

November 23, 2013

Re: Comments on the scope of the Sound Transit Long-Range Plan (SEIS)

Sound Transit
Attn: James Irish
401 S. Jackson St.
Seattle, WA 98104

To Whom It May Concern:

The West Seattle Transportation Coalition is a peninsula-wide organization working to address transportation and mobility issues for Seattle's largest constituency. Representing more than 100,000 people living and working in the 10 square mile area between the Duwamish River and Puget Sound, we are community leaders, advocates, business owners, residents and workers focused on addressing the transportation and commuting challenges of West Seattle. We need a permanent mass transit solution such as light rail to serve our growing needs.

West Seattle Transportation Challenges

- 1. Density without transportation capacity:** The region's commitment to increased density is not matched with equivalent increases in transportation capacity to serve the Peninsula's steadily growing population.
 - In its Comprehensive Plan, the City of Seattle designates the Alaska Junction in West Seattle as a HUB Urban Village. It also designates three Residential Urban Villages within West Seattle: Admiral, Morgan Junction, and Westwood-Highland Park.
 - The City of Seattle is projecting a population growth of 25% in HUB Urban Villages, along with 5% growth of employment by 2024.
 - There is no single comprehensive plan for all government agencies to use as a reference that overlay the projected population growth, economic development, building development and transportation needs in Seattle.
 - In West Seattle, development and population are outpacing transit capacity. Since the implementation of Bus Rapid Transit, there has been over a 40% increase in ridership from King County Metro's original ridership projections for the peninsula.
 - Arterial thoroughfares in West Seattle are overburdened with use by multiple modes of transportation; buses, cars and bikes are unsuccessfully sharing these main roads.
- 2. Natural barriers:** West Seattle has only limited routes connecting it to downtown and beyond for the vast majority of its residents. Mass transit is the only option that can move us across these choke points to keep our transportation systems functioning.
 - A grade-separated light rail route will avoid delays caused by the usual traffic congestion throughout West Seattle.

- Light rail will provide a premium service alternative separated from our vital egress route off the peninsula via the West Seattle high bridge.
- The current high capacity transportation option, King County Metro RapidRide, actually contributes to congestion and doesn't scale well to rapidly increasing population density.

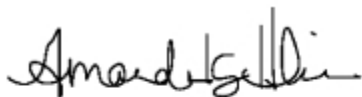
- 3. Loss of infrastructure:** The scheduled removal of the SR-99 Viaduct without sufficient replacement capacity on other routes to and from our peninsula.
- 4. The reduction of mass transit services:** The current insufficient level of transportation service by King County Metro will be compounded by the proposed cuts in our already under-served area.

As a significant portion of Seattle's population yet with a relative lack of mobility for an area so close to downtown, the residents of West Seattle must choose single-occupancy vehicles in greater numbers. These trips add to the region's congestion and the resulting adverse economic and environmental impacts.

The West Seattle Transportation Coalition calls upon Sound Transit to expedite the study of viable rail and related mass transit system integration to produce permanent solutions to these identified challenges affecting our peninsula. Dedicated high capacity transit is the only permanent, long-term transportation solution that meets the current and projected needs of West Seattle.

The coalition looks forward to partnering with you directly on the matters stated above. We respectfully invite you to **RSVP and present** at our **January 14th public meeting**. We expect to have representatives from state, county, and city government and as well as all relevant transportation agencies such as Sound Transit together to start working together to create long-range, sustainable solutions that propel our neighborhoods, city, county and state into thriving communities.

Sincerely,



Amanda Kay Helmick



Michael Taylor-Judd



Mat McBride



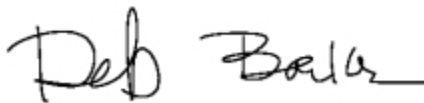
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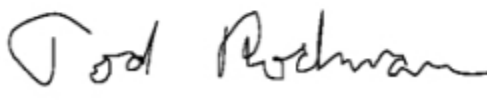
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