

TO: Sound Transit Board Chair Dow Constantine, Councilmember Rob Johnson, Councilmember Mike O'Brien

FROM: Councilmember Debora Juarez

CC: Sound Transit Board Members

With the recent release of the Sound Transit 3 draft proposal I have been contacted by numerous constituents, community groups, and businesses in my district surprised to see the NE 130th Street Station designated as a "provisional" project. Local leadership has crystalized public support, applied Sound Transit staff time and work, and laid the groundwork to upzone the immediate area for significant transit oriented development. NE 130th was commonly understood to be a solid proposal set to be built as part of the Lynnwood LINK line – as evidenced by repeated references in the FTA Record of Decision dated July 2015.

My understanding of the late-breaking decision to designate the NE 130th Station as "provisional" was that it was based on concerns that building the station would threaten a federal grant secured for Lynnwood LINK.

A concerned constituent recently drew my attention to a quite germane and recent example of an FTA project in Denver, referred to as the 61st and Peña Station.

Notably, both the Denver station and NE 130th are infill stations set to be constructed along rail lines that have received Federal Transit Authority grants. In Denver, city and county officials successfully added the 61st and Peña Station to the broader "Eagle P3" project *while construction was underway*. Officials in the Federal Transit Administration initially resisted the addition of the Denver station, but soon relented after continued advocacy by city and county officials. As such, **the federal grant was never jeopardized**. The station was paid for with local funds and the FTA did not penalize the community for prioritizing and paying for its needs.

The proposed NE 130th St./"Thornton Creek" Station sits on the Lynnwood LINK section of Sound Transit's light rail spine. The Lynnwood LINK section is funded by a combination of a \$1.2 billion federal grant as well as local taxpayer dollars collected under the Sound Transit 2 package. *The section of rail in question is still in the engineering stage*. NE 130th St. Station is at an earlier, and hence, improved position in the development process relative to where 61st and Peña was when they got their federal approval to add their station.

In short, even though the Denver station was added further along in the development process, its construction never threatened their broader FTA-financed project.

The Denver station will begin service next week. We owe it to our constituents to fully pursue the opportunity to obtain a similar accommodation from federal authorities. This duty is made ever more paramount due to the fact that adding NE 130th Street at a future undetermined date would require an unnecessarily burdensome expenditure of taxpayer resources. While the station was originally estimated to cost \$25 million dollars if built concurrently with Lynnwood LINK, going back and adding

the station later would more than triple the price to \$80 million dollars. We cannot afford to take on this additional obligation simply because we are unwilling to challenge federal bureaucratic procedure.

The logic behind designating the NE 130th Street Station as “provisional” is flawed, and the penalty for continuing to do so will be paid by local residents and all of Sound Transit’s taxpayers. This is unacceptable. These taxpayers, and all the residents of Bitter Lake, Haller Lake, Pinehurst, Lake City, and Cedar Park deserve a NE 130th St. Station delivered at a reasonable cost and within a reasonable time frame.