

Mayor
Jeff R. Johnson

17425 Ballinger Way NE
Lake Forest Park, WA 98155-5556
Phone: 206-368-5440
Fax: 206-364-6521
Email: cityhall@cityofLFP.gov
www.cityofLFP.gov



Councilmembers
Lorri Bodi
Tom French
Tracy Furutani
Larry Goldman
Phillippa M. Kassover
Jon Lebo
Semra Riddle

October 30, 2023

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

Dear Chair Constantine and Sound Transit Board Members:

In late 2022, the Lake Forest Park City Council formally requested a brief pause in the Stride Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) design work for 1.2 miles in Lake Forest Park (LFP), then only at the draft 60% level so that we could work cooperatively to develop design refinements. We made this request because of the north/east-bound BAT lane's huge environmental and fiscal impacts through LFP, compared to its transit, traffic flow, and travel time benefits.

Briefly, our city is heavily impacted by the BRT project. LFP's 1.2 mile span has 56% of the property takings, and the majority of removed trees: 110 homes and small businesses on Bothell Way and over 400 buffer trees removed. BRT budget estimates are also highest in LFP, including \$83 million for property acquisition and permits and \$210 million for construction/ construction management. Transit benefits will be modest, only about 2 minutes, only north/east-bound, and only at peak rush hour. As a result, Sound Transit is spending nearly 10 times as much per minute saved in LFP, compared with the cost per minute of transit time saved on 145th Street.

The Council appreciates the recent communications and information that CEO Timm has shared with our community, including her personal time and attendance as well as her September 2023 response to our 2022 letter. This exchange has been helpful. **The Council would like to share with you what we have learned through this recent engagement and design work, along with our updated concerns and requests:**

- 1) The many property takings along with the removal of 40 buffer trees for the BAT lane, will bring bus traffic on both sides of SR 522 much closer to the front and back doors of over 100 LFP homeowners and several multi-family buildings. None of the other cities along the route will experience impacts on this scale.
- 2) Driveways from dozens of private homes, multi-family buildings, and businesses will enter and exit directly into an active bus lane, creating traffic and safety issues.
- 3) These takings will also result in the removal of parking spaces for local small businesses.
- 4) Property takings, coupled with the removal of hundreds of buffer trees and shrubs, will increase noise and reduce air quality by bringing these much closer to our residences and businesses. Adverse human health impacts will result from these impacts.

5) While the city appreciates Sound Transit's collaboration and work on retaining wall design, a retaining wall the length of many football fields, without the current tree buffer, will nevertheless reflect and magnify noise impacts on these same homeowners.

6) Construction will add 1.3 acres of new impervious surfaces affecting 3 fish streams and coupled with tree removals, will increase heat island effects.

7) Changes to the intersection at Bothell Way and 145th Street will prevent Sound Transit busses from serving this intersection at all and 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 allows multiplexes and affordable housing in the area.

8) 95,000 tons of dirt and debris (65% of the project total), will have to be moved for the BAT in LFP, creating massive trucking and construction impacts on our residents and businesses.

These are fundamental BAT harms that would have lasting serious adverse effects on our community, not aesthetic concerns or easily mitigated impacts. We understand that Sound Transit is facing a number of challenges in trying to improve transportation in the Puget Sound region, and LFP supports public transit improvements. However, based on current data, the Council believes that the BAT lane is not the right transit solution for Bothell Way through LFP.

We urge Sound Transit to reconsider the BAT proposal and work with us to develop an LFP transit solution based on queue jumps and signalized lights, an approach we believe will capture similar traffic flow and transit benefits, but without such disproportionate environmental, safety, community, and fiscal costs.

To guide your reconsideration and assist continued engagement, the city, and LFP residents have requested a detailed cost-benefit analysis comparing the BAT lane and a queue jump with signalized lights. We repeat this request. We request side-by-side data for both options on: 1) number, magnitude, and costs of property acquisitions; 2) number and location of trees to be removed with costs of removal and mitigation; 3) length, height, and estimated costs of the retaining wall; 4) permitting, construction and construction management costs; 5) amounts of impervious surfaces and construction debris; and 6) the transit benefit time saved. This is important information that will allow the city, the Council, the community, and Sound Transit to reach an informed conclusion about the preferred option.

There is also a convincing precedent for changing course and adopting a non-BAT solution. On 145th Street during peak eastbound congestion, Sound Transit's engineering solution includes queue jumps with signalized lights. In fact, the queue jump on 145th accounts for most of the 15 minute, peak eastbound afternoon travel time savings for the entire BRT buildout (see attached). Claims that the two traffic congestion situations are entirely different are not persuasive. Because LFP peak afternoon backups occur at 4 traffic lights, the queue jump with signalized lights should be especially effective in LFP. Moreover, the queue jump approach makes even greater sense on Bothell Way, because of the many dozens of private residences where property would be taken and adversely impacted in LFP.

Sound Transit is now implementing with great effectiveness on 145th Street what we are respectfully requesting for LFP. We hope you will analyze, reconsider, engage with us, and agree.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Tom French", with a large, stylized flourish extending to the right.

Tom French
Deputy Mayor and Council Chair
On behalf of the Lake Forest Park City Council

Councilmember Semra Riddle
Councilmember Lorri Bodi
Councilmember Larry Goldman
Councilmember Tracy Furutani

Cc: CEO Julie Timm

Year: 2044 PM Peak Eastbound	Time Between Stops No Build 2042	Time Between Stops With Build 2042	Time Saved (Minutes) Build Vs No Build	% of all Time Saved
148th and 5th Ave	-	-	-	-
145th/15th	13.3	5.5	7.9	50%
145th/30th	4.0	2.1	1.9	12%
Bothell Way/ 153rd	4.7	4.2	0.5	3%
Bothell Way/ 165th	3.0	2.1	0.9	6%
Lake Forest Park/Bothell Way	1.8	0.9	0.8	5%
Bothell Way/61st	3.1	2.7	0.4	3%
Bothell Way/68th	2.5	2.2	0.2	1%
Kenmore P&R	1.6	1.5	0.1	1%
98th/182nd	6.6	5.6	1.0	6%
185th/104th	2.5	1.6	0.8	5%
UWB	5.7	4.7	1.1	7%
Beardslee/195th	3.3	3.3	0.0	0%
I-405 Station	2.4	2.4	0.0	0%
Total Time	54.4	38.8	15.7	100%

Stride S3 Line

Bus rapid transit peak transit travel times from Bothell to Shoreline/148th Link Station (2044)

