

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