



September 7, 2023

Phillip Hill
City Administrator
City of Lake Forest Park
17425 Ballinger Way NE
Lake Forest Park, WA 98155-5556

Subject: Stride Bus Rapid Transit (S3)

Mr. Hill,

Thank you for the ongoing collaboration to advance the Stride SR 522/145th Ave NE project (“S3”). This letter serves as an official response to the letter Sound Transit received from the City of Lake Forest Park requesting a formal pause on all project related activities within the City.

I know that the Lake Forest Park City Council is aware of the Sound Transit Board’s decision to continue advancing the project, and I want to reassure you that we have heard your community’s concerns about the project and requests for increased transparency and engagement. Since we received your letter, Sound Transit staff have made it a priority to increase our engagement with the City, WSDOT, and the greater north end Community on the S3 project plans, design, and future service. Through our Spring 2023 engagement, we heard concerns largely related to tree canopy, design elements, safety and pedestrian enhancements, as well as the final aesthetic condition of the retaining wall along Bothell Way in Lake Forest Park.

This feedback is consistent with comments I heard directly from the Lake Forest Park City Council and subsequent public testimony when I attended your July 13, 2023 council meeting. It was clear that the people of Lake Forest Park have concerns with Sound Transit’s approach to building, operating, and maintaining our transit operations along the Bothell Way/SR 522 corridor. At the City Council meeting, I committed to hosting a Stride S3 listening session with the greater community to allow for information sharing between the agency and the public. This community meeting was held on August 3, 2023 in Lake Forest Park where 200+ individuals attended and made comments on the Stride program. While many of the verbal and written comments were consistent with the concerns listed above, we did receive written comments expressing approval of the pedestrian and transit enhancements that are currently incorporated into our project design.

We understand that one of the major concerns of the City, and the greater community, is the number of trees anticipated to be displaced by the project. As

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Julie E. Timm

you are aware, Sound Transit has been working with the City on a tree replacement plan for the trees identified to be displaced. In parallel, we have refined the project design to reduce the number of trees impacted by the project by roughly 20%. We have also been working closely with WSDOT and your City staff to identify a solution to the retaining wall aesthetics, including the wall pattern, vegetation, and fence requirements. The City, WSDOT, and Sound Transit are now working to formally memorialize the progress we have made on this project element.

In addition, Sound Transit is reviewing BAT lanes and how they compare to bus queue jumps on this section of state highway. This analysis will provide extra reassurance that Sound Transit is committed to building the best possible project for the North End communities as well as future transit riders. We expect this work to be completed by October and will share this work with the City and community upon completion.

In addition to the work mentioned above, Sound Transit commits to continuing to engage with the greater community as the project progresses. In the near term, our team will be hosting a small group meeting with CORE and other interested community groups to discuss the project and the work the team has done to date. We also commit to general Fall 2023 engagement activities, which will include drop-in sessions in each of the Stride S3 communities. These drop-in sessions will highlight the 90% design revisions and focus on what to expect as the project moves towards construction. Once those dates have solidified, we will work to advertise these events to the greater community.

Thank you for your ongoing collaboration in the Stride program and for your support in building our regional transit network. I am committed to continuing to collaborate with you as this project progresses and ultimately opens for service in 2028.

Sincerely,



Julie E. Timm
Chief Executive Officer