



Date: May 12, 2016
To: Sound Transit Board of Directors
From: Craig Davison, Executive Director of Communications and External Affairs
Subject: Summary of March 29 – May 2, 2016 Sound Transit 3 Draft Plan Public Involvement
Attachment: Online survey results (topline), narrative/verbatim comments (electronic)

This memo provides an overview of outreach activities, participation levels, and key themes heard while engaging the public on the Sound Transit 3 Draft Plan from March 29 – May 2, 2016.

Energy around transit in Puget Sound is high, and as a result, public participation was very strong. The numbers make this clear: **2,320 written comments** submitted by mail, email and comment forms; more than **1,250 attendees** at seven open houses; and **34,706 responses** to a non-scientific online survey. Of these survey submissions, **18,032 offered narrative “open-end” commentary** as part of that engagement tool. The overall survey response was a 40 percent increase over responses received to establish candidate projects in summer 2015.

In addition to broad public involvement, Sound Transit received **90+ letters and comments from local jurisdictions, agencies and stakeholder organizations**. A list of these organizations follows at the end of this memorandum.

People who took the time to self-select and take the non-scientific survey were overwhelmingly supportive in their views about expanding regional transit services. Some **91 percent of respondents** reported supporting mass transit expansion across the region, either ‘strongly’ or ‘somewhat’. This high level of support is consistent with the 2015 survey where 93 percent of respondents supported mass transit expansion. When asked specifically in this survey about their level of support for light rail expansion and bus rapid transit, they were also supportive: 88 and 72 percent respectively.

Detailed results to this survey are summarized in a separate attachment (topline). All narrative comments have been reviewed into respective topical categories to compile the summary below. All comments received as part of this comment period are being provided to Board members verbatim on flash drive, and will be made available on the soundtransit3.org website.

A. Participation

As quantified through zip code information provided by respondents to the online survey, every corridor saw a dramatic increase in respondents over the 2015 ST3 Draft Priority Project List engagement, especially in areas beyond North King County.

	2016		2015 comparison	% increase YOY
Snohomish County	8.3%	2,871	5.8%	99%
North King County	45.9%	15,912	54.0%	19%
East King County	20.6%	7,142	17.0%	69%
South King County	6.2%	2,156	6.4%	35%
Pierce County	11.5%	3,999	9.6%	69%
Out of District	7.6%	2,626	7.2%	47%
Total participation		34,706	24,797	40%

B. Key findings, online survey quantitative results

The ST3 Draft Plan online survey offered the opportunity for respondents to provide their perspectives on the ST3 Draft Plan as a whole, and on individual projects. Comprehensive public feedback on all projects evaluated through the online survey is available in the [ST3 Draft Plan Online Survey Topline](http://soundtransit3.org/document-library) in soundtransit3.org/document-library.

There were two methods by which respondents could indicate their level of support for projects included in the Draft Plan:

1) By rating each ST3 Draft Plan project in terms of priority on scale of 1 (low) to 7 (high).

On a scale of 1 to 7, all ratings equal or above a 4 indicate higher priority. Across all subareas, respondents rated major capital projects (light rail extensions, bus rapid transit and Sounder - specific projects) located within their respective sub-areas at a 4.7 or higher.

Region-wide projects and policies such as parking, ST Express service, transit-oriented development, building bike and pedestrian facilities, and developing opportunities for buses to use highway shoulders to bypass traffic, showed strong support across all subareas (minimum average of 5.1 region-wide).

2) By providing their top two most important projects for inclusion in the final plan.

For each subarea, priority projects generally were those that specifically referenced cities, alignments or stations that could be physically located in and serve that subarea.

The following are the combined results of these relative priority questions, based on the “top two” question, by subarea geography.

Most important projects for inclusion (top 2 by subarea) <i>(question 11 in online survey)</i>	Priority rating by relevant corridor respondents <i>(questions 5, 7, 9, 10 in online survey)</i>
<i>Snohomish County</i>	
Lynnwood to Everett light rail, via the Paine Field employment/manufacturing center	5.69
I-405 Bus Rapid Transit serving Lynnwood, Kirkland, Bellevue, Renton, Tukwila and Burien with new transit center and station in South Renton and new station at NE 85th	5.22
<i>North King County</i>	
Ballard to Downtown Seattle light rail via Seattle Center and South Lake Union (including new downtown rail tunnel)	6.09
West Seattle to Downtown Seattle light rail	5.81
<i>East King County</i>	
I-405 Bus Rapid Transit serving Lynnwood, Kirkland, Bellevue, Renton, Tukwila and Burien with new transit center and station in South Renton and new station at NE 85th	5.54
Bellevue/Overlake to Downtown Redmond light rail	4.83
<i>South King County</i>	
Kent/Des Moines to Tacoma Dome light rail	5.23
Parking at rail stations	5.83
<i>Pierce County</i>	
Kent/Des Moines to Tacoma Dome light rail	5.31
Extension of Tacoma Link light rail connecting downtown Tacoma to Tacoma Community College	4.71

C. Key findings, written comments and open-ended survey responses

Between responses to the open-ended question in the survey, written comments offered at public meetings, and emails to soundtransit3@soundtransit.org, Sound Transit received over 20,000 written, narrative comments. To analyze these comments, all have been read and topically categorized for relative, qualitative comparison and to assess subjects emphasized by the commenters. All verbatim comments are available on CD for the Board to review by subarea, and are also being posted to the soundtransit3.org document library. Narrative comments generally express additional weight and specificity beyond the multiple-choice online survey questions.

The following themes emerged district-wide:

- **Improving project delivery timelines** is a constant sentiment in many forms:
 - Opinions to expedite specific projects, and relative priority order for completion of projects (which varies by geographic origin of each comment);
 - Needing relief from congestion now; and
 - Perceived lack of transit benefit, given the amount of taxes required over a long timeframe.
- Many comments reference the fact that the Puget Sound region is growing, express the opinion that mass transit should have been built across the region years ago, and therefore, **"We can't afford to wait."**
- Within the City of Seattle/North King County, there is a focus on advancing projects that serve high density neighborhoods first; in communities outside downtown Seattle, comments focus on completing the spine to address existing congestion in major north-south/I-5 and east-west corridors.
- **People prioritize projects near their home first, but also see the benefit of a completed regional system** (e.g., "Deliver Everett faster, and complete the spine to Tacoma").
- **People want to enhance access to the system**, through additional parking or by providing additional pedestrian/bicycle amenities/facilities. Within North King County, there is an emphasis on the latter, and in less dense areas, emphasis on parking availability, regardless of mode or station type.
- Some people question the **affordability of the plan or offer general opposition to the plan**, based on income and equity for seniors/other at risk populations and existing tax strain. Ultimately, these represent a minority of comments in total.

The following additional themes emerged by subarea:

Snohomish County

- Speed up delivery of light rail to Everett. Most comments prioritize the timeline to reach Everett, with no clear consensus on desired route.
- "Complete the spine" first, with reference to amount of taxes paid for Sound Transit services and projects since *Sound Move*

North King County

- Ballard to Downtown: timeline, various comments on preferred route and emphasis on grade separation (e.g., "West is Best" comments)
- Add Ballard to UW as a project
- Include 130th infill station to be a project, not provisional
- Advance timeline for delivery of Graham Street infill station

East King County

- Increased service and stations on I-405, with many references and questions to why I-405 would not have light rail

- Concerns about inclusion of a study or any transit suggestion on the Cross Kirkland Corridor; also opposition to removal of a transit project as a “missed opportunity”

South King County

- Perceived need for South King to get more out of the plan, sometimes referenced as an equity issue, especially among Renton commenters
- More concern about tax structure/overall cost of plan, relative to other subareas

Pierce County

- Desire for additional Sounder service hours beyond commuter hours
- Speed up delivery of light rail to Tacoma, and extending Tacoma Link
- More concern about tax structure/overall cost of plan, relative to other subareas

D. Petitions and form emails received

Some stakeholder organizations took the opportunity to encourage their members to comment on the ST3 Draft Plan using form comments/emails, or by signing a petition. These are noted below, with totals.

- MoveOn.org petition generated by Matthew Powell, “Extend Light Rail Hours” (2,614 signatures, 519 additional comments)
- Graham Street Station support petition (1,243 signatures, 131 additional comments)
- Cascade Bicycle Club, three form emails (486 total emails)
“Please increase investments in biking and walking”
“Increase investments in safe routes to transit”
- Sierra Club (338 total emails)
“ST3 Proposal Comments”
- Unknown source (72 total emails)
“ST3 Public Comment – Transit Oriented Development”
- American Heart Association (20 total emails)
“Please invest in health with Sound Transit 3”

E. Methods for promoting public engagement

Sound Transit continually works to refine the reach and effectiveness of its efforts to promote public awareness and involvement. There was particular attention on potential avenues to increase diversity in demographics for the online survey and geographic distribution of participation, with success. Methods employed are detailed below.

- Developed Sound Transit 3 website, designed for accessibility with a range of devices. Website generated more than **183,800** unique page views, more than three times a similar time period in 2015.

- Offered a comment form and translated content in seven languages the project website, with translated social media and ethnic media pointing to this availability. This garnered over **1,000 clicks** on translated social ads, and **104 comments to non-English comment forms**.
- Distributed a direct mailer to approximately **980,000** registered voter households in the district, encouraging people to attend a meeting and to take the survey. The mailer was listed most frequently among survey takers as a source of information about the survey.
- Provided email notification to transportation planning staff at all partner agencies and jurisdictions in the region, providing content to extend notifications to their distribution lists.
- Sent emails to more than **42,000** contacts who have signed up to receive information about system expansion, capital projects and rider alerts.
- Conducted over **50 briefings** across the district to city councils and other stakeholder groups. A list of letters received from local jurisdictions and stakeholders follows below.
- Coordinated with partner agencies, jurisdictions and stakeholder groups to provide information to their distribution lists/members and online newsletters, reaching tens of thousands additional recipients.
- Ran a robust advertising effort involving online, print, social and mobile app media as well as distributing more than **1,000 posters** at locations around Puget Sound. For the first time on ST3 outreach, television advertising was used as a channel to promote public involvement. Information was also shared with local community calendars and blogs.
- Supplemented advertising with translated advertisements in ethnic media publications and distributed posters at locations frequented by traditionally under-represented populations.
- Earned extensive media coverage as well as links to the survey from broadcast and print media, dozens of blog posts and electronic newsletter articles.
- Staffed a project information phone line to provide information and answer questions about the ST3 process.
- Ensured ST3 information was available at other events hosted by Sound Transit during the comment period, such as employer transportation fair tables.

F. Local jurisdiction and stakeholder organization submittals

The following local jurisdictions, agencies and stakeholder organizations provided feedback on the Sound Transit 3 Draft Plan.

Multi-County/Region-wide

- All Aboard Washington
- American Heart Association
- BlueGreen Alliance Washington State
- Cascade Bicycle Club
- Coalition of Immigrants, Refugees & Communities of Color
- Sound Transit Citizen Oversight Panel
- Joint Letter: Five North East Cities
- Futurewise
- Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation
- I-405 Cities Coalition Letter
- I-405 Legislators
- Microsoft
- Northwest Seaport Alliance
- OneAmerica
- Puget Sound Anglers
- Puget Sound Sage
- Regional TOD Advisory Committee
- Seattle Subway

- Sierra Club/Sierra Club Washington Chapter
- The Urbanist
- Transit Access Stakeholders
- Transit Riders Union
- University of Washington –Transportation Services
- Washington State Labor Council
- Regional TOD Advisory Committee
- Joint Letter: Five North East Cities

Snohomish County

- City of Bothell
- City of Edmonds
- City of Mill Creek
- City of Mountlake Terrace
- City of Sultan
- Snohomish County Cities
- Snohomish County Legislators
- Snohomish County Mayors
- Snohomish County Representatives
- Pilchuck Audubon

King County

- 46th District Delegation
- 46th District Democrats
- Bellevue Chamber of Commerce
- Bellevue Downtown Association
- Belltown Community Council
- City of Bellevue
- City of Bothell
- City of Burien
- City of Des Moines
- City of Issaquah
- City of Kenmore
- City of Kent
- City of Kirkland
- City of Lake Forest Park
- City of Redmond
- City of Renton
- City of Seattle: Transit Advisory Board
- City of Shoreline
- City of Tukwila
- City of Woodinville
- Downtown Seattle Association

- Eastside Audubon
- Economic Vitality Commission
- Imagine Housing: Kingsgate
- King County Transit Advisory Commission
- Lake City Neighborhood Alliance
- Lake2Bay
- Livable Ballard
- Neighbors in Motion
- North District Council
- North Seattle College
- Northgate Mall and Northgate South Commons LLC
- Northwest Seattle Coalition
- Olympic Hills Neighborhood Council
- On Board Othello
- Othello Park Alliance
- Othello Station Community Action Team
- Pinehurst Community Council
- Port of Seattle
- Rowley Properties
- Sabey Corporation
- Save Our Trail
- Seattle 2030 District
- Seattle Center
- Seattle Center Foundation
- Seattle Chamber
- Seattle Subway
- Seattle University - Student Government
- South CORE
- State Representative Joe Fitzgibbon
- Surrey Downs Eastlink Committee
- Talon Private Capital
- Wallace Properties

Pierce County

- City of Fife
- City of Lakewood
- City of Tacoma
- Pierce Transit
- Puyallup Tribe of Indians
- Downtown On the Go
- Tacoma-Pierce County Chamber
- Travel Tacoma + Pierce Count