everett, Seattle, Bellevue and Tacoma.

It's not that board members haven't been listening. Presented options that would extend light rail to downtown Everett along I-5 or a route that would serve the manufacturing center in southwest Everett near Boeing and Paine Field, the agency's draft plan recognizes the logic in serving a major job center and recommends the route that serves it.

But the draft plan doesn't see it as a priority in terms of when Everett will be served. Under the schedule outlined in the draft plan, light rail won't reach Everett's 128th Street until 2036. Paine Field, then downtown follow within another five years in 2041.

Supporters of the light rail extension knew it was going to be years before the Everett extension was built out. Lynnwood, which was part of the system's second phase, ST2, won't see the arrival of its Link station until 2023. But a 25-year wait was a stunner, no better expressed than by U.S. Rep. Rick Larsen, who has made transportation a major focus of his tenure in Congress: "There may be a lot of head-scratching from some folks," he [told The Herald's Noah Haglund](#) last week. "I'm not scratching my head; I'm banging it against the wall right now."

What makes the wait even harder to bear is the fact that the draft plan's funding priorities bring light rail spur lines to outlying Seattle regions years earlier: 2033 for West Seattle and 2038 for Ballard.

That wasn't the intention of the effort when it was launched more than 20 years ago. From the start, Sound Transit's plan in 1994 was to build a light rail spine that connected the four main population centers of Everett, Seattle, Bellevue and Tacoma. If not a promise, it's a commitment that Sound Transit's board of directors reaffirmed as late as 2014 in its [Regional Transit Long-Range Plan](#): "Sound Transit will prioritize its light rail investment funds for the completion of the Everett-Seattle-Tacoma Link light rail system. and the light rail system directly connecting Bellevue and downtown Redmond with that north-south rail spine. ..."

That stated priority serves the agency's original goals to connect the region's major job and population centers and alleviate congestion on I-5, where 90-minute commute times between Seattle and Everett are now routine.

No slight intended against West Seattle and Ballard, but — and here are those statistics that helped argue for a better transportation package — [according to Economic Alliance Snohomish County](#), Snohomish County has:

- The state's largest concentration of manufacturing jobs with 64,000 direct jobs at more than 750 companies;
- Which includes the state's second-largest number of aerospace jobs with 43,000;
- The state's second-largest base of technology employment with 66,000 jobs;
- Estimated job growth in the next five years of 6.5 percent, or 66,000 jobs; and
- A population of 772,500 that is expected to grow by 5 percent in the next five years.

Ultimately, it's not the 18 members of Sound Transit's board who must be convinced of the need to move up arrival of light rail to Everett's job centers and downtown transit hub at Everett Station; it will be the voters in the Sound Transit taxing district in Snohomish, King and Pierce counties who will be asked in November to approve a \$15 billion funding package, increases on sales tax, vehicle excise and property tax, with an estimated annual cost of \$200 per person.

A wait of 25 years for service to Everett could easily deflate voter enthusiasm for the project among Snohomish County voters. And it could also discourage support among voters in King County, too; many

make the reverse commute on I-5 north from King County in the morning and south after a day's work.

Already, area officials, including representatives of Snohomish County Cities and the county's legislative delegation have sent letters to Sound Transit's board, urging reconsideration of the draft plan's schedule for funding and construction of light rail projects.

The residents throughout Snohomish, King and Pierce counties, particularly those young adults who will benefit most from the light-rail system, need to be heard as well.

Failure of ST3 in November threatens to leave the region with an incomplete light rail system, one that falls far short of the original goal of connecting the region's employment and population centers.

A proposal that serves the entire region — and on a timely schedule — has the best chance at passage.

Comment on ST3

Sound Transit is seeking public comment on ST3, the third phase of its Link light rail system, until April 29. A survey and opportunity for comment is available at SoundTransit3.org. Comments also can be email to SoundTransit3@SoundTransit.org or mailed to Sound Transit, 401 S. Jackson St., Seattle, WA 98104.

Seven public hearings, including an Everett meeting at 5:30 p.m. April 25 at Everett Station, are scheduled. *Correction: An earlier version of this editorial misstated the amount of the tax package Sound Transit district voters will consider in November. The package of increases in property, vehicle excise and sales taxes is \$15 billion.*

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Seattle Met/Publicola, 4/6/16

<http://www.seattlemet.com/articles/2016/4/6/why-is-sound-transit-proposing-a-light-rail-plan-that-won-t-be-ready-for-another-quarter-century>

One Question

Why is Sound Transit Proposing a Light Rail Plan That Won't Be Ready for Another Quarter Century?

Sound Transit's director of planning explains why light rail won't run from West Seattle and Ballard to Downtown Seattle before your grandson's bris.

By [Josh Feit](#)

4/6/2016 at 8:57am

Fizz has been displaced this morning with a PubliCola One Question. And the question goes to Sound Transit planning director Ric Ilgenfritz.

The question: Why won't Sound Transit's \$50 billion proposal—the ST3 plan to expand light rail north to Everett, south to Tacoma, east to Issaquah, and from Ballard and West Seattle to downtown Seattle—be ready until around the time of your grandson's bris? In Seattle, for example, the West Seattle to downtown line won't be ready until 2033 and the Ballard to downtown line won't be ready until 2038, 17 and 22 years respectively. In twenty two years, we'll be further away than we are today from Blackstreet featuring Dr. Dre.

I've heard ST consultant polling shows it's not the gargantuan \$50 billion price tag (\$27 million in new taxes and \$23 million in federal money, existing ST taxes, and bond proceeds), but rather, the long wait that's got voters spooked. Voters are apparently more than happy to pay for light rail, but they'd also like to use light rail.

And if voters are spooked, you know ST is spooked too. They're all about elections. After all, the whole slave-to-the-spine POV of the plan reads as pure political calculation to woo as many subarea voting blocs as possible this November rather than as thoughtful urban planning; transportation planners generally advise that you build out from the central core first rather than building straight out to park and rides.

ST is spooked to the point that when I called yesterday to ask for an explanation about the lengthy timetable, they informed me they were holding a briefing with reporters and transit activists that very afternoon to address the timeline question.

Here's what ST planning director Ric Ilgenfritz said yesterday: "We're not going to say we can do things faster than we think we can. I understand people are not comfortable with these

timelines, but we're telling the truth to the public about what we think this stuff takes. We're not going to bullshit anybody. This is what we think it takes to do the job and do it well."

Specifically, Ilgenfritz—noting that we waited 20 years to complete ST1, and that it will be 17 years by the time ST2's east link line to Overlake near the Microsoft campus in Redmond is finished—explained there are two big factors governing the timeline: building and financing.

"I understand people are not comfortable with these timelines, but we're telling the truth to the public about what we think this stuff takes. We're not going to bullshit anybody. This is what we think it takes to do the job and do it well."

And within that frame, there are three phases to the building component—development, final design and permitting, and construction. Construction is the least flexible of those elements, according to Ilgenfritz. "Construction takes what it takes," he said, "once you're mobilized." Getting mobilized is the prerequisite process which involves doing environmental impact statements for all the station options to settle on your final plan and then designing and permitting that specific plan.

Ilgenfritz says it's those first two phases before the construction begins that provide the most opportunities for speeding up the schedule, but as opposed to construction, "it's the least predictable because you never know what you're going to encounter."

By that Ilgenfritz meant the EIS and the public process—including vetting all the possible environmental impacts of each station option and then acquiring property and working with individual cities on permitting—can be a political mine field. Basing ST3 timing estimates on "our experience to date" (he used the ST2 Federal Way EIS as an example with its "six month detour" in a local debate over determining the alignment around Highline Community College), Ilgenfritz laid out the reality of the Ballard line. He estimated an overall 18 to 20 year range, with the EIS period (including studying six potential tunneled stations at Seattle Center, South Lake Union, Denny, Westlake, Midtown, and International District/Chinatown) taking five to six years, the final design taking three to four years, and final construction (including the second downtown tunnel that will largely have to be built under traffic and not on the side of the street like Capitol Hill which made staging easier, he said) taking seven to eight years.

Asked about the possibility of phasing in the Ballard to downtown line to get a portion of that route up and running sooner (and as a way to make Seattle voters happier), Ilgenfritz explained that dividing up one project into two projects would "build support for some and cost support for others" (a nod to the regional political challenges of prioritizing Seattle projects over projects in the suburbs.)

The other issue that controls the timeline is financing. Yes, the ST3 plan identifies \$50 billion in revenues (including, as Ilgenfritz elaborated yesterday, counting on three federal grants.) But it's not as if they'll have a \$50 billion check in hand on November 9, the day after election day, if they win at the ballot. For starters, obviously, the \$50 billion, in part, relies on \$27 million in new taxes that they'll be collecting over decades. Second, ST's funding model relies on issuing bonds. And according to ST rules, they can't take on all their debt at once because putting all their collateral in play at once violates their bonding rules.

As Ilgenfritz explained it the “schedule for issuing bonds corresponds to the schedule for building the projects.” And, he went on: “we can’t issue all of the bonds all at once. We have to issue them in series... in a sequence that allows us to maintain our debt coverage ratio. And that’s a governor on how much bonding we can do.”

ST board rules, which are based on getting the most competitive bond ratings, require the agency to have enough money annually to cover all their costs for that year—plus half of their outstanding debt. “We can’t ever have more debt out,” Ilgenfritz says, “than we can cover on an annual basis plus a fifty percent reserve.” That’s a 1.5 debt coverage ratio.

The reason for the conservative policy? It gives them a better bond rating, which makes it cheaper for them to borrow money. As Ilgenfritz put it: “The cheaper your interest rate, the lower your cost to capital, the more financial capacity you have over the long term.”

The ST3 plan is divided into three phases—early deliverables like bus rapid transit improvements on the Rapid Ride C and D lines and on 405 that will proceed the completion of ST2 in 2023; projects that are happening relatively soon after ST2 gets done such as getting to Federal Way and Downtown Redmond by 2028, and then a series of later projects such as getting to the Tacoma Dome and from West Seattle to downtown Seattle in 2033 and to Tacoma Community College and to Issaquah in 2041.

Ilgenfritz concluded: “The three phases fit within the financial capacity curve. Each has a schedule, a linear schedule. Take anyone and slide forward or back, and it changes the curve...to the point where if you move one you’re going to have to move another and so on and so on... [and] you blow your [debt] coverage ratio...that 1.5 debt coverage.”