



**City of Tacoma
Transportation Commission**

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Penny Grellier, District 5
Kerri Hill, City Manager Appointed
Christiano Martínez, City Manager Appointed

April 27, 2026

Dear Chair Walker and the Infrastructure, Planning, and Sustainability Committee,

As the Sound Transit Board works to deliver its Enterprise Initiative despite a significant funding gap, the City of Tacoma’s Transportation Commission calls on the Board to make equity central to its deliberations. If equity is indeed central to Sound Transit’s determinations regarding what projects in ST3 are prioritized and delivered next, then getting Link light rail to Tacoma, getting Sounder to Dupont, and completing the T-Link Extension to Tacoma Community College emerge as priorities.

Does Sound Transit consider itself a *regional* transit agency? Does it *act* as a regional transit agency? If it does, then its priority should be to connect the region by completing “the spine.” If not, then it makes perfect sense to keep delivering projects that enhance services for areas already well served by transit.

Residents of Tacoma and Pierce County continue to be forced into untenable and unsustainable mobility options. This has been true for over 30 years, even as Sound Transit and its taxing authority were created to address and prevent this reality. Today, most people who commute between Tacoma and other points in Pierce Transit into King County and Seattle do so by car, clogging I-5 and state highways. If Sound Transit does not work to fulfill its mandate now, this reality and its impacts will be with us for another 20 years *at least*. The entire region—from Snohomish County to Thurston County—suffers the consequences. **If Sound Transit fails to connect the region, then it fails the region.** All residents of Puget Sound will continue to face extraordinary commute times, diminished air quality, and increases in road violence and death.

Tacoma and Pierce County are not transit-rich areas in our region. Tacoma is the second-largest city in the region and a major population center. Connecting Tacoma to the rest of the region requires that it completes TDLE at minimum. It also means that it must provide local services via Sounder and the completion of the T-Link line to Tacoma Community College just as it has worked to deliver local service to other parts of our region.

The Tacoma Transportation Commission is disappointed, on behalf of the City and its communities, that Sound Transit has not been transparent about how Subarea Equity Spending is informing the options the board is being asked to weigh. During its March 18, 2026, retreat in Tacoma, scant mention was made of this vital factor—not of how much Pierce County and Tacoma residents have apportioned already to Sound Transit’s budget, nor how these contributions would serve Tacoma and Pierce County. As this Commission sees it, what our communities have invested in is in regional connectivity—in the opportunity to live, work, and play across our region in ways that are more sustainable and less deadly.

Even a cursory review of the 2024-2025 budget reveals that most of the spending over the past 20 years has gone to King County, the wealthiest county in the state, and one of the wealthiest counties in the nation. Even with the recent expansion of T-Link, Tacoma and its communities have not yet seen even an adequate return-on-investment. What explains this disparity? To even suggest that our less amenity-rich and less affluent parts of our region wait even longer as the richer parts of our region get more borders on negligence.



Sound Transit does not want to contribute to an existing equity gap. We trust that the organization wants to work quickly to close it—even more so because Tacoma and other Pierce County cities and communities have already implemented significant zoning reforms and other investments in anticipation of high frequency transit, including dramatic revisioning of the major streets around Tacoma Dome Station.

Sound Transit cannot continue to turn its back on so many of our neighbors.

- ✓ **Complete Link light rail to Tacoma.**
- ✓ **Extend the Sounder to Dupont.**
- ✓ **Fulfill the T-Link Extension.**
- ✓ **Serve as a regional transit agency.**

We urge Sound Transit to fulfil its legal mandate of regional connectivity and deliver the transit Tacoma residents were promised.

Respectfully,

Matt Stevens, Co-Chair

Rubén Casas, Co-Chair

CC:

- Kurtis Kingsolver, Interim Public Works Director
- Hyun Kim, City Manager
- Mayor Ibsen and Tacoma City Councilmembers
- Planning Commission
- Climate and Sustainability Commission
- Sound Transit Board of Directors