

June 24, 2021

Sound Transit Board of Directors  
401 S. Jackson St  
Seattle WA 98104-2826

Re: Program Realignment -- Stride Bus Rapid Transit Projects

Dear Chair Keel and Members of the Board,

As the Sound Transit Board considers its options as part of the ST3 Realignment, **the undersigned organizations and cities encourage the prioritization and timely delivery of the Stride Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) that will connect the communities along I-405 from Burien to Lynnwood and SR 522 from Shoreline to Bothell.** We also encourage close coordination and collaboration with WSDOT as they work to identify alternative funding options for the I-405/SR 522 capacity improvements and develop a bond proceeds corridor plan which are closely tied to the delivery and success of the ST projects. We cannot wait any longer for the delivery of these important projects and we urge you to keep them on schedule.

East King County is in dire need of these projects because it will experience more employment growth than any location in Washington State by 2025. Large employers have publicly announced that more than 30,000 new jobs are coming to the Eastside by 2025. This unprecedented growth will add further pressure to our already overburdened transportation system and the expansion of BRT along I-405 is a crucial component of easing traffic and providing residents with fast, frequent and reliable bus service that will connect east side communities. BRT is a cost-effective way to move people quickly, and as significant growth occurs along the I-405 and SR 522 corridors, access to transit options will be a critical factor in keeping our region out of gridlock. The fact that cost estimates for Stride BRT have **decreased** since 2019 should be strongly factored and rewarded in the Board's deliberations.

While we acknowledge that the BRT project is closely connected to the state's delivery of capacity improvements between SR 522 and SR 527, this linkage should not impact Sound Transit's commitment to the project. During the 2021 legislative session, the state signaled its ongoing commitment to the corridor by rejecting policies that would've interrupted toll bonding authorization, and by directing WSDOT to consider phasing and funding alternatives to keep the state projects on track. We strongly urge Sound Transit to avoid making rash changes to the BRT delivery timeline while the state is still collecting and evaluating important corridor information. Instead, Sound Transit should continue to collaborate with the state in identifying creative solutions that deliver these projects to this region's residents without delay.

Areas such as East King County will be an economic engine that will help the entire state not only recover, but thrive following the pandemic. We should not hinder this growth by delaying these critical BRT projects that will accommodate this growth in jobs and population expected in just three short years. No one could have anticipated that a global pandemic would

challenge the implementation of these plans, but we thank you for your leadership to find creative solutions that keep the Stride BRT projects on track and on schedule.

