



SEATTLE CITY COUNCIL | DISTRICT 1

COUNCILMEMBER ROB SAKA

Board Administrator
Sound Transit
401 S. Jackson St.
Seattle, WA 98104

March 17, 2025

Re: Support for Sound Transit's Light Rail Expansion and Community Impact Mitigation

Dear Honorable Board Chair Somers, Board Members, and Interim CEO Sparrman,

As Chair of the Seattle City Council Transportation Committee and District 1 representative, I write to express my strong support for Sound Transit's light rail extension projects and urge efforts to mitigate their impacts on businesses and communities. Your work is essential in connecting our city and making Seattle a world-class place to live, work, and visit.

My district includes the diverse neighborhoods of South Park, Georgetown, Pioneer Square, SODO, and West Seattle. As both Transportation Chair and District 1's representative, I am closely following the West Seattle Link Extension (WSLE) project. This over 4-mile extension is a critical investment that will provide vital transit connections, economic opportunity, and civic engagement.

That said, such a large-scale infrastructure project obviously comes with significant impacts. With construction set to begin in 2027, residents, tenants, and property owners deserve transparency about the project's scope and effects. Those required to relocate must be made whole to the fullest extent permissible by law. I urge Sound Transit to work closely with city departments and the community to ensure clear communication and accessibility throughout this process.

Relocation efforts must prioritize financial, technical, and logistical support, along with other strong anti-displacement strategies. I urge Sound Transit to provide adequate compensation and assistance to those affected. Tenants and property owners should receive the maximum allowable support necessary to transition smoothly while minimizing disruption to their lives and businesses.

During the 2025 Washington State legislative session, I proudly supported HB 1733, sponsored by Representatives Brianna Thomas (34th LD), Joe Fitzgibbon (34th LD), et al. As you know, this bill would increase the statutory reimbursement cap for relocation expenses from \$50,000 to \$200,000—a necessary adjustment to support those displaced by transit expansion such as this. I understand that the legislation passed the House unanimously on a 96-0 vote, and should it pass the Senate and be signed into law, I urge Sound Transit to implement it as quickly as possible.

Despite the challenges of such a significant project, along with pending uncertainty at the federal level, I remain committed to supporting Sound Transit's expansion efforts locally in Seattle. I look forward to continued collaboration on transit security, infrastructure investments, and ensuring this project benefits the entire community. Thank you for your leadership in connecting our region.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rob Saka", is displayed on a light gray rectangular background.

Councilmember Rob Saka
Chair, Transportation Committee, Seattle City Council

cc: Seattle Mayor Bruce Harrell
Seattle City Councilmember Dan Strauss
King County Councilmember Teresa Mosqueda
Representative Joe Fitzgibbon, Majority Leader
Representative Brianna Thomas
Senator Emily Alvarado