



City of Seattle

Gregory J. Nickels, Mayor

Seattle Planning Commission

Barbara Wilson, Executive Director

March 3, 2006

Mr. John W. Ladenburg
Board Chair
Sound Transit
401 South Jackson
Seattle, WA 98104-2826

Ms. Joni Earl
Chief Executive Officer
Sound Transit
401 South Jackson
Seattle, WA 98104-2826

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Barbara Wilson,
Executive Director
Scott Dvorak,
Analyst

Dear Mr. Ladenburg and Ms. Earl;

The Seattle Planning Commission is writing to commend you on the comprehensive scope of Sound Transit 2 (ST2). We would also like to acknowledge the difficult task you face in narrowing the number of projects from a long list of the region's transportation infrastructure needs to an essential group of projects.

The City of Seattle is well-represented on the Sound Transit Board by Mayor Greg Nickels and Councilmember Richard McIver. We are confident that they are providing valuable input on Seattle's transportation needs and how they fit in to ST2. However, the Seattle Planning Commission - as a 16 member independent advisory body to the City on broad planning goals, policies and plans for the physical development of Seattle - has a long history of reviewing regional transportation and growth management issues. Our work is framed by Seattle's Comprehensive Plan and its long-range vision for the city. It is from that perspective that we offer our expertise and analysis for your consideration on ST2 with the following comments. The items are in no particular order or priority for the Planning Commission, but rather are simply a list of our thoughts on particular topics for your consideration during your ST2 project selection process.

- **Extension of Link Light Rail from the University of Washington to Northgate.** We are excited by the progress being made with the construction of the Central Link light rail system. It appears that the bulk of the financial resources in ST2 within Seattle will be focused on completing North Link. We support extending the system all the way to Northgate as proposed in the original Sound Move process.
- **The connection of First Hill to Central Link Light Rail.** Losing the First Hill light rail station due to technical and cost feasibility issues creates a serious gap in the regional transportation system. We believe enhanced transit connections between First Hill, Downtown, and Capitol Hill will be a great benefit to system-wide ridership, capacity and efficiency. We urge you to take this matter seriously and devote sufficient resources to solve this regional transportation issue.

- **High Capacity Transit from Downtown Seattle to Downtown Bellevue.** The east-west connection across Lake Washington between Seattle and Bellevue continues to grow as one of the most important transportation corridors in the region. Leveraging our investments in the expansion of regional transit by building capacity in this corridor using both the Interstate 90 and, secondarily, State Route 520 Lake Washington crossings should be of the highest consideration in determining where your resources are directed.
- **Regional Transit Service in Urban Neighborhoods.** There are several neighborhoods and districts within Seattle that are densely populated, transit-friendly, urbanized areas that lack Sound Transit service. There is a compelling argument that can be made for making regional transportation investments in places that are most likely to make an impact – both in developing a sustainable transit system and in serving areas of the metropolitan region that are already transit ready and essentially only lack the service. We understand that the bulk of regional spending in Seattle will likely be focused on completing Central Link light rail. Although we whole-heartedly support that effort, we also would like to note that providing regional Sound Transit service to other neighborhoods in Seattle would go a long way toward creating a functioning, financially feasible, transit system.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide our comments. We look forward to the adoption of ST2 and the important transportation projects that will result.

Respectfully submitted,



George Blomberg, Chair
Land Use and Transportation Committee
Seattle Planning Commission

cc: Sound Transit Board
Mayor Greg Nickels
Councilmember Richard McIver
Seattle City Council
Grace Crunican, Director of SDOT
John Layzer, SDOT
Calvin Chow, SDOT
Martha Lester, Council Central Staff
Rebecca Herzfeld, Council Central Staff