



King County



SUMNER

April 24, 2007

The Honorable John Ladenburg
Chair, Sound Transit Board
930 Tacoma Avenue South, Room 737
Tacoma, WA 98402-2100

Dear Chair Ladenburg,

Thank you for leading a dialogue at the April 12, 2007 Sound Transit Board meeting regarding the regional importance of the Eastside Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) rail corridor as both a potential trail and regional high capacity corridor. We are pleased with the direction the Board is heading on this issue and would like to see Sound Transit continue to take an active interest in the future of this corridor.

The Eastside BNSF corridor spans 42 miles from Renton to Snohomish and Woodinville, providing a regional connection through two counties and seven cities, and is of statewide and federal significance. It is important to Sound Transit because it parallels Interstate 405, which is designated for potential rail extension in the long range plan, and it is used in some of the proposed East Link alignments. This corridor was offered for sale by BNSF in 2004 and is at risk of being sold off piecemeal to developers if we cannot partner as a region to purchase it.

Though King County and the Port of Seattle are currently negotiating to purchase the corridor from BNSF, it is a complex and problematic deal, the details of which have raised significant concerns among members of the King County Council and the Port Commission, two bodies who must approve the deal before it can move forward.

Should this deal fail to materialize, it is imperative that the region have an alternative plan in place to immediately move forward to preserve the corridor. In that case, we would like to propose that Sound Transit lead a funding partnership with other jurisdictions in purchasing the corridor. We envision the funding partnership would include Sound Transit, King County, Snohomish County, the Port of Seattle, the Puget Sound Regional Council, the State of Washington, the federal government, and potentially the seven cities along the rail corridor.

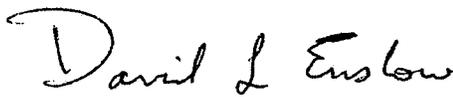
A Sound Transit 2 amendment sponsored by Boardmembers Patterson, Marshall, Reardon, and Phillips would allow Sound Transit to partner with other regional stakeholders in studying joint trail and high capacity use of the corridor, and would also provide the framework for Sound Transit to participate in purchasing the corridor should the need and opportunity arise.

Sound Transit's involvement in purchasing the Eastside BNSF rail corridor would be in accordance with policy adopted in Sound Move establishing a right-of-way preservation program. The purpose of this program is to "set aside sites for potential rail or regional express bus stations, route alignments, operating facilities and other facilities needed for the long-range system." This policy encourages cooperation with state and local jurisdictions in making such right-of-way acquisitions.

We believe it is in Sound Transit's and the public's best interest to preserve the Eastside BNSF rail corridor for future rail and trail use and urge the agency make this a priority. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,


Larry Phillips, Councilmember
Metropolitan King County Council, Dist. 4
Sound Transit Boardmember


David Enslow, Mayor
City of Sumner
Sound Transit Boardmember


Dow Constantine, Councilmember
Metropolitan King County Council, Dist. 8
Sound Transit Boardmember

cc: Sound Transit Boardmembers
Joni Earl, CEO, Sound Transit
The Honorable Patty Murray, United States Senate
The Honorable Christine Gregoire, Washington State Governor
The Honorable Mary Margaret Haugen, Washington State Senate
The Honorable Judy Clibborn, Washington State House of Representatives
The Honorable Ron Sims, King County Executive
King County Councilmembers
The Honorable Aaron Reardon, Snohomish County Executive
Snohomish County Council
The Honorable Kathy Keolker, Mayor of Renton
The Honorable Jean Garber, Mayor of Newcastle
The Honorable Grant Degginger, Mayor of Bellevue
The Honorable James Lauinger, Mayor of Kirkland
The Honorable Rosemarie Ives, Mayor of Redmond
The Honorable Cathy VonWald, Mayor of Woodinville
The Honorable Randy Hamlin, Mayor of Snohomish
Tay Yoshitani, CEO, Port of Seattle
Port of Seattle Commission
Bob Drewel, Executive Director, Puget Sound Regional Council
Gene Duvernoy, President, Cascade Land Conservancy
Jessyn Farrell, Executive Director, Transportation Choices Coalition
Chuck Ayers, Executive Director, Cascade Bicycle Alliance
David Freiboth, Executive Secretary, King County Labor Council
Paul Zimmer, Secretary, Eastside Rail Now
Anthony Trifiletti, President, All Aboard Washington
Bruce Agnew, Director, Discovery Institute Cascadia Center