



To: Sound Transit Board  
From: Sierra Club – Washington State Chapter  
Re: Supporting Infill Stations at S. Graham St. and NE 130<sup>th</sup> St.  
Date: April 29, 2016

This letter specifically addresses proposals in the draft Sound Transit 3 system plan for two Link light rail stations in Seattle: S. Graham St. and NE 130<sup>th</sup> St. Sierra Club will be submitting a separate letter to provide comments about the full draft plan.

Sierra Club strongly supports the proposed Link stations at S. Graham St. and NE 130<sup>th</sup> St. in Seattle. These infill stations represent low-cost, high-value investments that advance some of our most important ST3 priorities, including:

- **Creating compact, walkable communities:** Both stations would likely serve as a catalyst for transit-oriented development in their respective neighborhoods. In anticipation of a NE 130<sup>th</sup> St. station being included in Sound Transit 3, the immediate area around the station has been designated as a new Urban Village in the City of Seattle's "Seattle 2035" draft comprehensive plan update. If adopted, that designation would result in increased capacity for new jobs and residences within walking distance of the station.
- **Enabling smart bus-to-rail connections and climate-friendly station access:** Both stations are optimally located for efficient east-west bus connections that could boost ridership beyond Sound Transit estimates. We are also excited that neither station will include an additional parking facility, instead relying on transit connections and people walking and biking to the station to attract riders. NE 130<sup>th</sup> Station would likely spur planned bicycle and pedestrian improvements in the neighborhood, making it even easier for North Seattle residents to access Link without a car.
- **Social equity:** Access to reliable and efficient transit comes with economic opportunity, affordable housing choices, and health outcomes. Low-income neighborhoods and communities of color are often disproportionately dependent on public transit and disproportionately under-served by transit investments. Up to 80% of the riders boarding Link at S. Graham St. could be people of color. Diverse neighborhoods such as Hillman City, Brighton, and South Beacon Hill have no other way to access Link except by infrequent or indirect existing bus service. In North Seattle, a NE 130<sup>th</sup> St. station is the best way to serve the Lake City hub urban village, where the population of people of color has risen from 25% to more than 50% since 1990. Making these stations a reality will increase opportunities for employment and affordable housing, and could improve health, economic, and social outcomes for these populations.

We are pleased that funding for the S. Graham St. station was included in the draft system plan and are encouraged by recent statements from board members and CEO Peter Rogoff indicating that Sound Transit is enthusiastic about building the S. Graham St. station. This station will bridge the 1.8 mile gap between the Columbia City and Othello stations, and provide better access for



residents to schools, medical facilities, and regional job centers. We would like to see this advanced to “early win” status to expedite the project timeline.

The station at NE 130<sup>th</sup> St. should be funded in a way that doesn’t jeopardize Lynnwood Link and should also be included as an “early win.” We encourage Sound Transit to consider creative partnerships with the Federal Transit Administration to make this station a reality.

Sierra Club believes Sound Transit’s projected ridership estimate for the NE 130<sup>th</sup> St. station provides an incomplete picture of this station’s utility. Should this station be built, we expect frequent bus service to connect riders from neighborhoods to the east and west of the station area along the 130<sup>th</sup>/125<sup>th</sup> St. corridor, including Bitter Lake, Pinehurst, and Lake City. (Sierra Club has recommended routing the proposed BRT on State Route 522 to the NE 130<sup>th</sup> St. station instead of the NE 145<sup>th</sup> St. station, but similar bus connectivity to the NE 130<sup>th</sup> St. station could be accomplished by a local feeder route run by King County Metro.) Both Lake City and Bitter Lake are experiencing growth and have significant existing zoned capacity to accommodate new jobs and residents – far greater capacity than exists along Northgate Way or NE 145<sup>th</sup> St.

The planned stations at Northgate Transit Center and NE 145<sup>th</sup> St. will be nearly three miles apart and are insufficient to effectively serve the dense, growing neighborhoods and job centers to the east and west of the planned Link line. Geography and frequent congestion on key arterials conspire to make auto and transit connections from places like Lake City or Bitter Lake challenging during parts of the day. Both stations also present an unwelcoming environment for people walking or riding bikes. In contrast, the 130<sup>th</sup>/125<sup>th</sup> St. corridor usually sees less congestion, which would make getting to the station easier for all modes.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments. We look forward to working with you in the coming months to continue to shape and improve this important regional ballot measure.

Sincerely,

Tim Gould  
Chair, Transportation and Land Use Committee

Megan Jenny  
Chair, Environmental Justice Committee

Jesse Piedfort  
Chair, Seattle Group Executive Committee