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Re: Comments on 60% design for ST3 SR 522 BRT through Lake Forest Park

Dear Members of the Sound Transit Board and Managers of the ST3 Project:

We are submitting these comments as long term residents of Lake Forest Park (LFP) and in our individual capacities as a Councilmember and Deputy Mayor for the City of LFP. The current plan for the ST3 BRT through LFP includes road widening for a dedicated north/east bound bus lane for 1.2 miles and three large bus stops, at a cost of hundreds of millions of dollars. ST's own data show that this will save commuters about 2 minutes – and only during peak commute times heading in one direction.

Recently, the LFP City Council unanimously requested ST to “hear our citizens' concerns and work directly with the City and our community to develop new design refinements, including: 1) significant reductions in the amount of tree canopy destruction and property acquisitions; 2) to better address and improve mitigation plans for noise, tree removal, and environmental impacts; and 3) to rethink and reimagine the retaining wall design, safety, and landscaping.” The following comments reflect this request.

A majority of LFP citizens, ourselves included, voted for ST3 because we support efficient regional public transit. But this is not the project and impacts we voted for: these two minutes would come at a steep environmental and community cost. Making design changes is a matter of equity. Our city is the smallest and most heavily impacted community of the entire 4 city project, as well as the costliest segment of the route. Our segment has:

- the largest residential density of any segment, over 75 homes in less than a mile and 40% of ST's property acquisition budget;
- more than half of all private property acquisitions for the BRT;
- the only new bus lane, bringing traffic, noise, and pollution much closer to residents, literally right into their front and backyards -- and creating ingress and egress safety issues;
- the greatest density of native trees and vegetation to be removed: more than 400 significant trees and 500 smaller ones, representing two thirds of all trees removed for the project, along with increases in both greenhouse and noise impacts.
- the largest retaining wall, up to 16' tall and 4,000 feet long, the length of 11 football fields, transforming our city gateway into a wall of concrete;
- huge hillside and steep slope excavations and construction, plus removal of 28 trees on a steep slope designated a “landslide hazard” that has already failed in the past, along a fish stream;

- the largest stormwater runoff impacts, increasing impervious surfaces by 1.3 acres, and affecting three fish streams;
- the largest noise impacts of any segment, including several properties considered “unacceptable for residential land use without mitigation.”

In order to reduce and mitigate these impacts effectively, the following design changes should be made before proceeding further with the project through LFP:

- Rather than a full new bus lane, the use of “jump the queue” lanes, as being implemented on 145<sup>th</sup> Street. This would greatly reduce the magnitude of property acquisitions and tree removals and alleviate project noise, pollution, and safety impacts.
- Smaller bus stop designs at 153<sup>rd</sup> and 165<sup>th</sup> Street, which would similarly reduce the magnitude of property acquisitions and tree removals and alleviate project noise, pollution, and safety impacts.
- A retaining wall design that includes 1) tree design or other natural features and noise mitigation as part of the concrete, 2) greenery and/or vines along the wall, and 3) wood-look fencing rather than chain link at the top and elimination of the easement “dead zone” at the top that will create public safety risks.
- Tree replanting mitigation that is in place to the fullest extent possible, that retains a green corridor all the way along SR 522 through LFP.

Our City and community are not against transit or transit improvements, but are advocating these and other changes to provide less costly, less impactful, and more environmentally sound alternatives. There is a win-win for ST and LFP here if ST truly listens to our community.

Thank you for your consideration and concern for the environment and community of LFP.

Respectfully,



Lorri Bodi  
Lake Forest Park City Councilmember



Thomas W. French  
Deputy Mayor, The City of Lake Forest Park