

Eastside Mayors and Legislators support BRT on I-405

Six eastside mayors and eleven legislators from five legislative districts have written letters to Sound Transit in support of providing effective Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) on I-405 in comments on the proposed ST 3 plan.

Effective BRT means running in the HOT lanes with five additional direct access ramps like the ones at NE 6th St., NE 128th St. on I-405 and at the Eastgate Park and Ride on I-90. This would be consistent with the I-405 Master Plan approved in 2002 by 27 local agencies, including Sound Transit and WSDOT and with a Federal Highway Administration Record of Decision (ROD) in 2003. Up to this point Sound Transit and WSDOT have ignored the BRT portion of the Approved Master Plan. Sound Transit currently has about regional express (REX) bus routes that use I-405 to connect Bellevue with Everett, Lynnwood, Bothell, Renton, Burien and Kent with 20 to 60 minute service. This is not BRT.

The Mayors of Bellevue, Bothell, Renton, Newcastle, Clyde Hill and the Town of Beaux Arts Village submitted a joint comment letter to Sound Transit on May 2, 2016.

“...Full BRT, as we have requested of the Board in our previous communications, and as envisioned in the I-405 Master Planning effort that was sponsored by Sound Transit and WSDOT, is the equivalent of light rail on rubber tires.

Full BRT will include center-running operations the length of the system and serve in-line stops throughout the I-405 corridor...”

The April 28, 2016 comment letter from the eleven legislators in the corridor including Rep. Judy Clibborn, Chair of the House Transportation Committee also supports high level BRT on the I-405 corridor. Legislators from the 41st, 48th, 33rd, 1st and 11th Legislative Districts signed this letter.

“...any BRT system along the I-405 corridor should mirror the quality and dedicated access that comes with Light Rail Transit service. It is critical that the BRT system serving I-405 be center running, serve in-line stations, sync up with express and local bus service, and most importantly is closely coordinated with the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) and its BRT plans as laid out in the I-405 Master Plan...”

On May 2, 2016 Mayor John Stokes, City of Bellevue, sent the City’s comment letter to Sound Transit that includes:

“...We request that the Board amend the ST3 plan to include a center running BRT system the length of the I-405 corridor that serves, at a minimum, in-line stops at the following locations:

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- Canyon Park (Bothell);
- Northeast 85th Street (Kirkland);
- 112th Avenue Southeast (Bellevue/Newcastle);
- Northeast 44th Street (Renton); and,
- North 8th Street (Renton)..."

The City of Bellevue letter also requests that a full vetting of the options to serve Issaquah be included in the plan, rather than the light rail plan proposed in ST 3.

Conceivably, the Sound Transit Board may get the message that BRT on the I-405 corridor is a reasonable option for High Capacity Transit in East King County, consistent with the Approved I-405 Master Plan.

Sound Transit will be combining the formal comments received by May 2, 2016 with comments from the various Public Hearings on the \$50 Billion tax plan that is being proposed as ST 3 over the next 2 months. A final plan will be developed by late June, with a Ballot Issue adopted by the ST Board in July for the November, 2016 ballot.

Light Rail Does Too Little, Costs Too Much, Takes Too Long.