

September 30, 2022

Cathal Ridge
Executive Corridor Director
Sound Transit
401 S. Jackson St.
Seattle, WA 98104

Submitted via email to cathal.ridge@soundtransit.org

Re: Mercer Stakeholder Scoping Questions for Denny Station Alternative Study and Seattle Center/Uptown Station Alternative Study

Dear Cathal Ridge,

The Mercer Corridor Stakeholders Group (Mercer Stakeholders) thank you for your diligence as you evaluate the best alternatives for the Denny and Seattle Center/Uptown Stations and associated alignment. In July 2022, the Sound Transit Board requested staff analyze the possibility of a mix-and-match option through north downtown—connecting the Denny Station at Terry Street to the South Lake Union Station on Harrison Street to an alternative Seattle Center/Uptown Station location. Staff are anticipated to provide updates on both studies at the November 2022 and February 2023 Board meetings. We write you today to elevate questions we request be studied in this next phase of work.

As you're aware, the Mercer Stakeholders represent transportation interests on behalf of neighborhood organizations, non-profits, residents, major employers, and small business owners in South Lake Union, Uptown, and Denny Triangle. Since its inception in 2006, the Mercer Stakeholders have been a champion for regional transit, including Sound Transit and ST3.

In their DEIS comments, submitted April 26, 2022, the Mercer Stakeholders requested that Sound Transit study the Denny Station alternative at Terry Street and study alternative station locations, other than Republican, at Seattle Center/Uptown while minimizing impacts to Mercer. We thank you for taking the time to conduct this important analysis.

As you embark on the studies for the Denny and Seattle Center/Uptown Stations, we ask you address the following:

- 1. Early, frequent, and meaningful public engagement.** Groups like the Mercer Stakeholders are invested in Sound Transit's success and are eager to help the agency resolve challenges and trade-offs around the north downtown stations. Providing process updates and completed report findings is insufficient. Please provide opportunities for the public, including the Mercer Stakeholders, to engage early and provide input on the content of the studies before work is complete. The Mercer

Stakeholders invite you to three meetings: 1) to discuss the Denny Station and Seattle Center/Uptown Station scopes of work, 2) to workshop options and trade-offs before decisions are made, and 3) to inform the group about preliminary findings ahead of the February Board meeting.

2. **Impacts of station scenarios on rider experience during and after construction.** The new north downtown stations will be critical in supporting regional job growth, a growing downtown residential population, and increasing tourism. Please describe how the station alternatives will address the pedestrian experience during and after construction, including ridership capacity, rider ingress/egress, station depth, vertical conveyance, and adequate pedestrian spill-out space around stations. If engineering or construction parameters pose challenges to these goals, we ask that you share these challenges to inform a transparent conversation about solutions and trade-offs. We also ask that you please share which sidewalks and crosswalks would be necessary to close under different construction and station scenarios and suggestions for mitigating impacts.
3. **Comprehensive transportation analysis of cumulative impacts.** The DEIS identified potential street closures but did not evaluate the cumulative impacts of these closures. Already, corridors like Westlake Ave already operate at a level of service (LOS) F (Table 4-39 of the DEIS Transportation Technical Report). Given the magnitude of construction and likelihood of overlapping construction schedules, we ask that Sound Transit evaluate the cumulative nature of street closures in the context of the full project, with a particular focus on Denny Way, Westlake Ave, Blanchard Street, Lenora Street, Queen Anne Ave N, 1st Ave N, and Mercer Street. We ask that you model cumulative traffic volumes, vehicle delays, and freight impacts caused by these closures and suggest adequate detours, including access routes to regional transportation corridors like State Route 99 and Interstate 5.
4. **Transit capacity and throughput.** As part of the transportation analysis, we ask that you pay particular attention to transit routes and corridors and prepare a plan for how transit can continue to operate at full capacity during construction with minimal delays. We also ask that you develop a solution to keep the South Lake Union Streetcar operating at full capacity during construction and explore how the Center City Connector streetcar can provide necessary transit relief during years of construction and street closures.
5. **Creative construction approaches.** The DEIS does not elaborate on the means and methods of construction nor on the justification for the chosen method. As you know, different construction techniques have the opportunity to impact costs of construction and construction safety, but also impact the quality of the completed stations and the level of construction disruption at the surface-level. Please describe the construction methods and options, as well as trade-offs for the different construction techniques.
6. **The true cost of alternatives, including the required mitigation during years of construction.** In the coming months, the Sound Transit Board will weigh the costs of route alternatives with the associated public benefit. However, the current analysis does not take into account the required costs for mitigation, obscuring the actual costs of system build-out for either alternative. To ensure that decisions are based on

complete information, we ask that you provide estimates for required mitigation related to transportation detours and subsidies, property acquisition, residential displacement, and business and non-profit relocations—in addition to cost estimates for light rail construction.

The benefits of ST3 will serve our region and its residents for years to come. We thank you for your attention to these questions and look forward to more conversation regarding the Denny and Seattle Center/Uptown Station alternatives.

Sincerely,

Members of the Mercer Corridor Stakeholders Group

Danah Abarr
Executive Director
SLU Chamber

Maria Barrientos
Co-Chair
Uptown Land Use Review Committee

Jennifer Chu, CPA, CFE
Interim Executive Director
MUSEUM OF POP CULTURE

Ian M. Goodhew
Head of Government Relations, PNW
Google

Jeffrey Herrmann
Managing Director
Seattle Rep

Kirk Hovenkotter
Executive Director
Commute Seattle

Reza Marashi
Director, Government Affairs
Kilroy Realty Corporation

Tom Mara
Executive Director
SIFF

Neha Nariya
Co-Founder
Civic Hotel

Howard Anderson
Chair
Denny Triangle Neighborhood Association

Brandon Bird
Vice President of Operations
Cornish College of the Arts

Mercedes Fernandez
Co-Chair
Uptown Land Use Review Committee

Ada Healey
Chief Real Estate Officer
Vulcan LLC

Rick Hooper
Chair
Uptown Alliance

Zeb Keck
Senior Director, Construction & Development
Schnitzer West, LLC

Dan McGrady
Government Affairs Director
PEMCO

Shawna McMahon
President
South Lake Union Community Council

Von Perkins
Principal
PCMCLLC

Ethan Raup
Chief Executive Officer
KEXP 90.3 FM

Christina Scheppelmann
General Director
Seattle Opera

Jon Scholes
President and CEO
Downtown Seattle Association

Rachel Smith
President and CEO
Seattle Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce

Eugene Wasserman
President
North Seattle Industrial Association

Shelly Sakiyama-Elbert, Ph.D.
Vice Dean, Research and Graduate Education
UW Medicine

John Schoettler
Vice President, Global Real Estate & Facilities
Amazon

Charley Shore
Executive Director
Queen Anne Chamber of Commerce

Marjorie Thomas
CFO
Allen Institute

Jane Zalutsky
Executive Director
Seattle Center Foundation

Cc:

Sound Transit Board of Directors

Sound Transit System Expansion Committee Chair Claudia Balducci

Julie Timm, CEO, Sound Transit

Brooke Belman, Chief of Staff, Sound Transit

Leda Chahim, Government and Community Relations Manager, Sound Transit

Marshall Foster, Director, City of Seattle Office of the Waterfront and Civic Projects

Greg Spotts, Director, Seattle Department of Transportation

Sara Maxana, Sound Transit Program Director, Seattle Department of Transportation