

# MERCER CORRIDOR STAKEHOLDER COMMITTEE

January 20, 2016

## Community Organizations

South Lake Union  
Chamber of Commerce

South Lake Union  
Community Council

Queen Anne  
Community Council

Queen Anne  
Chamber of Commerce

Uptown Alliance

Uptown UDF  
Stakeholder Committee

Magnolia  
Community Council

Magnolia- Queen Anne  
District Council

Seattle Parks Foundation

## Businesses & Non-Profits

Amazon.com

AEG Facilities

Cornish College  
of the Arts

Center for Infectious  
Disease Research

EMP Museum

Fallon International

Firmani + Associates, Inc

Fred Hutchinson  
Cancer Research Center

Graphica Inc

Hurry Curry of Tokyo

KCTS 9

Museum of History &  
Industry

Morningside Academy

Northwest Folklife

One Reel

People and Performance  
Strategies

Pacific Northwest Ballet

Pacific Science Center

PEMCO Insurance

Pottery Northwest

Seattle Family  
Chiropractic

SCCA House

Space Needle and Chihuly  
Garden and Glass

Seattle Children's Theatre

Seattle Children's Museum

Seattle Repertory Theatre

Seattle University

Terrenzio Solutions, LLC

Teatro ZinZanni

Tutta Bella Neopolitan  
Pizzeria

Vulcan, Inc

The Vera Project

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

**Subject: Mercer Corridor Stakeholders  
Preferences for ST3 Package**

Dear Board Members:

The Mercer Corridor Stakeholders, who are representatives of businesses and community groups in the South Lake Union, Denny Triangle, Uptown, and Queen Anne neighborhoods of Seattle, believe that the regional transit network operated by Sound Transit must be expanded, and that light rail service must reach this rapidly-growing extension of Seattle's downtown core.

South Lake Union, Denny Triangle and Uptown are dense urban neighborhoods as well as PSRC-designated Regional Growth Centers that contain some of the highest concentrations of employment in our region. The Seattle Center, located in the heart of Uptown, is a regional attraction that welcomes more than 12 million visitors every year. Building out ST3 to deliver the most efficient and effective high-capacity transit system possible is critical to maintaining the region's competitive advantage, ensuring the future success of our regional economic centers, and providing improved access to regional attractions like Seattle Center. To this end, we propose an ST3 package that includes the following elements:

- **New tunnel through downtown Seattle** – We strongly endorse the new light rail tunnel through downtown Seattle connecting Tacoma to Ballard through Denny Triangle, South Lake Union, and Seattle Center/Uptown (Option 3). This tunnel is a prudent investment because it attracts the highest ridership, provides the most reliable service, and allows for future system expansion. This tunnel is critical for connecting residents with jobs region-wide and for providing a viable transit alternative to commuting by automobile. The tunnel should extend to serve the major employment and residential centers in the Denny Triangle, South Lake Union and Seattle Center/Uptown Regional Growth Centers. An at-grade rail line along First Avenue through downtown does not offer the travel times, capacity, or connectivity for a reliable and effective regional transit system.

Our analysis (see attachments) shows that the population, employment, and tourist/event attendees in these three north downtown neighborhoods are among the highest in the region, and that they will continue to grow. Sound Transit's own analysis shows that the new downtown tunnel could have daily ridership that is nearly 80,000 higher than a surface route along First Avenue. The additional cost of the tunnel is a worthy investment since the cost of not building it—in terms of added regional congestion, additional bus service needed to serve those riders, and delays to other surface transit—would be high.

To maximize the efficiency and capacity of the new tunnel, we support staff's **LRT System Operations Option #3**, which will connect the new Ballard line to the Tacoma line, providing more balanced ridership among the three light rail lines, the greatest reliability for the overall system, and the highest capacity for future expansion.

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Uptown UDF Stakeholder Committee  
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Seattle Parks Foundation

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Seattle Family Chiropractic  
SCCA House  
Space Needle and Chihuly Garden and Glass  
Seattle Children's Theatre  
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Seattle University  
Terrenzio Solutions, LLC  
Teatro ZinZanni  
Tutta Bella Neopolitan Pizzeria  
Vulcan Inc.  
The Vera Project

- **Three stations along the light rail segment through north downtown Regional Growth Centers.** Denny Triangle, South Lake Union and Seattle Center/Uptown are some of the fastest growing neighborhoods in the country, and are now extensions of Seattle's downtown core area. The density of these centers, as well as the Seattle Center's event and tourist demand, warrant station spacing that is similar to that in the downtown core. Our analysis shows that three stations could be located along the northern tunnel extension at 0.4 to 0.5 mile spacing, which is slightly further than the stations are now spaced through downtown. It is also compatible with the best practices from other light rail systems throughout the country, for which the typical station spacing in dense urban centers is about 0.4 mile. If only two stations are provided, they would be spaced 0.7 to 0.8 miles apart – too far apart to effectively serve these dense urban centers.

Providing these three stations reflects Sound Transit's core priority of integrating transit and land use to support transit-oriented development. Our analysis shows that the employment located within a 5-minute walk of these three potential stations would generate station ridership that would be among the highest in the system. Furthermore, research has shown that commuters are much more likely to choose transit as their travel mode if their worksite is located within 0.25 miles of a transit station.<sup>1</sup> These growth centers already have the density needed to support high-capacity transit, and they have the zoning in place to accommodate the substantial growth that will continue into the future.

Convenient access to the Seattle Center is also critical to shift event and tourist trips from automobiles to transit. An estimated 75% of the 12 million visitors per year to Seattle Center come from outside of Seattle. Excellent high-capacity transit service to the Seattle Center would lessen event-related congestion on our regional freeway system, particularly on Interstate 5, SR 520, and Interstate 90, which would benefit the entire region. As alignment and station planning progresses, we encourage Sound Transit to explore opportunities for partnerships that will help to advance ongoing planning initiatives, such as Seattle Center's Century 21 Master Plan vision and the Uptown Urban Design Framework.

The Mercer Corridor Stakeholders share the values expressed in Sound Transit's Core Priorities for the development of the ST3 System Plan. Serving these three Regional Growth Centers with a tunnel and three stations will maximize ridership, connect to region's urban centers with high-capacity transit, support transit-oriented development, provide equitable access to jobs, and integrate with other transit systems.

Thank you for consideration of this request and if you have any questions, please contact Marni Heffron at (206) 523-3939 or [marni@hefftrans.com](mailto:marni@hefftrans.com).

Sincerely,

Mercer Corridor Stakeholder  
(List of Supporters Attached)

cc: Ric Ilgenfritz, Sound Transit

Attachments: Organizations and Businesses that Support Letter's Position  
Supporting Analysis - ST3 for our Region's Future

<sup>1</sup> WMATA 2005 Development-Related Ridership Survey Final Report [https://www.wmata.com/pdfs/planning/2005\\_Development-Related\\_Ridership\\_Survey.pdf](https://www.wmata.com/pdfs/planning/2005_Development-Related_Ridership_Survey.pdf). See page S-3.

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## Community Organizations

Danah Abarr  
Executive Director  
**South Lake Union Chamber of Commerce**

Mike McQuaid,  
President  
**South Lake Union Community Council**

Thatcher Bailey  
Executive Director  
**Seattle Parks Foundation**

Ellen Monrad  
Chair  
**Queen Anne Community Council**

Martin Henry Kaplan, Architect AIA  
LURC Chair  
**Queen Anne Community Council & Uptown UDF Stakeholders Committee**

Charley Shore  
Executive Director  
**Queen Anne Chamber of Commerce**

Michael Davis  
Co-president, Transportation Committee  
Chair  
**Uptown Alliance**

Carol Burton  
President  
**Magnolia Community Council**

Stephen Deforest  
Chairman  
**Magnolia-Queen Anne District Council**

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## Businesses and Non-Profits

John Schoettler  
Director - Global Real Estate and Development  
**Amazon.com**

Leonard Garfield  
Executive Director  
**Museum of History & Industry**

Ron Severt  
CEO  
**Space Needle and Chihuly Garden and Glass**

Steve Ransom  
Director, Premium Seating Services  
**AEG Facilities**

Kent Johnson, Ph.D.  
Founder & Director  
**Morningside Academy**

Karen Sharp  
Managing Director  
**Seattle Children's Theatre**

Liisa Spink  
Cornish Playhouse Manager  
**Cornish College of the Arts**

Robert Townsend  
Executive Director  
**Northwest Folklife**

Donna Marie Bertrand  
Executive Director  
**Seattle Children's Museum**

Louis R. Coffman  
Senior Vice President/COO  
**Center for Infectious Disease Research**

Chris Weber  
Executive Director  
**One Reel**

Jeffrey Herrmann  
Managing Director  
**Seattle Repertory Theatre**

Patty Isacson Sabee  
CEO + Director  
**EMP Museum**

Curt Archambault  
Vice President  
**People and Performance Strategies**

Bill Hogan, Director of Athletics  
Eric Guerra, Assoc. Athletic Director  
**Seattle University**

Maura Fallon  
CEO  
**Fallon International**

John Tangeman  
Manager of Audience Services  
**Pacific Northwest Ballet**

Joseph D. Terrenzio  
Attorney  
**Terrenzio Solutions, LLC**

Mark Firmani  
President  
**Firmani + Associates Inc.**

Will Daugherty  
President & CEO  
**Pacific Science Center**

Markus Kunz  
Executive Director  
**Teatro ZinZanni**

Scott Rusch  
Vice President, Facilities & Operations  
**Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center**

Stan McNaughton  
Chief Executive Officer  
**PEMCO Insurance**

Ada M. Healey  
Vice President, Real Estate  
**Vulcan Inc.**

Camberly Gilmartin  
VP Client Services + Development  
**Graphica Inc**

James Lobb  
Executive Director  
**Pottery Northwest**

Tim Lennon  
Executive Director  
**The Vera Project**

Becky Yoshitani  
President  
**Hurry Curry of Tokyo, PNW, Inc**

Jill Goldberg, DC  
Owner  
**Seattle Family Chiropractic**

Amy French  
Dir. Marketing & Comm. Relations  
**Tutta Bella Neapolitan Pizzeria**

Robert I. Dunlop  
President & CEO  
**KCTS 9**

Glen Moore  
Facilities Manager  
**SCCA House**