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City of Bellevue
Interest Statement Concerning Sound Transit's Phase 3 (ST3) System Plan
~~June 22~~ **July 13, 2015**

The City of Bellevue has long embraced and advocated for a multimodal approach to addressing local and regional transportation challenges. The network of highways, high-occupancy vehicle facilities, express and local bus service, regional trails and future light rail serving our region and the Eastside must work as a highly integrated system to serve the needs of the growing population and to sustain a healthy economy.

Looking at the expansion of the regional system beyond ST2 is timely now that East Link is progressing and will be operational by 2023. The planning and implementation of the ST3 System Plan will extend beyond the next 25 years. ST3 must be integrated with and support local and regional plans that have identified areas for significant growth over that time period. The City of Bellevue urges the Sound Transit Board to build on the implementation of ST2, especially East Link light rail, to make the most of those investments in keeping with 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 following projects, in order of priority, are critical to developing a more extensive and efficient transportation system that better serves the current and future needs of Bellevue, the Eastside and the region:

1. ***Complete ST2 Light Rail to Downtown Redmond.*** Bellevue strongly re-affirms its support for completing East Link light rail to Downtown Redmond as envisioned in ST2. This should be the first project designed and constructed in any ST3 funding package.
2. ***Fully Implement Bus Rapid Transit from SeaTac to Lynnwood Consistent with the I-405 Master Plan.*** I-405 bus rapid transit has been partially implemented since the I-405 Master Plan was adopted in 2002. Fully implementing bus rapid transit along the entire I-405 corridor from SeaTac to Lynnwood, is an essential component for the Eastside and the region. High-quality bus rapid transit on I-405 is the north/south spine needed to connect Eastside cities with frequent, reliable transit and complement the east/west spine provided by East Link light rail.
3. ***~~Develop a Strategic Plan to Strategically Implement~~ Maximize System Access Improvements.*** In order to maximize the benefits of the system, it is critical that ST3 projects include an array of access improvements such as: expanded regional park-and-ride capacity; safe and accessible bike and pedestrian connections; and opportunities for transit-oriented development, including affordable housing, within walking distance of high capacity transit stations consistent with local plans. Sound Transit should coordinate with other transit providers and WSDOT to ensure the entire high capacity transit system has adequate and strategically placed park and ride lots at the outer edges of the region to intercept trips "upstream" in highly traveled corridors. **Sound Transit should evaluate new**

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technologies that emerge over the life of the ST3 System Plan and implement those that can improve access and increase use of the system.

~~4. **Increase Regional Express Bus Service.** Sound Transit's regional express service is integral to the success of ST3. Regional express service is necessary to supplement the high capacity transit component of the system and to provide interconnectivity among Eastside cities and the region. {Combined with revised priority 4 below}~~

5.4. Provide a High Level of Capacity Transit Connecting Kirkland-Bellevue-Issaquah Eastside Cities. Cross-lake traffic represents only one portion of regional travel patterns. A growing proportion of trips are destined for or occurring among Eastside cities due to the growth in population and increased employment on the Eastside. One of the most important corridors to serve current and future growth is a high-capacity connection from Kirkland to Issaquah via Bellevue. Along with East Link and I-405 bus rapid transit, connecting the three ~~cities~~ regional growth centers along this corridor would add an important third high capacity transit spine to the Eastside network. Sound Transit should evaluate the cost-effectiveness of light rail, bus rapid transit, or a combination of modes that can cost-effectively connect Kirkland, Bellevue and Issaquah. The Eastside Rail Corridor offers an opportunity for serving that portion of the connection between Kirkland and Bellevue and the Bellevue College connection ~~could~~ should be a component of the Bellevue to Issaquah segment. Increased regional express bus service is integral to the success of ST3. Regional express service is necessary to supplement the high capacity transit component of the system and to provide interconnectivity among Eastside cities and the region.

6.5. Implement a Highly Integrated System. One of the core priorities of the ST3 System Plan is system integration among transit providers. Bellevue's *Transit Master Plan*, Proposed Frequent Transit Network, is a critical component to improving future mobility for the Eastside. ST3 projects must be based on close coordination among local jurisdictions and transit providers to ensure a fully integrated, multi-modal approach to optimize the effectiveness of the regional network.

7.6. Consider High Capacity Transit along the Eastside Rail Corridor. The Eastside Rail Corridor is a valuable regional and local asset that provides exciting opportunities for a combination of high capacity transit and regional trail facility in the same corridor connecting Kirkland and Bellevue, at a minimum, and potentially extending south to Renton and north to Woodinville. Bellevue strongly supports consideration of the corridor for high-capacity transit (i.e. light rail as well as bus rapid transit). It is important that planning for the corridor is consistent with Bellevue's 2013 Eastside Rail Corridor Interest Statement, particularly as it relates to long term implementation activities: *"Ensure affected local intersections and state highway interchanges along the corridor are carefully analyzed, planned and phased, especially where there are overlapping or competing interests for uses of the ERC right-of-way in highly constrained locations."*

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8.7. Include the Bellevue College [Regional] Connection in the Next Plan. Bellevue appreciates the Sound Transit Board's inclusion of the 142nd Place SE transit corridor serving Bellevue College's increasing student population in the *Long Range Plan Update*. Eighty percent of the trips coming to the college originate outside of Bellevue and improving this corridor will provide significant operational reliability and travel time savings for transit. The City urges that this project be a priority in the ST3 System Plan.

9.8. Support Transit-oriented Development (TOD) Consistent with Local Plans. Sound Transit should partner with cities to implement TOD around light rail stations, when consistent with local plans, through strategic use of remnant property and capital investments that facilitate TOD and ridership. TOD should include affordable housing consistent with the goals of the Growing Transit Communities Partnership.