



February 23, 2023

Sound Transit Board Members,

I'm writing on behalf of Historic South Downtown, a state-created Community Preservation and Development Authority established to support Chinatown-International District and Pioneer Square mitigate the impacts of large-scale, publicly funded projects like the WSBLE.

First and foremost, thank you for your leadership on the Sound Transit Board. Over the length of the project, HSD and our partners have had the chance to meet with most of the members of the Board. Your diligence and commitment to the WSBLE project is clear.

From the beginning of this process, community members have been united in our consistent call for a station in the Chinatown International District that is *accessible, well-connected and contributes to this community's vitality*. Indeed, these priorities dovetail with the Goals articulated by Sound Transit in its Regional Transit Long Range Plan (Dec. 18, 2014) and in the Purpose and Needs statement articulated in the DEIS released by Sound Transit on January 28, 2022. Specifically, the goals to:

- Provide high-quality rapid, reliable, and efficient light rail transit service to communities in the project corridor...
- Improve regional mobility by increasing connectivity and capacity through Downtown Seattle to meet the projected transit demand
- Connect regional centers as described in adopted regional and local land use, transportation, and economic development plans and Sound Transit's Regional Transit Long-Range Plan (Sound Transit 2014a)
- Encourage equitable and sustainable urban growth in station areas through support of transit-oriented development and multi-modal integration in a manner that is consistent with local land use plans and policies...

A station on 4th Ave S. has long been a part of the broader vision for residents and businesses in the CID neighborhood. 4th Ave. S. offers the most convenient and efficient regional connectivity for eastside riders, Sounder and ferry commuters. It ties together the CID, Pioneer Square, South Downtown and the Stadium District, and helps create multi-modal integration, promotes economic development in the CID and Pioneer Square, contributing to the vibrancy of these communities.

Based on all the information that has been studied by Sound Transit and reported out publicly, it is clear that a 4th Ave S station delivers the greatest benefit to the community. We ask that you select it as the preferred alternative.

Every option under consideration has the potential for negative impacts in CID during construction. However, 4th Ave. S. is the only option on the table that has been fully studied, and then further refined, based on community input. We have yet to see how the newly proposed north/south option will affect our neighborhoods and – perhaps most importantly – how they will benefit our communities.

We know infrastructure projects of this magnitude are disruptive, and as such, the north/south option does not avoid harm to our community. Quite the opposite. We will still bear the brunt of construction impacts, but without the benefit of a station at the end of it. This short-sighted thinking harms our community more by cutting us off from the rest of the system.

The north/south options suppress ridership and make connections more complicated for people coming into and out of the CID, and for people passing through. A chance to quickly jump off the train to shop in CID businesses is gone. The north/south options eliminate permanently the planned transportation hub at Jackson and 5th Ave S./4th Ave. S. With 4th Ave. S., people in the CID and all riders regionally will have easy access to the bus network, all of the additional rail lines, Washington State Ferries, the Seattle Streetcar, the Sounder and Amtrak. Without this station, that level of connectivity is impossible now and in the future.

We are willing to accept short-term disruption and partner with you to mitigate the impacts in exchange for the long-term, generational benefits that a 4th Ave S. option offers.

Sincerely,

Kathleen Barry Johnson
Executive Director