

CETA The Coalition for Effective Transportation Alternatives

4/1/03

SUMMARY

1. We are strong advocates for transit. This is not a choice between building light rail or building more roads. It is not about building rail or doing nothing. It is about delivering a regional system that supports the local network, not a local line that cripples the existing regional network. It is about keeping promises, regaining public trust and reprogramming regional and federal dollars in effective transit and transportation alternatives to driving alone.
2. After 13 years and hundreds of millions of dollars in planning, Sound Transit still does not have a Plan. The Draft Supplemental Environmental Assessment of routes North from Downtown to the U-District and Northgate, was to be released November 2002. Sound Transit was forced to release it by the Courts and now claims that it wasn't scheduled to be released till April/May of 2003.
3. While the State is spending money on planning and construction for separating trains from cars, Sound Transit and the FTA are planning to run 272 trains a day down a neighborhood arterial across 18 streets that will not have gates.
4. There will be no money or debt capacity to pay for any extensions to this Initial Segment (14 miles) without either borrowing from other sub-areas for a much longer time than promised, significantly raising the RTA tax or delaying the extensions.
5. Light Rail has never been compared to an equal investment in Bus Rapid Transit, Monorail, or a combination. The ST Joint Operations Study done in 2001, post "new agency," compares best-case scenario for LR trains and worst-case for buses- without disclosing that those are the assumptions.
6. Express Buses, if funded, can carry far more passengers than the LR trains EVER will through the Downtown Bus Tunnel and I-5 corridor. The monorail could give us even more. The real challenge is not capacity but demand for transit service. All transit should treat riders as customers with frequent, clean, reliable, attractive service and facilities. It is the quality of service not the quantity of money spent that counts with riders.
7. Building light rail will actually increase the demand for more road capacity because it will serve, even if built to Northgate, a fraction of the 6 million expected new trips in the Region while leaving little left over to provide real alternatives to driving alone.
8. The State Legislature, and the Public, never intended for ST to be able to collect taxes indefinitely, not do an honest alternatives analysis, put people and businesses at physical and financial risk.
9. The Legislature can fix ST. We hope that you can support any Bills or Amendments, which accomplish the following:
 - Make it an elected Board – SB 5538
 - Require a Revote of this non-voter approved plan – SB 5537
 - An Independent Performance Audit of Sound Transit- under Leg. control
 - Protect sub-area Equity by writing it into Legislation – SB 5674
 - Require ST to be subject to Initiative – SB 5584
 - Fold ST into a larger transit/transportation planning body HB 1960
 - Reduce the Board and give its operating and capital responsibilities to existing agencies – their overhead was \$47,000,000 last year alone.