

From: [Dave Lange](#)
To: [City Council](#); [John Norris](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Comments for the Council Meeting with Sound Transit 6/19
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Its my Friday look at the numbers. I will say again I fully support Transit and TOD and their operational implications. I am predicting the current rail corridor will be maxed out about the time Northgate gets light rail before the Lynnwood segment opens. Look at the hard limits faced by ST.

ST is comfortable talking about all their capacity with the new corridors up the east side and out to west Seattle with a second tunnel. The real limits are 4 cars per train which is a limit due to station platform lengths already built and turning loops at the segment ends. The corridor is currently at 6 minute intervals and apparently there are no actual plans under 4 minutes. I got into communications with ST planners recently and I am not happy with their 12,000 riders per hour, per direction per corridor maximum. I'm less happy their forecasts go back to a 2004 EIS that predates the ST2 and ST3 research and coordination and the growth spurt in Seattle. The recent press announcement of starting 3 car trains in the Husky Stadium Capitol Hill corridor should translate into a new estimate of what can be expected in the Northgate segment when the light rail stations open up. We have significant new density from downtown to the Roosevelt station. The numbers from 2004 should have been reevaluated with every new segment opening and the 4 car maximum at Roosevelt should have been checked as the contracts were generated. So that by the time you get to 2030 you still have current and accurate estimates.

ST talks in terms of dwell/stop time at the station (up to a minute) and not the slowdown or speedup. When you don't have sidings for passenger platforms you care about deviations from full speed in the main line for planning. The East side link and downtown links will easily have 2 way ridership which effectively doubles the capacity. The Northlink from Lynnwood to at least Northgate is going to be heavily commuter based with very light use of the trains on the reverse commute. There are real, hard, maximums around the expected 12,000 riders/hour and the 4 cars per train. The 4 minute intervals may be increased to a 3 minute interval, but there are limitations below it.

All that density urbanists want around the stations have formulas to plan for car, bike, walk and rail trips per household. If housing is estimating a certain transit trip leaving the dwelling, then ST needs to expect the same rider to show up in the station. All the plans to redeploy bus routes to feed light rail on 6 or 10 minute frequencies and to stop downtown buses at stations on the edge of town are all predictable loads that weren't in the early EIS. The transit group has discussed heavy rail and light rail in the past, I see the core corridors as a trunk line that has the same capacity as its suburban segments. If we fill up a train starting in Lynnwood then you don't have more seats when you get to Capitol Hill. If a train leaves the Seattle Tunnel full you probably aren't getting to Lynnwood at anywhere close to capacity. The maximum of 12,000 riders per hour starts being a real limitation. Using the transit numbers from

Shoreline's Upzone EIS for the 12,000 expected riders per hour translates to serving a population of 100,000 residents for the corridor.

Mitigation to provide more capacity means more than 2 pair of rail tracks and tunnels into downtown, reducing intervals and adding sidings (Metro calls them bus bulbs) at the stations or redeploying buses in the freeway. None of this is funded by ST3 which just keeps lengthening the corridors and picking up ridership. I can pick up on another idea from a transit group that cars should be paired and the middle cab controls should be eliminated for more passenger areas. That means we grow as 2 cars then 4 cars and ST should be evaluating 6 car trains now before the Northgate segment opens and Roosevelt can still be fixed. ST Link is a Seattle City service and the suburbs don't appear ready to remove their regional bus service. Is the glitzy new link going to become a very packed ride based on the new rider squeezing in that needs to get to work on time? Or the rider that needs the more personal space around them closer to the original ST design?

This ends my summary. Can someone brighten my day why this is wrong and why I should just trust the system? It would be unusual for ST to add more capacity to an existing rail line, preferring to serve an additional corridor. This means the Shoreline density at the Shoreline stations won't be walking distance to an existing available ride and will have to take a bus somewhere else in the future.

We really should implement a Shoreline upzone building moratorium until the Northgate light rail station capacity is better understood and the 145th Interchange plans should not put a buttonhook on-ramp into the northbound bus lane. If we end up with buses mitigating the full light rail, we need the existing bus infrastructure at 145th since southbound buses using the new 148th station is such an awkward detour.

Thanks for listening,

Dave Lange

Shoreline

PS just say no to orange stations!