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June 27, 2024

Sound Transit Board  
Sound Transit  
401 S. Jackson Street  
Seattle, WA 98104

RE: Stride S3 Line Project

Dear Mr. Gorman, Ms. Mestas, Mr. Constantine, Mr. Somers, Mr. Upthegrove, and Ms. Balducci:

As elected representatives for the City of Lake Forest Park (LFP), we wish to thank Mr. Gorman for his March 29, 2024, response to our letter last fall describing our city's technical, environmental, and design concerns with Sound Transit's (ST's) current plans for Bus Rapid Transit on Bothell Way through our city. Our letter was a follow up to our previous requests for design and engagement improvements extending back two years. This includes public meetings in 2023 with CEO Timm attended by many hundreds of Lake Forest Park residents, where she committed to examine alternatives to a full BAT lane through LFP and improve communications with our city and community.

At the outset, and for the record, we are compelled to clarify some of the background and context described in the letter.

- **Voter Approval:** While most of our citizens voted for ST3, and our city strongly supports improved public transit, the current plans differ in many significant ways from the proposal voted on. Notably, the plans submitted to the voters did not include a northbound/eastbound BAT lane through LFP. (There are, however, existing BAT lanes northbound from 165th Street, and of course, the full length southbound in LFP, which were included and which we continue to support.)
- **Timely Comments:** Our city's formal concerns have not come at the last minute but extend back to comments made by the city at the draft 60% design stage, the first time specific details were shared with the public. At that time, we requested (in writing) a pause in project design to examine alternatives that would provide transit benefits with less adverse impacts, as well as improved community engagement.
- **Disproportionate Impacts:** Regardless of the SEPA checklist prepared in 2022 at 30% design, our city has repeatedly documented the disproportionate impacts in LFP. While 13% of the BRT project is in LFP's 1.2 miles, 55% of the costs and most of the adverse impacts are here.
- **Transit Time Benefits:** We note that the travel time improvements ST estimates of 2.3 minutes from new BAT lane components through LFP only occur from 4-6 pm weekdays northbound. Recent review of the same data and methodology shows that the estimate includes improvements outside of the LFP corridor. When that segment is removed, adjusted benefits are only 1.5 minutes at those peak hours. And even the 1.5 minutes may be overstated since it fails to include traffic from the 46 driveways (private homes,

condos, apartments, and businesses) necessarily turning into and out of the new BAT lane, an adjustment allowed by ST's methodology, but not used.

We sincerely appreciate the recent design details described in your letter, addressing LFP's retaining wall and tree ordinances, as well as the environmentally sensitive critical areas surrounding B'schetla Creek, a designated fish bearing stream that has already experienced major landslides. We also concur in shortening the bus stop at 165th Street to one bus length (incidentally, a bus stop not included in the voter-approved proposal).

Even with these modifications you describe, the project as designed remains hugely impactful on our city, already bounded by impacts from two major state highways. No other city will face such inequitable impacts. As a reminder, under the current plans:

- Our green residential corridor and city gateway will still become a concrete corridor with a nearly mile-long retaining wall that is as high as 16 feet in places.
- 110 mostly residential properties will be taken in whole or part, with 46 driveways that will necessarily turn into the proposed BAT lane, posing safety issues.
- Five acres of mature trees and shrubs (including 80 landmark trees) will still be removed, and 95,000 tons of dirt and debris will still be removed and trucked, creating heat island and greenhouse gas effects that erode city and regional climate action plans.
- Increased stormwater runoff, discharging into three fish streams, will occur from tree removal and the creation of 1.3 acres of new impervious surfaces at a time when federal and state mandates are imposing costly new restrictions on the city, especially from tires and road surfaces.

Further, changes to the intersection at 145th Street will make public transit along Bothell Way worse for LFP riders. Sound Transit busses will no longer serve this intersection at all, and the design will prevent King County Metro from serving it north/westbound. This will remove 75% of bus access from LFP's Southern Gateway neighborhood, which includes a large middle-housing development. Such a severe reduction will ripple into the future since current zoning calls for multiplexes and affordable housing in the area.

While ST staff are approaching 100% design, LFP's fundamental concerns remain unaddressed. Our continued request over the years -- which CEO Timm agreed to address in public meetings with over 450 people in attendance -- is a meaningful engagement examining design alternatives for transit improvements less impactful to the LFP environment and the community. The simplistic slide presentation using cherry-picked Google data shared recently by ST staff truly does not honor Ms. Timm's commitment in a meaningful way.

Under the circumstances, after a detailed analysis of ST data and documents and in consultation with our community, the City of Lake Forest Park is now formally proposing its own alternative design concept for BAT transit improvement through Lake Forest Park (see attached design concept).

Starting at the south end, from Bothell Way at 145th to Ballinger Way, our proposal would be:

- Retain the new full BAT lane between 145th Street and 153rd Street, as now proposed by ST.
- Eliminate the proposed BAT lane between 153rd and 165th Streets, from traffic light to traffic light.
- Retain the existing BAT lane at 165th Street, as now proposed by ST
- Add signalized lights and lane jumps at 153rd and 165th Streets, allowing busses to merge into regular lanes north of the 153rd traffic light and merge into the existing BAT lane north of the 165th traffic light

Based on recent analyses, we think this is a preferred alternative for Bothell Way in many respects. It provides virtually identical transit time benefits to those from the full BAT lane currently proposed and relies on elements of the current ST designs for both Bothell Way and 145th. It would reduce or eliminate significant property takings and adverse environmental, greenhouse gas, and stormwater impacts, including construction in the vicinity of the B'schetla Creek critical/landslide area. As a result, it likely could be constructed faster, on time and on budget compared with current plans. We see this alternative as a win-win for Lake Forest Park and Sound Transit.

Looking ahead, we appreciate the renewed communication with ST leadership and look forward to continued collaboration. We will be following up seeking meetings with each of you in the month of July. We invite you to come and see the project area with us and meet our community at your convenience.

Sincerely,