

3 March 2023

Sound Transit Board of Directors:

I look forward to the increased transit service to my community which will come with Stride3 SR 522 NE 145 BRT. I regularly use public transit whenever feasible. I spent my career as a Landscape Architect in a multi-disciplinary design firm working for both public and private clients. I learned, particularly as a project manager the importance of documentation of the entire work/decision process. However, it has become apparent that the Sound Transit Staff (Staff) running this project has not followed this basic procedure.

I take issue with the Staff's handling of the following:

- From the public record it appears that Staff looked at three alternative alignments through the residential area south of LFP Town Center. The "West Shift" option was selected internally in June 2020, yet apparently was not presented to the Sound Transit Board until September 23, 2021. No documentation explains the decision process or evidence of community interaction, and no financial or other analysis was done concerning the decision to adopt the "West Shift." Nor was there any disclosed information why this is the best of the three alternatives. A full and complete analysis should have been done.
- I would note that this September presentation was 6 months after the Environmental Declaration of Non-Significance (DNS) was issued. Reading the Environmental Checklist that was prepared to support the DNS, one finds no quantitative discussion of the probable impacts. Perhaps not surprising since it was completed and rubberstamped well before the "West Shift" design requiring massive tree clearing and retaining walls had been presented to either the Board or the affected community. Deciding that the environmental issues can be adequately covered with a Checklist not an EIS does not relieve Staff of the responsibility to provide fair and accurate evaluation of the impacts from the project. In hindsight, if the project envisioned in the 60% design package is built, the Environmental Checklist and the DNS clearly appear to be inadequate.
- At the January 26th meeting of the Sound Transit Board, Staff defended their community outreach efforts. Yet, I understand that the SR522/145th BRT Elected Leadership Committee has not met since February 22, 2019. And, certainly the community has not had any previous adequate notice of the environmental and visual impacts now being presented as a fait accompli.
- At the September 23, 2021 Sound Transit Board Meeting, Sound Transit staff estimated the cost of SR522/145th BRT at \$544 million. Records indicate this was the meeting at which the "West Shift" alternative was presented and approved. In less than a year, corresponding to Design Development of that alignment, the cost estimate for SR522/145th BRT, increased by 25% to \$651 million. Unless proven otherwise, I would conclude that much of the additional \$107 million increased cost is directly due to the massive clearing and retaining walls needed to accommodate the "West Shift" design.
- Until earlier in this year, the community had no meaningful information available on which to base comments on the SR 522 NE 145 BRT design. A review of the on-line documentation for the 522 BRT Copy of Online Open House, March 2021, provides no useful illustration of the proposed impacts of the West Shift. The 30% Plan Rolls are inadequate to describe the proposed clearing and massive walls necessary to complete this alignment through LFP. No supplemental

graphics are provided to illustrate the impacts. Apparently, no knowledgeable public input was truly desired by Staff.

The public record clearly shows that the Staff has proceeded with design to the current 60% level without adequately documenting their analysis, presenting a full and honest review to the Board of Directors, nor providing adequate means for informed public comment.

The Sound Transit Board of Directors has a fiduciary responsibility to assure that taxpayer dollars are effectively and efficiently spent. I urge the Board to bring this project back under its control and direction, and to ensure the community is consulted at a meaningful level. The suggestions proposed by many others in the Lake Forest Park community deserve to be heard. Time is not the adversary. The best possible design, considering the full range of costs and impacts should be resolved before construction proceeds.

Thank you for your attention,

David Hepp
Lake Forest Park

Dear Sound Transit Board and Planners:

I'm writing in support of the Lake Forest Park City Council request to pause the Lake Forest Park segment of the SR522 widening project. I'm writing both as a Lake Forest Park resident and a King County taxpayer. As fourth generation Seattleite who has lived in the Sheridan Beach area of Lake Forest Park for the past ten years, I have great concern that the modest (at best) benefit of this expensive work does not outweigh the permanent environmental cost to our neighborhood.

I have long supported public transportation and often use the Sound Transit 522 bus and light rail. I was a supporter of the initial planning for the project but the minimal benefit and environmental cost has only become recently clear with the 60% plan. A two minute improvement on the time to traverse the route by bus for the entire route seems like a very modest benefit – and how many riders cover the entire route? And as I understand it, this is only an improvement in the North/Eastbound direction. I think it's likely that most work commuters are heading to work in the South/Westbound direction. I'm retired now, but when I was working it was more important to save time on the way to work 😊 A two minute improvement is inconsequential.

I came away from the November 30 outreach meeting in Lake Forest Park with the sense that there was no recent data supporting both the benefit of this segment and its impacts.

I believe that the data regarding need for transit services in this segment needs updating. It is assumed that ridership, down substantially during the pandemic, will increase over the long term. There is mounting evidence that this may not be the case. Prior to my recent retirement, I was an IT director at UW. I had spent literally years preparing for a remote workforce with rapidly evolving technology tools to increase productivity coupled with elements to support personal interaction and work socialization. I think that there is a widespread perception that the pandemic caused or forced remote work but from my perspective it was simply a catalyst that accelerated the change. Technology has a history of precipitating disruptive change and this is just another example. One hundred percent remote work may be rare but hybrid work for the many jobs that support it is here to stay. This will have a large impact on long term ridership which will not be offset by increasing population.

Another belief seems to be that those avoiding public transit because of health concerns will no longer have those concerns when (if) Covid subsides. However, it may well be that the acute concern with infectious diseases may lead some to continue to forego public transportation if the benefit doesn't substantially outweigh the convenience and safety of private transportation. After all, months after many have concluded that the Covid pandemic is over, local public health officials are encouraging all to wear masks indoors. Further, this project has already delayed the Lake Forest Park parking garage for decades. How will the need for commuters to find ad-hoc parking or walk longer distances to the bus stop affect their cost/benefit decision to forego public transportation?

At the November meeting, the project was characterized as a 100 year investment. I came away thinking that as a taxpayer, Sound Transit should be investing in a way that is nimble and responsive to vast changes in the cost/benefit ratio over a long period of time. The technology disruption of remote work has only emerged in the last decade. What other technologies will alter the cost/benefit over 100 years?

I've listed some links to recent articles below. Since this message may resonate with other taxpayers in the Puget Sound region, I intend to communicate it to local media outlets as well.

[Getting Rid of Remote Work Will Take More Than a Downturn - The New York Times \(nytimes.com\)](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/01/technology/remote-work-downturn.html)

[Will remote work continue in 2023? | The Seattle Times](https://www.seattletimes.com/business/remote-work-continue-2023/)

[Musk's about-face on remote work shows its value in recession | The Seattle Times](https://www.seattletimes.com/business/musk-remote-work-recession/)

I can say that most of my neighbors are very concerned about the project's impact to the qualities that led most of us here. I live a block off 522 on the 41st street dead end. Though we 41st residents won't feel the impacts like our neighbors on the West and East sides of SR522, we will definitely be impacted. Though there are many negative impacts, I'll focus my comments on increased traffic noise.

At the November 30 meeting Sound Transit representatives said the increase in traffic noise will be only 1 dB and that noise diminishes with distance. I wasn't sure whether the noise analysis encompassed the 60% design changes with tree/shrub removal and the long tall concrete retaining wall but it seems doubtful that the noise impact will not be greater than that. I lived at the Hamlin and Harvard intersection as a boy when the I5 freeway was opened in 1962. I have first-hand experience with the reflective impact of a concrete wall on traffic noise! Representatives seem to be considering the general "white noise" of traffic during commuting hours and spoke of the beneficial impact of quiet electric buses to offset the increase in bus traffic. But I can tell you as residents, we experience the traffic noise mostly from non-bus traffic and characterized by bursts of loud exhaust from trucks and other vehicles at all hours of the day and night. I noted that the analysis models forgive these bursts as acceptable if they occur only for fractions of an hour. The metric also fails to accommodate the increase in noise when traffic is on a hill such as it is along that stretch of SR522. The white noise will increase but the amplification of these sounds will be the most egregious impact for my neighbors. I'd be surprised if our distant neighbors across the lake in Kirkland won't also experience an increase in traffic noise.

Finally, the impact of traffic and parking in our neighborhood has not been fully accounted for given the postponement of the Lake Forest Park Center garage. I live close to the 165 bus stop that will be expanded under the plan. When asked at the November 30 meeting why this 165th expansion was needed, Sound Transit representatives alluded to analyses showing that commuters won't walk more than a mile or so to the bus stop. How many commuters will then park in our neighborhood? The ability of emergency vehicles is already hindered by vehicles parking on both sides of the street. Will the increase in parking mean that someone will lose their life because emergency vehicles couldn't get to them?

I hope you will consider the 90 day pause to provide more community involvement and update data.

Sincerely,

-John Drew
16136 41st Ave NE
Lake Forest Park

January 25, 2023

Chair Dow Constantine, and Sound Transit Board Members

I am a former 2 term Lake Forest Park City Council member. During part of my terms, I was also co-chair of the Seashore Transportation Forum. During this period the Forum encouraged its citizens to support and vote for ST-3 including the extension of Line 1 past Mountlake Terrace to Lynnwood. In one of Sound Transit's presentations to the Forum the widening of Bothell Way through Lake Forest Park was mentioned as saving 5 minutes in the time it took to transit this corridor. Being familiar with Bothell Way between 145th street and Brookside Blvd NE, I could easily surmise that the widening of Bothell Way would be a very expensive endeavor concluding with a low cost/benefit relationship of improved transit times.

Before committing vast sums of money to execute Resolution R2023-3, would it not be prudent to analyze and to cost a scheme of using Queue Jump Lanes with priority signal treatment as detailed in NACTO's Transit Street Design Guide. This approach is also being proposed for the intersection of Bothell Way and 145th Street.

In addition to lessening the negative impact to the environment, to most of the businesses and all of the homeowners on this corridor, the cost savings might allow for the adding of another floor or floors to the parking garages in Kenmore and Bothell. This approach might yield a much better cost/benefit relationship to this project.

Having greater parking capacity in the near future for the users of this transit system may be of greater user value than the 5 minutes or less of time in transit on this corridor.

Respectfully

Don Fiene
4014 NE 178th Street
Lake Forest Park, WA 98155-4214

December 8, 2022

Letter to Sheridan Beach CC, LFP Mayor and City Council

and LFP Stewardship Foundation

From: Jim Halliday and Tyson Greer

The last song that John Prine wrote starts out:

“I’ve been down this road before

I remember every tree

Every single blade of grass

Holds a special place for me”

My wife Tyson and I can’t hear that song without thinking about where we live --- Lake Forest Park.

In Lake Forest Park we are trying to preserve and enhance what we have. We are trying to save our trees and bring salmon back to our streams.

We attended the meeting on November 30th where Sheridan Beach Community Club had invited representatives from Sound Transit (ST) to listen to our concerns about their proposed widening of Bothell Way in our city to move people to the new light rail station at 145th.

It soon became evident that the representatives were not really interested in our concerns nor were they really very interested in adjusting their plans to accommodate them. In their minds it was obvious that this project is a fait accompli.

Earlier that day when Tyson and I drove up Bothell Way we could see surveying crews busy with their transits taking measurements and pounding in stakes. Hurrying the fait accompli.

We feel that much has changed since this project was conceived and planned years ago. The work-a-day world is no longer the same and the data ST used is no longer relevant. Covid has changed everything.

We support the efforts of our city to put the Lake Forest Park section of the plan on hold, until relevant data can be provided and at a minimum to demand that Sound Transit withdraw its DNS and re-open the SEPA threshold. WAC 197-11-340 says:

3)(a) The lead agency shall withdraw a DNS if:

(i) There are substantial changes to a proposal so that the proposal is likely to have significant adverse environmental impacts; or

(ii) There is significant new information indicating, or on, a proposal’s probable significant adverse environmental impacts; or...

Let’s pause the fait accompli in progress. Let’s have independent studies done about future ridership. Let’s examine what the true effect will be of not fully widening 145th between Bothell Way and the new

light rail station. Let's review whether the full impacts of the planned stormwater retention vaults will really be able to cope with changing climate conditions or release more stormwater to our creeks and Lake Washington. Then informed decisions can be made about whether this project is worth the cost to us in lost home values, taxes spent, citizen health and environmental welfare.

We think it may still be possible to create the environment in which we want to live.

If we fight for it.

Jim Halliday and Tyson Greer

PS – Here are some reasons we support re-opening SEPA discussions.

- 1) We need to review the stormwater catchment storage vault plans . Has ST adequately taken into consideration increased deluges we have been experiencing, as they may be releasing greater volumes of polluted stormwater through piping into our creeks or Lake Washington (which would further jeopardize salmonoids). And if the polluted stormwater is released into the soils, it would mean an increase in water above the homes on the east side of Bothell Way and 41st which would increase the potential for liquefaction of our sandy soils.
- 2) What would the effect be on the "Return Kokanee Salmon to our Streams Project"? It is our understanding that no development can be undertaken that "reduces environmental function". Widening Bothell Way, cutting down trees that reduces the canopy, continued congestion on 145th that will cause more exhaust from cars idling in our city, just doesn't seem to us to be complying with the law; and will harm community members' health as well as decrease home values, which in turn will affect our city's financial picture.
- 3) Trees – many citizens may not be aware that when trees are cut down in Lake Forest Park, our regulations require planting trees that in 30 years will replace that canopy lost, if each tree planted survives that long. That is a loss of environmental function for thirty years.
- 4) There also needs to be an I-Tree Analysis of the loss to the community and City (in dollars) of the "tree services" that those 439 "significant" trees slated for removal provide.
- 5) Note that the 439 trees identified for removal are only those that are at least 6" in diameter at breast height (defined as "significant" in the regulations). Our regulations do not count the trees that are only 5-7/8" or 4" or 3" or 2" or 1" that will be removed. Therefore, the actual number of trees to be removed is much higher than 439; and they will not be replaced.

Dear Chair Balducci, Vice Chair Roscoe, and members of the Sound Transit System Expansion Subcommittee:

Let's talk money. This letter is in regards to the Lake Forest Park portion of the SR522 NE145 BRT project and the cost/benefit/detriments of the project.

Stated Project Goal:

- Bernard Van De Camp at the SBCC Meeting at the Civic Club in November 2022 confirmed: The BRT speed gain from Seattle to the Bothell Campus is **ONLY 2 minutes** with the Build.

Project Cost:

- 2022 SR522 NE145 BRT Project Estimates published by Sound Transit 60% Design is \$651 million in 2022 dollars, but with WA State Construction increases up 14.1% , in 2023 dollars the cost increase adds (\$91,791,000) increasing the project cost to **\$ 742,791,000 in actual dollars.**

Project Budget:

- SR522 budget (in 2022 dollars) for 8 miles is \$626 million. The Lake Forest Park section of **1.2 miles** will cost in excess of \$250 million dollars (**40% of the total budget**) building the single dedicated bus lane **going North only.**

Property Acquisition Cost:

- The 2023 cost for property acquisition is estimated at **\$83 million** with 50% or more of the property acquisitions in Lake Forest Park to gain a north bound dedicated bus lane **running 1.2 miles from 145th to Ballinger Way.**
- In the 1.2 miles of the SR522 (or 6336 ft) there are 38 LFP property acquisitions with the average property takings every **166 ft** along the roadway

Ridership:

- Ridership has **declined 70%** since 2019. Covid became the catalyst for remote work and alternative shopping means now established in our region. Future projections of recession indicate large layoffs further reducing ridership in the coming future. Seattle ranks second in the nation for remote work and the downtown core remains empty with an average of 20% occupancy per high-rise. Hundreds of businesses are also shuttered in Seattle.

Why is it so expensive to build in Lake Forest Park?

- Lake Forest Park is a 4.147 sq mi City established in the 1950's as a forested bedroom community. It borders the North end of Lake Washington with the SR522 portion of the roadway going from Seattle North at 145th and running 1.2 miles to Ballinger Way, ending at the border of the City of Kenmore.
- The city of LFP is heavily forested with steep slopes running East from Lake WA to the West towards I-5
- SR522 was expanded to the safest maximum width in 2009 for the WSDOT SR522 project so further widening invades steep slopes on both sides of the roadway. This is the only portion of the BRT Project with this type of difficult topography and requires the highest construction costs per linear foot.

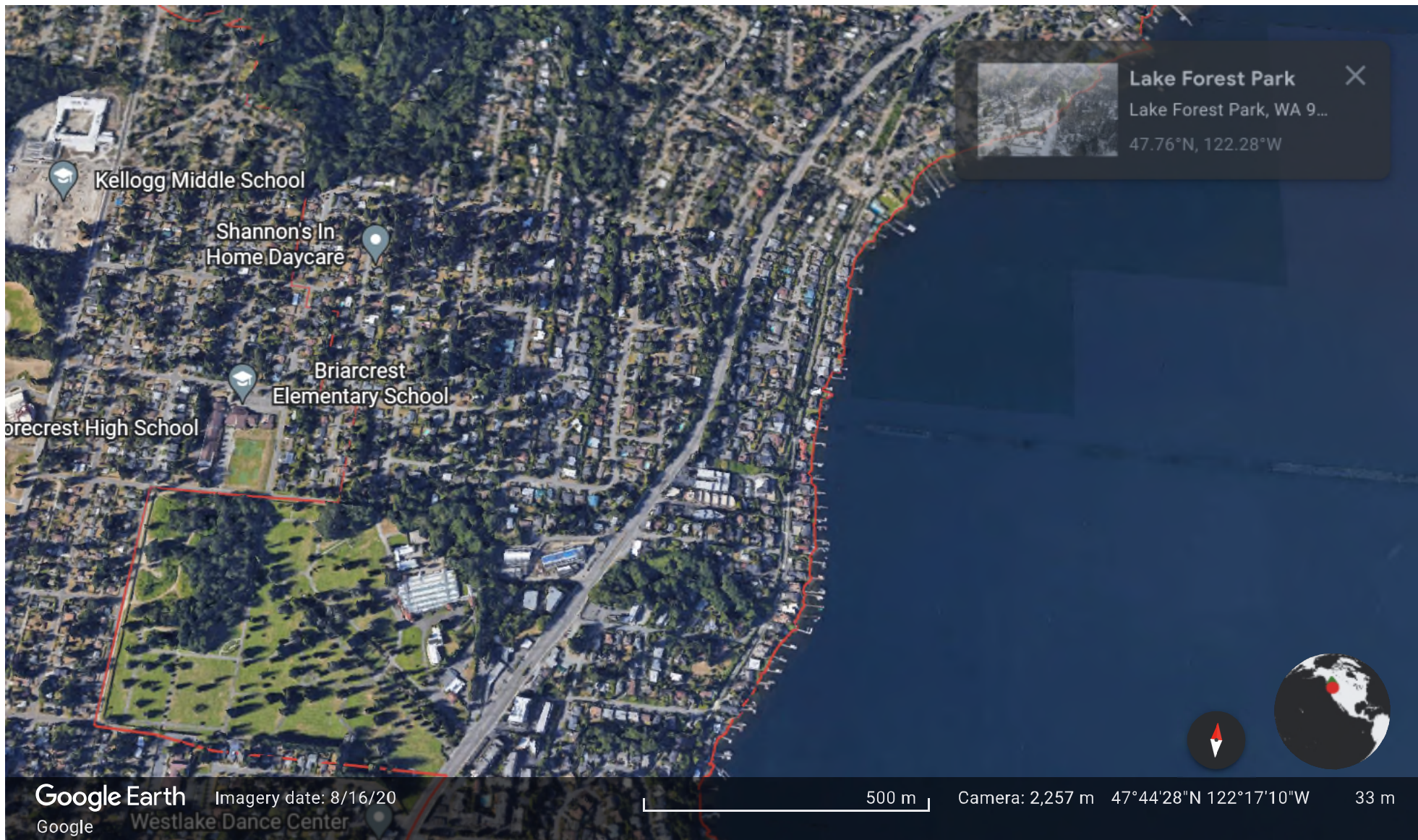
Project Impacts to the City and Residents:

- Project removes huge number of trees and permanently changes 'Lake Forest Park' identity
- It endangers documented Salmon streams and established nature habitats with noise and hazardous runoff. It endangers citizens due to dangerous construction methods and hazardous neighborhood exits required due to land topography- It impacts a higher percentage of property owners and small businesses than in any other city.

In conclusion, with no bus lanes to be added to the 145th portion, and with a South bound bus lane already present, it is financially irresponsible for Sound Transit to use our public dollars to the tune of \$250 million dollars to **establish a single 1.2 mile bus lane going North from 145th to Ballinger Way.** There are better ways to spend this money which is why I request that Resolution No. R2023-03 Lake Forest Park Property Acquisitions be permanently cancelled and a more effective way for this money to be spent. There are other real-world ways people transit from Lake Forest Park to the Light Rail at the 145th Station, and bus service has **INCREASED** in time (even with Covid) by over 30 minutes from Lake Forest Park to Seattle than in 2016 schedules.

Paula Goode

15348 Bothell Way NE, Lake Forest Park, WA 98155



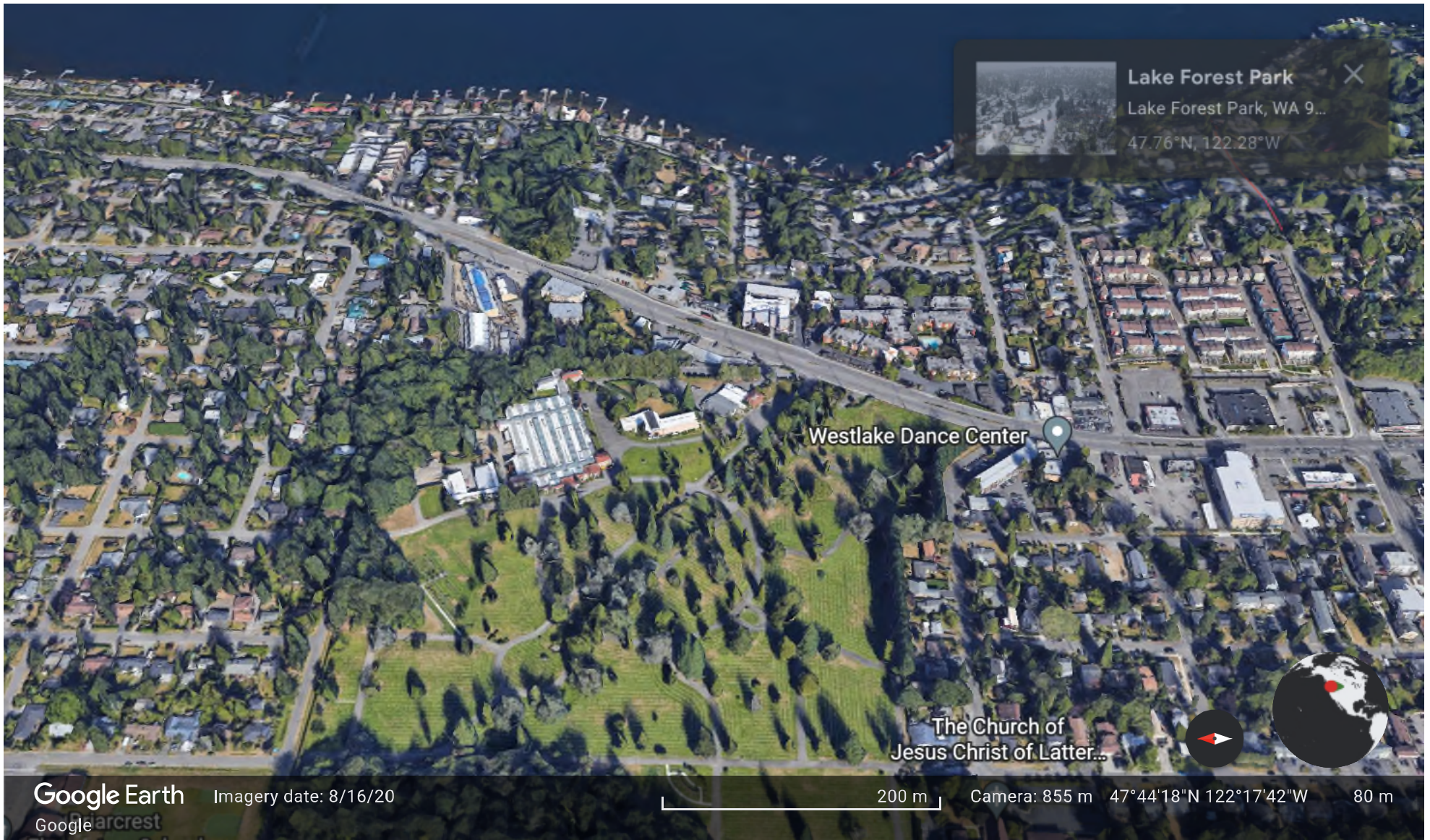
SR522 Route through Lake Forest Park - Looking North rising from approx 67' feet above sea level to 476' feet at the East most Border at Shoreline WA.



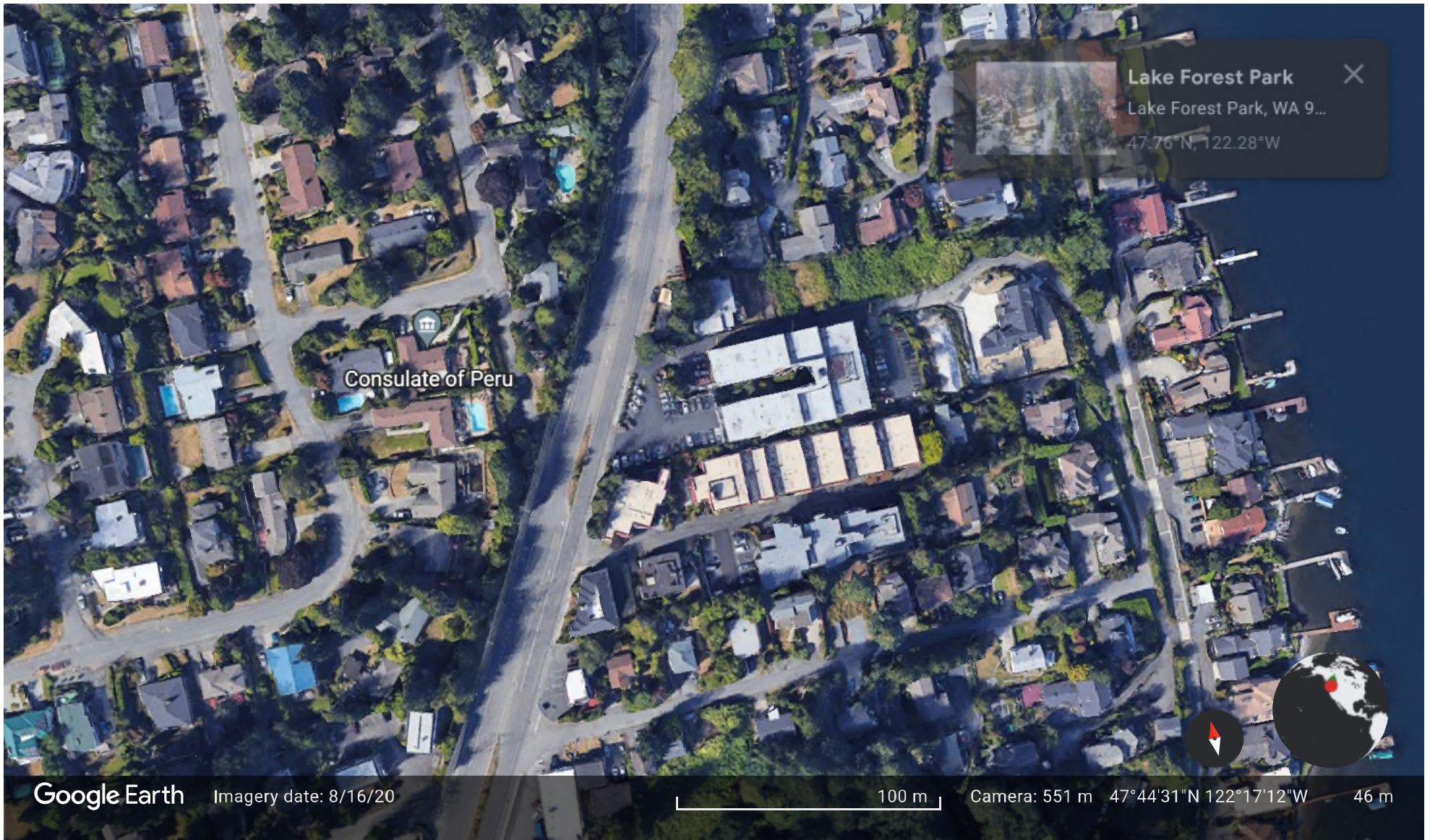
SR522 at NE 153rd Pinch-Point- This portion of the roadway is the most narrow with a steep slope on each side of the roadway. The trees behind the Bus Shelter represent a identified Salmon Stream (Bsche'tla) and this stream is approximately 100' feet BELOW this roadway. This is the area that has the steepest and highest slide area slope in the City of Lake Forest Park at 80 degrees and is LESS THAN 25 feet from the roadway.



Yellow Line Indicating Bsche'tla Stream running downhill from SR522 (1107 feet) to Lake Washington.
Treed area indicates steep slope and is approximately 100 ft down in center. These trees are documented to be higher than 120' feet with multiple Heritage Trees at the SR522 roadway itself.



View Looking East from Lake Forest Park to North End of Lake WA - Rising from approx 67' feet above sea level to 476' feet at the top of the hill.



View Showing Step Slope Topography



View Looking East at NE 155th looking towards Lake WA indicating slope present. Exiting out of this Dead End by the 50 or so residents lakeside (who's only exit this is) was deemed by Bothell Fire Marshall Jeff La Flamme as a safety hazard if the SR522 widening were to occur on the Eastside of the road in this area as planned.



View Looking North along Bothell Way NE and NE 155th indicating steep slopes on both sides of the roadway at the Historically Registered Sheridan Market. Sound Transit plans to extend the roadway to the East (right side of picture) but has not identified how the steep slope present at the roadway and behind the Sheridan Market would be reinforced. Bsche'tla Salmon Stream is present within 30 feet of the red door on the right of the structure. Reinforcing the slope would require mediation of 100 linear feet of slope from SR522 heading East, down 100 feet at 80 degrees. After two years of inquiry, there has been no answer as to how Sound Transit would safely reinforce the imminent slip hazard present.

Jon Peters
16011 41st Ave. NE
Lake Forest Park, WA 998155
January 10, 2023

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

Dear Board of Directors:

I am a relatively new resident of Lake Forest Park. I am writing to express some of my concerns about your ST-2 project and its effects on our neighborhood:

1. The placement of a bus stop on NE 165th Street – This is a main thoroughfare for entering and exiting the residential community. This placement of the bus stop will likely create the following issues:
 - a. A major congestion point for traffic because it is placed in a residential area that is widely used by residents. It seems like a traffic study should be conducted that takes into account timing of stops, timing of bus turnaround, and neighborhood traffic.
 - b. There could be a significant problem with parking, especially because you are delaying the parking garage. Most residents park on the street. An influx of cars could create a nightmare for residents. With this change occurring, I propose you conduct a study of the impact on parking for the residents now and in the summer when the Swim Club is operational.
2. While I do not have access to your ridership, everything I read says that it has fallen off drastically. I propose you update your ridership studies to reflect the trends that are occurring:
 - a. Many people do not want, or have to, commute back and forth. They prefer to work at home and businesses have found this acceptable.
 - b. Other individuals are concerned about heightened crime, more homeless people with mental and drug disorders, less police protection, and COVID exposure. People less willing to travel on mass transit.
 - c. There is a trend toward moving away from big cities and working much more remotely. This will reduce riders.
 - d. Your published ridership figures reflect the above changes. It looks like ridership is back to 2005 levels.

Board of Directors

January 10, 2023

Page 2

3. I am concerned about the level of noise created on the East side now that the plan is to put a wall on the west side. I speculate it would reflect more sound toward the east. When I asked this question at the Dec meeting, I was told it would not matter. It does to me as the traffic noise is already quite high. I suggest you conduct a noise study on the effects on noise of moving the wall to the West.

Additionally, I would like to mention that my observance from the meeting with your team that I attended is that your representatives were quite dismissive of the community comments. They did not project any type of genuine concern for the residents. People were brushed off with "It's being looked at" or arguments. Your literature stresses how well your team works with the community. I was quite surprised that most of the individuals did not even acknowledge what the residents were saying. In the end, this creates bad feelings on all sides.

I know you have a lot on your plate but I would ask that you "slow the train down" to resolve concerns.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jon Peters". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Jon Peters



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

January 11, 2023

Dear Chair Balducci, Vice Chair Roscoe, and members of the Sound Transit System Expansion Subcommittee:

I am concerned about the quality of communication among Sound Transit, their Board, the Lake Forest Park community, and the City of Lake Forest Park. I totally disagree with Faith Roland and Bernard Van De Camp, who stated at the November 17th Board Meeting, that there has been adequate and meaningful community outreach in Lake Forest Park.

The 30% - 60% Drawing Sets, have been developed without soliciting feedback from homeowners on both sides of Bothell Way. West side residents were not contacted about the magnitude of the alignment shift west (at 30% Documents, completed in 2021) creating major negative impacts to the community: scrubbing up to 16' within 63 homeowners property lines, demolishing nearly 500 trees and 500 shrubs, promoting environmental degradation, loss of habitat, harm to streams and wetlands; and replacement of the tree canopy with tall, blank, undifferentiated concrete retaining walls (requiring 5'-wide-permanent easements on private property, all along Bothell Way) with no mitigation for sound, landscape, privacy, or views of the highway.

For over 2-years, as these plans were drawn during COVID, there was no meaningful, direct one-on-one community outreach to westside residents or to the community—or City—as a whole. Now, Sound Transit seems to be confusing or conflating community outreach with acquisition outreach, which Sound Transit has stepped considerably up since mid-July.

This is why our City Council has asked Sound Transit to pause the design process, to respond to citizen's concerns in meaningful ways, that promote contextual design aligning with our values, mitigating this project's negative impacts, by reducing noise, pollution, environmental degradation, property takes, privacy issues, parking impacts, and diminished quality of life. If Sound Transit cannot accomplish this, perhaps these tax dollars are better spent elsewhere.

Is the Pain Worth the Gain or the Cost?

Bernard Van De Camp at the SBCC Meeting at the Civic Club in November 2022 confirmed:

The BRT speed advantage from Seattle to the Bothell Campus is 2 minutes with the Build.

2022 SR522 NE145 BRT Project Estimates Published by Sound Transit 30% Design: \$626 million; now \$651 million

Of the SR522 NE145 BRT budget of \$626 million (including all 8 miles) as much as \$250 million or 40% could be spent to build the 1.2-mile dedicated bus lane in Lake Forest Park. Property acquisition costs for 2023 alone are budgeted at \$83 million with 50% or more of the property acquisitions in Lake Forest Park, almost all necessitated by building the eastbound dedicated bus lane. This is a waste of tax payer money with little return.

Another consideration is ridership, which has declined as much as 70% since 2019. I rarely see a bus with more than four-to-six riders at any time of the day in LFP. COVID became the catalyst for remote work, now trending in our region. Now Seattle ranks second in the nation for remote work. The downtown remains uneasily empty, as workers opt to work remotely rather than accept free lunches, free parking or \$30,000 dollar raises to return to their once thriving offices.

Times have changed and no one can predict the future, but one thing is for sure, bad design does not get better with age. Please reconsider all of your assumptions for SR522 NE145 BRT and consider this wise old saying:

"It ain't what you don't know that will kill you. It is what you do know that tain't so."

(Please see my presentation on the following pages 2-8.)

With regards,

Vicki Scuri

15004 37th Ave NE, LFP 98155



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

Last fall, I created this presentation for the Lake Forest Park City Council, to visually illustrate my concerns regarding the design impacts to our City and especially to the west side of Bothell Way. I am attaching my presentation below, with annotations. When I created this presentation, I anticipated that our community would have input and impact on the design of the alignment. Still, I am hopeful that this will happen. My presentation is excerpted below.



This presentation received a unanimous positive response from our City Council. Our City supports transit. I voted for ST3, as did many of my neighbors. Our concern is that when we voted for ST3 in 2016, none of us knew the details of Sound Transit's plan or how it would impact our community as a whole.

Previously, I have worked for Sound Transit as a consultant and always, I have been impressed with how Sound Transit really tries to engage with communities and reflect their values. A good example of this is the South Bellevue Station, a project I worked on and know well. Here, nature and transit again collided, but Sound Transit went above and beyond to reach back to the South Bellevue community to reach a design solution that reflects their values and identity. This is why I am so dismayed with how this project has progressed. I realize that COVID played a role, but so did community Zoom Meetings that formed in a vacuum with few participants and no follow-up to encourage or solicit community comment, especially from all of the most impacted homeowners and businesses.

It is not too late to correct this process. At the November SBCC meeting where Sound Transit presented, I was surprised to learn that key members of the Design Team had never visited the site before that night. Paula Goode, a member of CORE and our community is sending you a letter with aerial and roadway views that illustrate roadway conditions and environmental concerns. I strongly encourage the Sound Transit Design Team and Board Members to visit our site and work with our community, Community Council and the City, to make this a project that we can all be proud of and will serve to benefit the present and future generations.



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

One of the challenges we face in the 21st century is humanizing our transportation infrastructure. These projects often, paradoxically, divide neighborhoods while seeking to connect others. Large scale efforts to increase mobility often impact neighborhoods at the human scale. Infrastructure can become a better neighbor by responding to its site, landscape and community. We must transform infrastructure from anonymous expressions of planning and engineering into amenities that celebrate and reflect local identity.



**Stride S3 Removes
439 Trees**

Stride S3 Removes a Mature Canopy with 439 Trees and Over 500 Shrubs



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



Stride S3 Impacts 16' Inside Property Lines of 24 Homes Along the West Side of Bothell Way

WSDOT Standard Patterning Above / 10'-12' Tall Wall Shown Below Creates a Dead Space





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



Stride S3 Wall and Black Chain Link Fence Do Not Provide Noise Mitigation or Landscape



Planted Retaining Walls and Sound Walls with Vines Growing from Top and Bottom



ST Proposed Solution



Preferred Solution

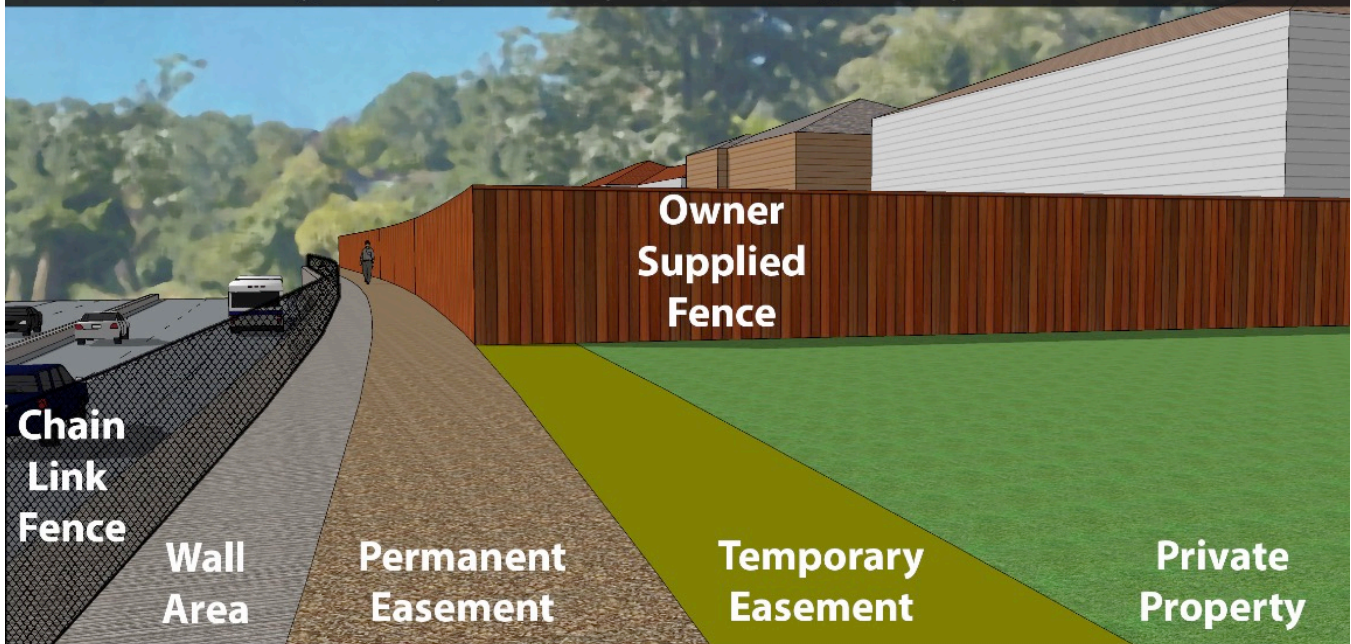


Who is CORE? We are concerned neighbors who live in LFP, who are sharing information of ST3 and its impacts on our community.



The Permanent Easement Proposed by Stride S3 Creates a No Man's Land, Between Fences

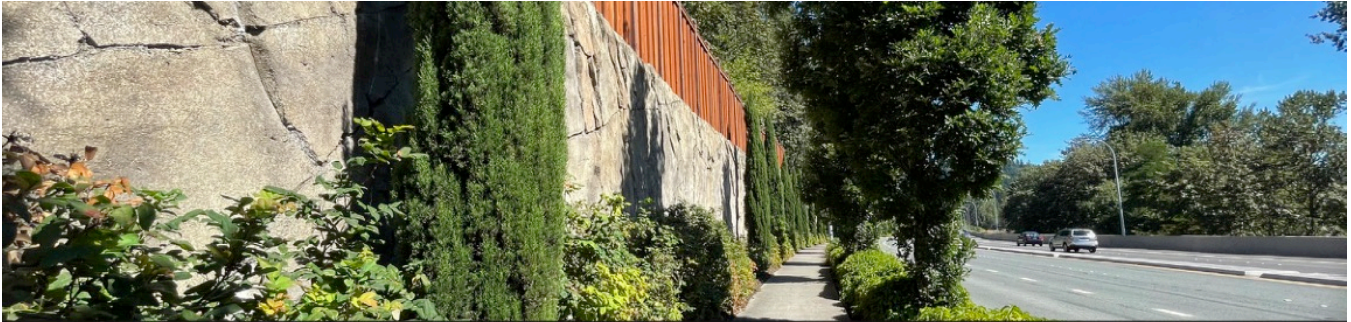
Homeowner Privacy, Security & Property Values are Impacted by the Permanent Easement



Stride S3 Provides a Black Chain Link Fence Only at Top of Wall



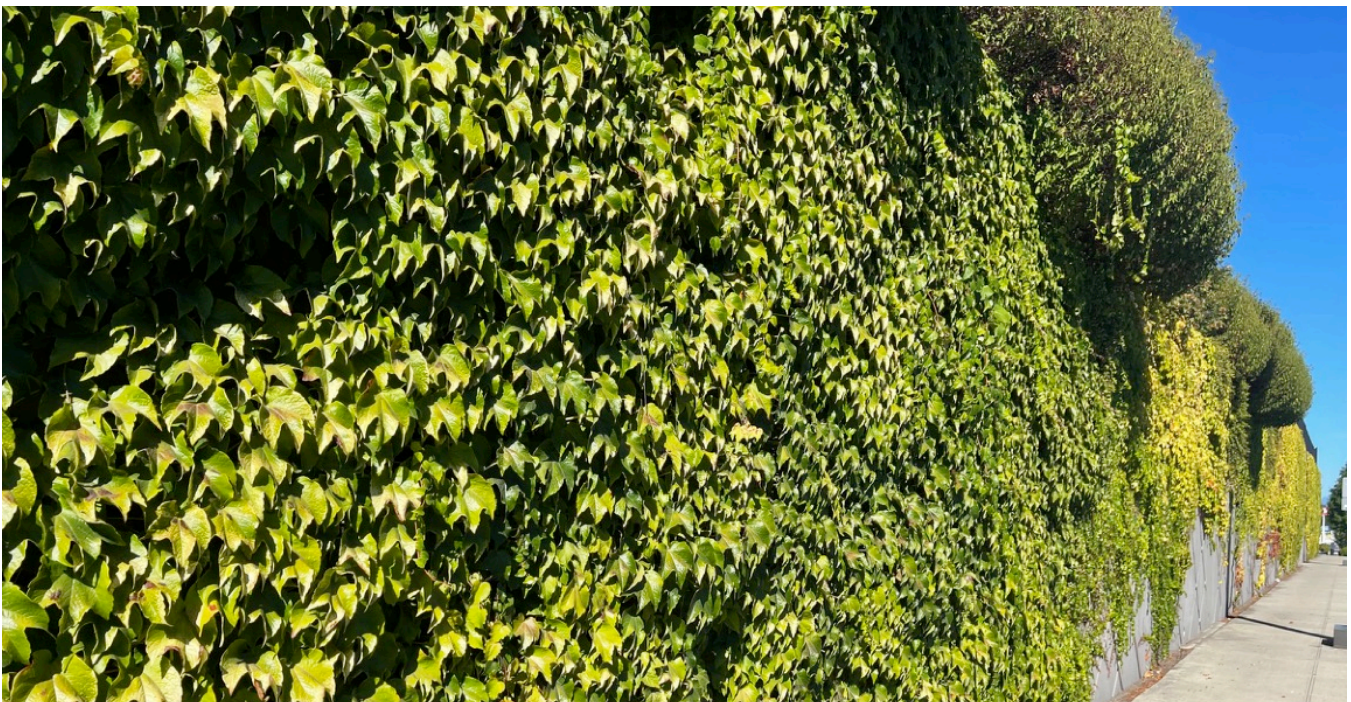
Who is CORE? We are concerned neighbors who live in LFP, who are sharing information of ST3 and its impacts on our community.



Along Bothell Way, a Narrow Band of Plantings Softens the Impact of the Wall and Road



In Kenmore, Vines and Hanging Plants Need Minimal Space and Care to Provide Greening



In Kenmore, Vines and Hanging Plants Need Minimal Space and Care to Provide Greening



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



Lake Forest Park Identifies with Trees



Patterning Reinforcing City Identity and Nature is Preferred Rather Than Generic Texture

Some Questions to Consider

What is the Gain?

What is the Pain?

Is the Gain Worth the Pain?

vicki@vickscuri.com

Jeff Snedden

January 12, 2023

Letter to the Sound Transit Board

The majority of Lake Forest Park citizens support mass transit and Sound Transit's overall goals. However, we are increasingly concerned about SR 522/145th BRT, specifically the construction of a 1.2-mile eastbound dedicated bus lane on HWY 522, the major thoroughfare through our small community, for three reasons.

- **Lack of a Business Case:** As taxpayers, transit riders, and supporters of mass transit, we do not believe there is business justification or an adequate return on investment sufficient to justify a capital expenditure of up to \$250mm to build a 1.2-mile dedicated eastbound bus lane in Lake Forest Park.
- **Negative Environmental Impacts:** As residents of Lake Forest Park, we believe Sound Transit should withdraw the Determination of Non-Significance issued for this project on March 23, 2021, based on the 30% design. The 60% design released on November 8, 2022, made significant changes that indicate probable and significant adverse environmental impacts in our community to our valued streams, wetlands, sensitive areas, steep slopes, landslide areas, impervious surfaces, stormwater runoff, noise pollution, and tree canopy to name a few.
- **Community Equity:** Lake Forest Park is the smallest community included in this project but bears the brunt of the impact far beyond the other communities. The roadway work here involves more than half of this project's private property/ROW acquisitions. The new bus lane brings traffic and noise pollution closer to residents than any other community, literally right into their front and backyards. Ours is the only segment with a large retaining wall, up to 16' tall, the length of 11 football fields, transforming our city gateway into a concrete wall. Traffic will be forced onto our local streets and near our schools during and after the project's completion. There is no reserved transit parking for commuters in Lake Forest Park, and there will be no parking garage until 2044.

The Business Case: It boils down to this. How much is saving less than 2 minutes' worth?

Sound Transit's goals for Stride BRT projects are clear: frequent, accessible, reliable, and fast bus service connections.⁽¹⁾ Frequent, accessible, and reliable have little to do with building a 1.2-mile dedicated eastbound bus lane here.

Fast bus service has two primary dimensions.

- Fast arrivals and departures. SR 522/145th BRT is designed for faster arrivals and departures with level boarding, off-board fare payment, multiple-door entry and exit,

double-wide bus stops, and signalized lights.⁽²⁾ None of this requires the construction of a 1.2-mile dedicated eastbound bus lane in Lake Forest Park.

- Fast transit time. Fast transit time is impacted to varying degrees by the combination of all roadway improvements, not just the addition of a 1.2-mile dedicated bus lane in Lake Forest Park.

We believe the return on investment on the estimated \$250mm cost to construct the 1.2-mile eastbound dedicated bus lane in Lake Forest Park does not make financial sense for Sound Transit, taxpayers, or transit riders.

Why? Because it does not meaningfully decrease transit times for bus riders going to or from the South Shoreline Light Rail Station and Bothell UW/Cascadia on the SR 522 bus.

First, a dedicated westbound bus lane is already running through Lake Forest Park.

As for eastbound HWY 522, traffic backups are highly related to traffic backups on 145th during peak hours.⁽³⁾ Regardless, traffic backups on this section of roadway in Lake Forest Park are concentrated over 15 hours, from 4 pm-7 pm, Monday through Friday. Outside of this 15-hour window, especially since the pandemic and work-at-home phenomenon, there are virtually no traffic backups of significance. And no traffic studies appear to have been done since 2018, 2 years before the pandemic's start.

Using a similar approach to that used in the March 2021 Appendix H Transportation Technical Memorandum⁽⁴⁾, current bus transit times were estimated using SR 522 published bus schedules over the current 6.5-mile 522 bus route (UW Bothell/Cascadia to Bothell Way/NE145th). Examining AM and PM weekday peak travel times shows a 4-minute longer westbound PM transit compared to the westbound transit. Specifically:

- 21 minutes at 18 MPH during the AM weekday peak hour.
- 25 minutes at 15 MPH during the PM weekday rush hours.

The PM weekday transit time has a higher overall peak hour traffic volume than its AM counterpart⁽⁵⁾, meaning the 4-minute difference over the 6.5-mile route is related as much, if not more, to the higher overall volume of traffic on the roadway than the lack of an eastbound dedicated bus lane in Lake Forest Park.

If Lake Forest Park had an eastbound dedicated bus lane, how much faster could the 522 make that 1.2-mile transit?

- No impact traveling westbound; there's already a dedicated bus lane.
- 30 seconds faster if the bus could average 16 MPH, which is one of Sound Transits' goals for transit speed once construction is completed⁽⁶⁾.

- 1 minute faster if the bus could average 18 MPH, the same rate as the westbound bus during peak AM weekday peak hours with a dedicated bus lane.
- 1 minute 45 seconds faster eastbound commute time if the bus could average 22 MPH, another of Sound Transits published goals for the SR 522/145th for the completed 8-mile roadway⁽⁷⁾.

A 2-minute shorter bus transit time that accrues from adding an eastbound dedicated bus lane in Lake Forest Park was confirmed by Sound Transit's Bernard van de Kamp at a recent meeting with Lake Forest Park residents.

When the \$626 million project is completed, can the 522-bus average 22 MPH, Sound Transit's goal over the 8-mile transit to and from Bothell to the South Shoreline Lite Rail station? Highly unlikely. To accomplish this:

- The average westbound speed would have to increase by 20%, from the current 18 MPH to 22 MPH: the average eastbound speed by 45%, accomplished over an 8-mile roadway with 19 stop lights, 2 stop signs, and 12 bus stations.

How many miles of the 8-mile roadway are without a dedicated bus lane now?

- Rerouting the 522 through downtown Bothell means no dedicated bus lanes could be built on this 1-mile stretch of the roadway.
- The roadway from 145th/Bothell Way to the South Lynnwood Lite Rail Station will not have dedicated bus lanes over this 1.5-mile stretch.

The entire route that could have dedicated bus lanes then is 5.5 miles, 11 miles both ways. Currently, on these 11 miles, nearly 80% of the available roadway already has dedicated bus lanes.

How many transit riders would benefit from a 2-minute shorter bus commute over the 3-hour weekday PM rush hour?

- Sound Transit's planned headway eastbound is 10 minutes or 6 times an hour, 18 times total during the 3-hour peak afternoon rush hour⁽⁸⁾.
- If each bus was an articulated bus seating 60 passengers and was full, and an additional 20 passengers were standing, less than 1,500 daily transit riders during the 3-hour weekday afternoon rush hour would benefit from the \$250mm less than 2-minute shorter commute in the afternoon.
- Will average daily bus boardings on the SR-522 route grow from the current 1,500 to the projected 8,900 per day in 2042⁽⁹⁾? Who knows. But to accomplish that by 2042 it would

take an annual compounded growth rate of 9% over the next 23 years to get to the 8,900 average daily boardings which seems more than aggressive.

How much of the I-405 BRT and SR 522 BRT investment of \$1.8 billion over a total of 46 miles of roadway is spent building the dedicated eastbound bus lane in Lake Forest Park?

- SR-522/145th budget is \$626mm, 34% of the \$1.8 billion
- Of the SR-522/15th BRT budget of \$626, as much as \$250mm or 40% is committed to build the 1.2-mile dedicated bus lane in Lake Forest Park.

And yet the Sound Transit staff flags significant budget risks that could quickly drive program costs up and delay project completion. Sound Transit's April 2022 Annual Program Review ⁽¹⁰⁾ highlights the risk of an inflationary rise in property acquisition (ROW) costs. Property acquisition costs for 2023 alone are budgeted at \$83mm ⁽¹¹⁾ 50% or more of the property acquisitions are in Lake Forest Park, almost all necessitated by building the eastbound dedicated bus lane. In addition, the report, dated April 2022, was based on the 30% design, not the 60% design, and notes the project completion date (2026) was already trending toward 2027.

What if the dedicated eastbound bus lane in Lake Forest Park was not built? Will Sound Transit still implement essential ways to deliver on the goals of transit time on SR522/145th?

They include:

- Short dwell-time features at stations, dual-bus platform length, level boarding, off-board fare payment, and multiple-door entry and exits.
- Double-length articulated buses, signalized stop lights, BAT lanes, and bus queue jumps.
- Fewer bus stations along the route.

These collectively will likely have a far more significant impact on delivering the goals of frequent, accessible, reliable, **and fast** bus service connections than building a 1.2-mile dedicated bus lane in Lake Forest Park.

There do not appear to be any documents that estimate the potential transit time savings for building the eastbound dedicated bus lane in Lake Forest Park. Other reports and online materials examined do not provide analysis rank ordering each of the various improvements to the roadway in terms of how much they contribute to a fast bus commute relative to one another vs what the cost of the improvements is. Absent this analysis, the answer appears to be "just build it all." Put another way, without this analysis, there is no business case to determine if the 1.2 mile \$250mm dedicated bus lane that reduces eastbound PM weekday peak hour transit times by less than 2 minutes has a sufficient return on capital invested relative to other improvements to justify building it.

Add this to the impacts on Lake Forest Park on our environment and our City, and you should be able to understand our concern.

The lack of a business case alone cries out for the construction of the 1.2-mile dedicated eastbound bus lane to be reconsidered by the Sound Transit Board.

This was and is the purpose of Sound Transit's Realignment Process started in early 2020 when the agency faced an estimated \$6.5 billion affordability gap for delivering projects on their previous schedules, culminating in a plan approved in August 2021. As noted in the April 2022 Annual Program Review Report ⁽¹²⁾, the Realignment Process "instructs staff to produce Annual Program Reviews to apprise the Board and the public of major project changes, risks, or other developments in a timely manner."

April 2023 is three months away. Now is the time to reexamine the business case for building the 1.2-mile dedicated eastbound bus lane in Lake Forest Park.

And, as pointed out by Roger Millar, WSDOT Secretary, and Sound Transit Board member, on February 25, 2021, in a letter ⁽¹³⁾ to Kent Keel, Chair of the Sound Transit Board, "let us use the realignment process to thoughtfully redirect funds to get the highest return on our investment."

With Sound Transit facing a \$6 billion affordability gap; with lower post-pandemic bus ridership and traffic volumes remaining 33 months after the start of the pandemic; with an inflationary economy and likely recession in 2023; and in the spirit of the Sound Transit Realignment Process, the construction of a 1.2-mile dedicated eastbound bus lane in Lake Forest Park is a textbook example of a project the Sound Transit Board should scrutinize to determine if the cost of building it provides the best possible return on investment among all the other options, Sounder, Link Lite Rail, and BRT.

Footnotes

- (1) [Stride S3 bus rapid transit | Project map and summary | Sound Transit](#) Stride BRT projects are clear: frequent, accessible, reliable, and fast bus service connections
- (2) March 2021 Appendix H Transportation Technical Memorandum, pg. 17 reliability improvements, including BAT lanes, transit queue bypass lanes, Transit Signal Priority
- (3) March 2021 Appendix H Transportation Technical Memorandum pg. 28 delays on the Lake Forest Park section of HWY 522 are heavily impacted by heavy traffic volumes at the intersection
- (4) March 2021 Appendix H Transportation Technical Memorandum pg. 14 estimate bus transit time
- (5) March 2021 Appendix H Transportation Technical Memorandum pg. 15 higher peak hour traffic volume than the AM counterpart
- (6) 2020 Community Engagement Guide, pg. 4 30 minutes end to end
- (7) [Stride S3 bus rapid transit | Project map and summary | Sound Transit](#) 22 minutes/22mph
- (8) March 2021 Appendix H Transportation Technical Memorandum pg. 1 planned headway is 10 minutes
- (9) Sound Transit System Performance Tracker [System performance tracker | Ridership | Sound Transit](#) Will daily bus boardings
- (10) April 2022 Annual Program Review pg. 48-51 highlights several risks, including inflationary rise in property acquisition
- (11) Agency Progress Report February 2022, pg. cost of ROW
- (12) April 2022 Annual program Review pg. i Realignment Process “instructs staff to produce Annual Program Reviews
- (13) Letter from Roger Millar to Kent Keel dated February 25, 2021