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July 14, 2015

Sound Transit Board
 c/o Board Administrator
 Sound Transit
 401 S. Jackson Street
 Seattle, WA 98104

RE: City of Bellevue Interest Statement on Sound Transit's Priority Project List for the Phase 3 (ST3) System Plan

Dear Chair Constantine and Members of the Board:

We appreciate the opportunity to comment on the draft Sound Transit Phase 3 (ST3) Priority Project List (List). The City of Bellevue has a significant interest in ensuring that future regional transportation projects maximize the investments of ST2 and meet the growing needs of the Eastside and the region. Bellevue has been engaged throughout the Long Range Plan Update process and now the ST3 System Plan development. The attached "Interest Statement" and the specific projects listed in this letter reflect the City Council's highest priorities, in order. We strongly urge the Sound Transit Board to include these priorities in the ST3 System Plan.

Bellevue's priorities acknowledge and emphasize the many interests and goals shared among Eastside cities. It is imperative that the ST3 System Plan address the needs of the Eastside in a comprehensive fashion to serve the substantial population and employment growth that is expected and to maintain the principles of subarea equity (i.e. Utilizing local tax revenues for transportation programs and services that benefit the residents and businesses of a subarea generally in proportion to the level of revenues contributed by that subarea). The ST3 System Plan must recognize that high capacity transit (HCT) connections among and between Eastside cities are as vital to the overall regional network as cross-lake connections. It is also important that future expansion of the system recognize local land use and transportation plans and conscientiously balance those with regional priorities. Finally, it is also important to note that Bellevue's priorities and interests align with all eight *core priorities* identified by the Sound Transit Board for development of the ST3 System Plan.

Following is a list of the City's priority projects to accompany the priorities in the attached interest statement. These projects are essential to maximize the investments of ST2 and to serve the future growth of the Eastside and the region. The Bellevue City Council strongly urges the Sound Transit Board to include these projects in the priority project list for further analysis and evaluation and for inclusion in the ST3 System Plan.

- 1. Complete ST2 East Link LRT to Downtown Redmond (per the Record of Decision)**
- 2. Fully Implement I-405 BRT from SeaTac to Lynnwood Consistent with the I-405 Master Plan**

City of Bellevue offices are located at 450 110th Avenue NE

- Alternative routing for northbound I-405 BRT that exits at I-90 to Bellevue Way SE to serve South Bellevue Station, East Main Station, and Bellevue Downtown along arterial streets before returning to I-405 via the NE 6th St direct access ramp;
- Service improvements paired with I-405 BRT related capital projects;
- Freeway-to-Freeway HOV ramps between I-405 and SR-520—south leg to east leg—in East King;
- NE 6th Street Extension in Bellevue;
- Freeway-to-Freeway HOV ramps between I-405 and I-90 to and from Issaquah in East King;
- In-line BRT station at 112th Street SE and expansion of Newport Hills Park-and-Ride in Bellevue.

3. Strategically Implement System Access Improvements

- Include an elevated crossing of NE 8th Street at the Eastside Rail Corridor to provide access between Wilburton Station, located on the north side of NE 8th Street, and the Wilburton area on the south side of NE 8th Street. The crossing will serve people walking and bicycling along the planned Eastside Rail Corridor multi-use trail as well as provide access from the street level of NE 8th Street;
- Add park-and-ride capacity to the system, including new facilities for north Sammamish and Issaquah. Increase system connectivity for light rail, bus, and automobiles through consideration of additional parking in collaboration with Bellevue and the private sector in the area between the Wilburton Station and Downtown Bellevue, including the possibility of joint layover space for Metro and Sound Transit;
- Coordinate with Bellevue and King County to implement the three-party agreement for realignment of 120th Avenue NE to increase TOD potential at the OMSF site;
- Evaluate and implement emerging technologies that can be applied to improve access and increase use of the system.

4. Provide a High Level of Transit Connecting Eastside Cities

- Evaluate and implement cost-effective high capacity transit (e.g. light rail, bus rapid transit) connecting Kirkland to Bellevue to Issaquah;
 - Eastside Rail Corridor offers an opportunity for serving that segment from Kirkland to Bellevue;
 - Wilburton Station and the Bellevue College Connector to the I-90 corridor should be components of the Bellevue to Issaquah segment;
 - New stations constructed at Totem Lake, Kirkland Downtown, South Kirkland, Eastgate, and Issaquah.
- Increase Regional Express Bus Service, including all-day frequent service:
 - Between Redmond and Crossroads in Bellevue with stops at Redmond Transit Center, Redmond Technology Center, Overlake Park-and-Ride, Crossroads Shopping Center, and Bellevue Transit Center. Service improvement paired with NE 6th Street extension over I-405 to connect to Bellevue Downtown Transit Center;

- Between Kirkland and Factoria in Bellevue with stops at Kirkland Transit Center, Houghton Park-and-Ride, Redmond Technology Center, Eastgate Park-and-Ride, and Factoria Boulevard. Service paired with Bellevue College Connector;
- Between Eastgate and UW Station with stops at Bellevue College, Bellevue Transit Center, Yarrow Point Freeway Station, Evergreen Point Freeway Station, Montlake Interchange, and UW Station. Service improvement paired with Bellevue College Connector and NE 6th Street extension over I-405 to connect to Bellevue Transit Center;
- Between Issaquah and Mercer Island with stops at Issaquah Highlands Park-and-Ride, Issaquah Transit Center, Eastgate Freeway Station – and including an alternative routing with stops at South Bellevue Station, East Main Station, and Bellevue Transit Center. This service is paired with the new park-and-ride in Issaquah.

5. Implement a Highly Integrated System

- Develop integrated service plans with King County Metro consistent with Bellevue's *Transit Master Plan*;
- Improve system access through improved connections to stations (see priority 3 above).

6. Consider High Capacity Transit along the Eastside Rail Corridor

- Segment connecting Kirkland and Bellevue;
- Light rail or bus rapid transit;
- Preserve regional trail throughout the corridor.

7. Include the Bellevue College [Regional] Connector Project

- Between the intersection of 142nd Place SE and SE 36th Street on the south end and SE 24th Street and Kelsey Creek Road on the north end. The corridor spans the length of the 142nd Pl SE Bridge over I-90 from SE 36th St to SE 32nd Street, continues north along Snoqualmie River Road to its intersection with Kelsey Creek Road, and proceeds north to SE 24th Street;
- Snoqualmie River Road roadway surface reconstruction to support increases to frequent bus service, construct sidewalks and provide accessible bus stops and modify the 142nd Pl SE/SE 32nd St Intersection;
- Separated off-street path connecting 145th Pl SE bikes lanes to the Mountains to Sound Greenway Trail;
- Weather protection on 142nd Pl SE for people who use transit, walk, and bicycle;
- College Transit Center along the corridor;
- All-day frequent service with the increase in regional express bus service described above.

8. Support Transit-oriented Development (TOD) Consistent with Local Plans

- Make remnant properties available for TOD;

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- Fund capital improvements to facilitate development and ridership;
- Support affordable housing as part of TOD consistent with the goals of the Growing Transit Communities Partnership.

Bellevue will continue to be engaged in the development of the ST3 System Plan in collaboration with other Eastside cities and Sound Transit. We would welcome the opportunity to provide information during the next phase of analyzing the priority projects and developing the draft ST3 System Plan. Thank you for considering the City of Bellevue's comments. Please contact David Berg, P.E., Transportation Department Director (dberg@bellevuewa.gov, 425-452-6468) if you have any questions or want to discuss in greater detail.

Sincerely,



Claudia Balducci
Mayor

cc: Bellevue City Council
Brad Miyake, City Manager
Mike Harbour, Acting CEO, Sound Transit
Ric Ilgenfritz, Deputy Director, Sound Transit

Attachment:

- City of Bellevue Interest Statement Concerning Sound Transit's Phase 3 (ST3) System Plan