



May 24, 2004

The Honorable Gary Nelson, Chair
RTID Executive Board
3000 Rockefeller Avenue
Everett, WA 98201

Dear Chair Nelson:

I am writing on behalf of the Sound Transit Board of Directors in response to your letter of February 12, 2004, in which the Regional Transit Investment District (RTID) Executive Board asked us to consider participating in a joint ballot measure that would be placed before the voters in the fall 2004 election.

Before the Board met to consider a decision at our May 20, 2004 meeting, it became clear that a number of key stakeholders had already concluded – on the basis of recent public opinion surveys and the abundance of other issues vying for voter attention this fall – that the timing is not right for pursuing a joint ballot measure this year. As we discussed during our phone call that morning, the withdrawal of financing support for the fall 2004 ballot was fatal. While the Board was clearly discouraged by this development, we decided to follow through and discuss the issue at the May 20 meeting. This is because previous discussions revealed our Board believes the concept of a joint ballot is valid. We concluded that we would not rule out a joint ballot proposal, and that we would want to continue our dialogue if in the future it becomes likely that RTID is taking a regional package to the ballot.

We have analyzed the legal implications of a joint ballot, the potential financial capacity it would create, and the options it would present for expanding the regional transit system in Pierce, King, and Snohomish Counties. We examined these issues extensively during four of our regular board and committee meetings. Our staff brought forward information including project lists, cost estimates, and revenue projections. We spent considerable time working through various revenue swap scenarios in order to ensure voters throughout the region would benefit from an equitable investment strategy. During this effort, we received numerous public comments representing the full range of public views on this question.

We did identify a number of issues that will have to be dealt with to insure the success of any future joint ballot. Among the issues identified by our Board deliberations in need of resolution are: a feeling that, given our legal limitation to

Central Puget Sound
Regional Transit Authority
Union Station
401 S. Jackson St.
Seattle, WA 98104-2826
Reception (206) 398-5000
Facsimile (206) 398-5499
www.soundtransit.org

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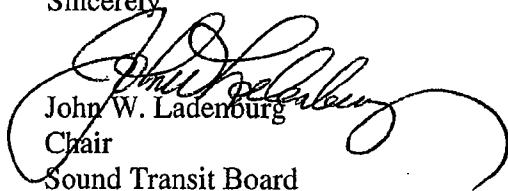
Joni Earl

Phase I scope enhancements, not enough high capacity transit investments would be ready for a fall ballot; limitations on the use of surplus funds in our East King County subarea; the application of our subarea equity policy; and the relationship between a ballot measure and Sound Transit's Phase 2 planning effort.

As the agency charged with developing a regional transit system, we share your concern about the critical importance of investing in transportation improvements in order to protect our economic competitiveness and quality of life. We believe the dialogue between our two agencies has been productive in bringing people together around the idea of a balanced investment strategy including both roads and transit. The public clearly expects elected officials and government agencies to work cooperatively to provide transportation options that work for all.

We applaud your efforts to craft regional consensus and carry out the RTID mission. We hope to continue the dialogue between our agencies in order to pursue other opportunities for us to carry out our respective missions, including exploring a prospective joint ballot next year and/or appropriate legislative changes that might strengthen our efforts. On behalf of the Board, I look forward to continuing the collaborative approach we established this year.

Sincerely



John W. Ladenburg

Chair

Sound Transit Board

cc: Sound Transit Board
Joni Earl, CEO
Paul Matsuoka
Ric Ilgenfritz
Marcia Walker