



Who is CORE? We are concerned neighbors who live in LFP, who are sharing information of ST3 and its impacts on our community.

Contact: info@lfpcore.org www.lfpcore.org

February 22, 2023

An open letter to Julie Timm, ST CEO, John Henry, ST CFO, Bernard Van De Kamp, ST3 Program Executive, and Sound Transit Board of Directors, the Lake Forest Park City Council and Mayor, and City Administration regarding Sound Transit's plans to construct a 1.2-mile, dedicated EB bus lane in Lake Forest Park as part of the SR522/145th BRT project:

We are a small community of nearly 14,000 residents. Many of us live here for a close relationship with nature. This is very important to us. We are writing to you because of the need for more transparency, meaningful analysis, and meaningful community outreach, other than acquisition outreach, that has transpired in designing the SR522/145th BRT project for Lake Forest Park. This project, currently at the 60% design stage, could destroy our community. **We ask Sound Transit to modify the design to save our City, reducing impacts and costs.**

Between 2019 and June 2020, the Bothell Way's alignment shifted from its current centerline to the west, impacting 110 residents and the greater Lake Forest Park Community. Sound Transit never informed us of the magnitude of this shift or the impacts created by this "West Shift." The "West Shift" changes the character of our community. It divides our community along the lines of wealth and impacts our environment. It is a flawed plan. It is not equitable. It is not environmentally responsible. The designers of this transportation project have focused solely on creating a Business Access & Transit Lane (BAT) lane, disregarding all other aspects. This plan does not address the concerns of our community. Nor does it consider the most likely alternative to the BAT lane: Queue Jumps, which achieve nearly the same transit time savings. Sound Transit has designed Queue Jumps for NE 145th Street, where Seattle prohibited BAT lanes. **We ask Sound Transit to modify the design and compare the cost and efficiency of Queue Jumps to the dedicated BAT lane: reducing tree removals, the need for walls and property acquisitions, and cost.**

The current plan removes 490 trees along the alignment, deforesting Bothell Way. With this expansion, the highway moves approximately 10'-12' closer to the west side homes, blading 60,000 square feet of backyards. There is no plan for noise mitigation. Instead, on the west side of Bothell Way, there are concrete retaining walls (up to 16' tall) along nearly the length of the alignment. These retaining walls create a concrete corridor that bounces sound eastward across the highway and up the westward embankment. On the new sidewalk next to the road, the sound exceeds 80 decibels. Buses will run every 10 minutes, up and down on both sides of Bothell Way, totaling 220 trips daily. Sound Transit's SR522 Noise and Vibration Study did not sample sound along the alignment in the most impacted residential areas. The report was completed before the "West Shift." Sound Transit's plan for widening the highway on the east side of Bothell Way shows that at Bsche'tla Creek, the steep banks of the creek and the buffer zones are "cleared and grubbed," removing of over 28 trees, blading the understory, making this slide-prone area more unstable. This construction impacts habitat and nearby businesses, requiring more property on the east side of Bothell Way, south of 155th Street NE, past the bridge.

Regarding budget, this project is the most expensive cost per mile in ST3. The price tag for ST3 ranges from \$626 million to \$651 million. Of the 205 total property acquisitions, 110 are in Lake Forest Park. Sound Transit budgeted \$83 million for the property acquisition costs in LFP. The overall cost for SR 522 NE 145 BRT is over \$250 million, or 40% of the total ST3 budget. This build saves only 2.3 minutes in transit time during rush hour.

We support transit. We request a more equitable, sustainable, and contextual design that we can all be proud of when this Project is completed, and it becomes our legacy for the next 100 years.

Vicki Scuri, CORE, 15004 37th Ave NE, LFP 98155



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KEY DATES:

Sound Transit reviewed three alternative design approaches to the Lake Forest Park section of ST3, SR522/145th BRT, neglecting to explore a fourth: Queue Jump Bypasses. They are:

a. March 2019:

- **Option 1: Refinement 1 Lake Forest Park “Safe Highways” Preferred.** This refinement calls for a 1.2-mile dedicated eastbound BAT lane running exclusively on the east side of Bothell Way.
- **Option 2: Refinement Alignment 2.** This refinement would have the eastbound BAT lane run about half the distance on Bothell Way, from NE 155th to just past 41st Street S/south of Brookside Blvd.

b. June 2020:

- **Option 3: Lake Forest Park West Shift.** Sound Transit announced it was “considering a shift of roadway widening to the west side of SR 522 to reduce property impacts and ensure more residents can maintain access to their homes.” Formalized in late 2020 and became the design reflected in the 30% and 60% design documents.

c. TBD:

- **Option 4: Queue Jump Bypasses:** never studied, although Queue Jumps are considered and implemented for NE 145th Street in lieu of a continuous BAT lane, due to the limitations of the corridor width and adjacent buildings.

The “West Shift” was developed without community interaction or full analysis of the impacts compared to other options:

- Cost of property acquisitions, including total private properties impacted (partial and full), the total square footage required, and the estimated cost of acquiring the property.
- Cost of construction and time to build.
- Potential reduction of bus transit times.
- The number of tree removals required.
- The need for, extent and cost of retaining walls required for each design.

In June 2020, Sound Transit decided the “West Shift” design was the best approach, citing the following:

- “Shifting the roadway widening to the west allows more property owners to stay in their homes and minimizes the overall change to the neighborhood.”
- They could avoid as many as “6 full property acquisitions.”
- “Making use of existing right-of-way reduces the need for property purchases.”
- “Widening SR 522 exclusively on the east side of the road between 38th Avenue NE and 41st Avenue NE in Lake Forest Park could cause significant impacts to driveways.”

These assumptions are erroneous. The “West Shift” negatively impacts homeowners on both sides of the highway with 266 trees removed on the east side (largely due to front yards to be paved as new turnaround driveways), increasing the square footage of impervious surfaces. Similarly, on the west side, a 16’ wide swath, beginning at 38th Ave NE and ending across the street from 41st Avenue NE, blades nearly 4,000 linear feet of all vegetation, including 226 trees, replacing the trees with a monotonous concrete wall.



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CONCERNS:

Without meaningful analysis of the “West Shift” or any alternatives, the plan was presented to the ST Board on September 23, 2021, as Resolution R2021-07 and unanimously approved.

This decision was followed by Sound Transit's "Realignment Process," which addressed the \$5.8 billion systemwide "affordability gap." At the September 23, 2021 Sound Transit Board Meeting, the staff presented an estimated cost for SR522/145th BRT at \$544 million. Less than a year later, the cost increased 25% to \$651 million, with the completion date of the project pushed out to 2027, a six to twelve-month delay.

How much transit time is saved with this build? In Lake Forest Park: 2.3 minutes.

We ask: Is the pain worth the gain? Is this a fiscally responsible solution? Are there better alternatives?

See the chart below for a breakdown of the estimated time savings:

Bus Transit Time Savings Build Vs. No Build in 2042 by City for the PM, weekday, 3-hour peak times (rush hour). Breakout down per City, of Sound Transit staff’s forecast of 15.7 minutes faster bus travel time over the 8-mile corridor as a result of SR522/145th BRT

PM Weekday 3 Hour Peak Commute Bus Transit Time Saved No Build vs Build 2042									
City	Time Saved (minutes)	% Time Saved	Estimated Construction and Property Acquisition Costs by City	% of Costs by City	Cost Per Minute of time saved	Index Cost Per Minute Saved	Miles of Roadway	Cost Per Mile of Roadway	Index of Cost Per mile of roadway
Seattle/Shoreline	9.7	62%	\$ 108,797,020	23%	\$ 11,160,665	0.4	1.5	\$ 72,531,347	1.3
Lake Forest Park	2.3	15%	\$ 253,131,200	55%	\$ 63,003,970	2.1	1.2	\$ 210,942,667	3.6
Kenmore	1.7	11%	\$ 13,956,700	3%	\$ 8,225,886	0.3	3.6	\$ 3,876,861	0.1
Bothell	1.9	12%	\$ 88,155,550	19%	\$ 45,962,226	1.6	1.7	\$ 51,856,206	0.9
Total	15.7	100%	\$ 464,040,470	100%	\$ 29,620,278	1.0	8	\$ 58,005,059	1.0

- Of the 15.7-minute faster bus transit time, Lake Forest Park’s 2.3 minutes is 15% of the total bus transit time saved.
- 62% of the total bus transit time saved is on the 1.5-mile section from the 145th St section from the Shoreline South Light Rail station to Bothell Way, a section with no BAT Lanes.
- It costs \$63 million in Lake Forest Park per minute saved, 2.1 times more than the average for the entire corridor.
- It costs \$210 million in Lake Forest Park per mile of roadway, 3.6 times more than the average for the corridor.

Last December, the Lake Forest Park City Council passed a resolution asking the Sound Transit Board to pause design work and to analyze other alternatives for Lake Forest Park. On January 26, 2023, at the Sound Transit Board Meeting, staff declined the pause, arguing it is “critical to keeping HWY522/145th on track in terms of schedule and cost control.” The Sound Transit Board unanimously agreed.

We disagree. We ask Sound Transit to apply the approach employed on NE 145th Street, implementing queue jumps, with signal priority and swift boarding, and that they reduce the size of the bus stops at 165th Street NE and 153rd Street NE to be an appropriate scale for our residential neighborhood, where bus boarding is significantly lower. We remain hopeful that there is a solution here, but it requires Sound Transit to refine and redesign this project in partnership with our City and our Community.