



King County

Teresa Mosqueda

Councilmember, District 8

Metropolitan King County Council

April 11, 2024

Dear Sound Transit System Expansion Committee,

I testify today to humbly ask you as Board Members and members of the Sound Transit System Expansion Committee to please consider refinement options to the N. Delridge location prior to advancing a vote in June.

The N. Delridge community is not asking for alternatives to be evaluated – like Sound Transit granted in the CID – we are asking instead for more simple refinement options to be evaluated to preserve public assets, community hubs and make Sound Transit a value add.

In addition to raising concerns with Sound Transit staff starting nearly 2 years ago, I have coordinated many meetings with small businesses located in the N. Delridge economic business hub – all of which will be impacted by the preferred N. Delridge station location. To a person, every single business, has explicitly that they want and welcome Sound Transit in the region. I too want sound transit, desperately. If you know me, you know I am a big believer in the 15 min walk shed and getting people out of their cars. But what I and others cannot square is why a mostly vacant and unoccupied Bartell building, three empty surface parking lots, and portions of paved surface streets - within 20 feet of the proposed site and pillars – are not being fully utilized for a future site instead of going through existing businesses.

After being in conversation with Sound Transit staff for nearly two years, connecting staff with small businesses like the childcare center (which was completely left-off of the Draft EIS), after putting a directive in the City of Seattle budget year to direct the city departments to better support Sound Transit in assesses community assets and vulnerable communities that would be impacted by proposed stations – it's clear to me that these concerns need to be elevated. The current proposed N. Delridge plans will eliminate the West Seattle Health Club and large community utilized pool, the largest childcare on the peninsula, and small businesses – many of which are women owned – including a grocery mart, all ages music venue and lessons, cafes and gathering places. These amenities are what makes N. Delridge a walkable community, and Sound Transit can and should be an added asset to this neighborhood by complementing these community amenities, not eliminating them.

I am here to ask you to ask for two refinement options that could save money and save businesses.

a. Refinement Option: Shift the elevated rail pillars 20 feet south to SW Yancy Street

- Please ask for a refinement that shifts the pillars that would hold the elevated rail line leaving N. Delridge up to Avalon by just 20 feet. The refinement option should look at shifting the pillars south by 20 feet onto the dead-end Yancy Street or elevate it slightly to go above the gym swimming pool. If it goes through the pool as planned it will wipe out the gym completely.



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- The West Seattle Health Club is home to one of the only pools in N. Delridge one that children and families access beyond gym members for swim lessons.
- Seattle Fire Chief Scoggins reminded me last weekend at April Pools Day that every time a pool closes the number of deaths from drowning goes up, and noted that drowning is already the second most common cause of death for children in King County.
- I ask you to imagine if a Sound Transit pillar was set to take out the Olympic Athletic Club in Ballard – a gym I used to go. I know that community would be activated to protect that public asset – I ask you to do the same for N. Delridge. The West Seattle Health Club has already said they will have to close if they cannot operate their pool.
- This is a cornerstone public asset for the peninsula and our neighborhood families - is and help protect the gym by doing the simplest thing and elevate or push out the rail line 20 feet – this could save money by not demolishing a business and utilizing public street space on a dead end.

b. Refinement Option: Shift the station SW to preserve the small business corridor

- Ask for a refinement that would look at shifting the proposed N. Delridge station location site 100 or a few hundred feet southwest to protect the childcare center and row of small businesses. This refinement should evaluate using parts of 28th Street and Andover – especially if Sound Transit is unwilling to take the mostly empty Bartells building or parking lot, which are relatively easy to relocate corporate offices.
- A refinement could preserve the small businesses, like MODE music, Skylark, Ounces, Sound Physical Therapy, Uptown Espresso, the corner grocery mart, ILWU52, and Alki Beach Academy - the largest childcare center the Peninsula. No other station has proposed to take out a childcare center of that magnitude and importance. We have a childcare desert and infant care crisis, one that is even more acute on the peninsula because of our geography.
- We are asking for creativity to protect Nucor and the other business assts in this business pocket so they can complement a new station.
- A refinement that shifts the station SW using part of Andover Street and the north end of 28th Street may prevent the elimination of the heart of the thriving N. Delridge business corridor – and possibly save Sound Transit acquisition and demolition dollars as well.

Lastly, Nucor is a valued industrial employer with good wages in the region. I appreciate Sound Transit is preserving their land and accommodated new access points. Last October, Nucor posted a press releases announcing they are looking at a new Pacific Northwest site. I have heard subsequently that no one from Sound Transit reached out to ask what this means for Seattle. I am asking you to do that – please proactively reach out to fully understand what Nucor’s plans are prior to making final decisions.

To reiterate – those raising concerns about the preferred station location and pillars in N. Delridge all do want Sound Transit in our N. Delridge community. We want Sound Transit that complements the community amenities where people can:

- Drop off their children in the morning at day care or go to the gym before using light rail.



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- Get off light rail and going to a local establishment for coffee, the tap house or get physical therapy.
- Where teens can continue accessing one of the only all ages clubs in the region at Skylark.
- Where children and adults can get their music lessons from MODE, where scholarships are offered.
- Grab necessities from the small grocery corner store – one of the only walkable food vendors in the neighborhood.

We just ask for at least these two refinement options to be evaluated prior to a vote – recognizing that it may add time but it's critical. We request refinement options that (a) shift the pillars holding the rail south, and (b) shift the station southwest and preserve as many community assets as possible by utilizing street vacations and empty surface parking lots. This is how we can make the vision of a truly walkable, livable, thriving neighborhood with light rail come to fruition that complements the community assets, while also saving cost for Sound Transit.

I welcome you to the N. Delridge neighborhood to do a walk-through of the vacant streets, empty surface parking lots, and to imagine what it could look like to preserve many community assets as we enjoy some food at one of the local businesses so we can do some creative thinking with you and your team. As Sound Transit Board Member Franklin said just now in today's meeting, "let me look at the solutions with you." Thank you for your consideration of these two refinement options.

Sincerely,

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