



July 28, 2014

Board of Directors
Sound Transit
401 South Jackson Street
Seattle, WA 98104

Dear Sound Transit Board of Directors:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on the Sumner Station Access Improvements Project. When Sound Transit 2 (ST2) passed in 2008, we appreciated that it funded improved access for the already overcrowded Sumner station. More importantly, we appreciated that it launched an intensive study and community-wide discussion to figure out the best definition of “improved access” in order to use the funding to best serve the station and the community into the short-term and long-term future.

We have not come to this issue lightly. Although this decision has been difficult, we stand united in our request to Sound Transit. The Sumner Sounder Station is located within our historic downtown core. While that location comes with a lot of benefits to the future economy and strength of Sumner, it also poses some challenges. Sound Transit is a key partner in shaping the future of our community, so we respectfully request that your Board of Directors give strong consideration to the City Council priorities outlined in this letter.

After much conversation, deliberation and listening to our citizens, the Sumner City Council has identified the following preferred ST2 improvement package which we believe aligns with Sound Transit’s evaluation criteria, in that it addresses both community and commuter priorities while remaining within the prescribed budget:

1. **SR 410 Interchange Access Improvements:** Anyone who drives into Sumner realizes that access to and from the Sounder Station currently holds two challenges: driving through the 410-Traffic Avenue interchange and parking. While a garage solves the second, the first challenge must still be addressed. No parking improvement works without significant impact to neighborhoods unless there are concurrent improvements to this interchange. To that end, we strongly urge Sound Transit, in partnership with Sumner, Puyallup and WSDOT, in rebuilding the outdated freeway overpass at 410 on Traffic Avenue, and to make a significant financial commitment to that end. We also request Sound Transit provide improvements to traffic signals on either side of this overpass to facilitate efficient vehicular movement.
2. **Parking Improvements:** Commuters using our station and our own citizens strongly agree that the best location for a new garage is on the existing Sounder Station parking site. They chose this site 2 to 1 over the next popular site. We believe this consensus comes from a number of benefits this site holds:

- It provides the closest access for commuters to the station and its trains and buses, eliminating any need for pedestrian street crossings and reducing the risk of a pedestrian-vehicular incident when people are hurrying to or from a train in the dark.
 - It reduces visual distraction from downtown, the surrounding residential areas and the City's entrance on Traffic Avenue, thus minimizing a garage's impact on the small-town charm of Sumner.
 - It does not remove any further property from the tax rolls. Being such a small town, any commercial property, especially on Traffic Avenue, is important for future sales tax generation. With the changes in Washington State tax structure, sales tax has become vital to fund services like police and fire, the very same services which also contribute to a viable community for a successful transit center.
 - The garage is best situated to double as weekend parking for the City's use to support large attendance at events such as the Daffodil Grand Floral Parade, the Santa Parade, etc., better integrating Sound Transit into the community and encouraging positive support for Sound Transit from non-commuters.
3. **Surrounding Neighborhood Improvements:** Despite this site's multiple benefits, we identify that no one garage will solve the long-term access that demand will put on our station. For our part, we continue to use best planning practices to encourage density in the surrounding area to drive long-term housing choices that eliminate the need for lots of cars seeking to park in Sumner. We have identified the following items as critical to helping us increase housing choices around the station and improve access for non-vehicular commuters:
- Sidewalk improvements within a quarter-mile radius and handicap curb cuts within a half-mile radius of the station to improve pedestrian access, especially for disabled individuals.
 - Lighting improvements for pedestrian routes within a quarter-mile of the station to assist with the fact that Sumner residents using the station are walking in the dark most of the year.
 - Wayside horns which will cut noise pollution from trains and greatly increase the viability of land around the station for housing redevelopment.
 - Free access to parking on weekends and holidays in order to patronize businesses or attend special events within our community.

We appreciate your Board's consideration of these recommendations and look forward to working closely with Sound Transit during the upcoming environmental review/engineering phase. We wish to express additional City of Sumner priorities as we move forward with this ST2 process:

- The City requests substantive input into the design and planning of the proposed facilities, particularly the parking garage. We still have concerns about exit patterns, cut-through traffic and the overall look of the facility to further minimize impacts on our community. We would like our staff and citizens to be actively involved in the details of this new facility.

- The City requests that the Sumner Arts Commission have a lead role in identifying projects for use of 1% arts funding associated with the project.
- If the Washington Tractor site is purchased during the construction of a parking facility, the property must be sold and returned to the private sector after the garage is complete.
- The City and our local merchants would appreciate ongoing coordination with Sound Transit to identify further means to encourage Sounder commuters to patronize nearby downtown businesses. We believe something as simple as a “Rider’s Choice” award could explore how much riders use and know about Sumner businesses.
- We support the City of Puyallup’s request to explore other access points, perhaps including a station at Shaw Road as possible future options in upcoming funding packages. We understand that ST2 did not fund a new station, making the Shaw Road site not an option at this point, but we encourage Sound Transit to explore its viability in the future.

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide these comments to your Board. If you have any questions about them, please contact City Administrator John Galle at johng@ci.sumner.wa.us or 253-299-5501 or Mayor Dave Enslow at denslow@ci.sumner.wa.us or 253-299-5790.

Sincerely,