

August 15, 2011

Dear Secretary LaHood:

I believe Sound Transit's East Link light rail encroachment on Mercer Slough Park violates Federal Environmental law because they failed to consider a viable "no-build" alternative of converting the center Lake Washington bridge to a two-way bus-only configuration. The other vehicular traffic currently using the bridge center section would be accommodated by adding a fourth HOV lane to the outer bridge sections. Each bus lane can accommodate up to 720 buses per hour (5 sec intervals) more than 20 times light rail and enough to satisfy any potential cross-lake requirements.

The added capacity would allow express bus routes directly connecting each of the east side P&R lots with Seattle allowing every resident to leave their car at a local P&R and get fast, reliable transportation into and out of Seattle. To facilitate the added buses 4th Ave and 2nd Ave will be reserved for buses with each express bus having one or two dedicated drop off points on 4th Ave and pick up points on 2nd Ave. This approach allows people to park their cars near where they live rather than where they work, the key to reducing congestion throughout the Eastside.

The real tragedy is the East Link program described in the July 15, 2011 Final EIS will result in Sound Transit spending \$6-8 billion on a project which does absolutely nothing to reduce 405 and I-90 congestion, devastates Mercer Slough Park and nearby residential areas, and makes it impossible to better utilize the bridge center section.

Thank you for your interest in this matter.

Sincerely,

Bill Hirt

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