

Below: Bothell Way as Proposed becomes a concrete corridor, a generic expression of engineering without the benefit of community engagement or oversight from other disciplines. Engineers build roads not communities.



Below: Bothell Way (today) in Lake Forest Park, is a tree-lined corridor to Town Center, identified with a mature tree canopy, promoting ease, awareness of seasonal change and the value of nature to LFP residents.



I appreciate your taking the time to review my response. Please give me a call to discuss further: 206-930-1769.

The reality of what Sound Transit is proposing looks more like this:

Below: A typical WSDOT Wall as proposed for nearly 4,000 linear feet along Bothell Way, creating an attractive nuisance for graffiti, resulting in an aggressive highway and extensive walls reflecting sound, increasing noise pollution on both sides of Bothell Way.



In contrast, both Kenmore and Bothell have attractive walls announcing their City entries.

Below: Bothell Way as it exists in Kenmore and Bothell, with shotcrete “rock” walls in Bothell (above image), landscaping, sidewalks, and lighting to humanize and soften the impact of ST3.



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We Get None of This

Along Bothell Way, a Narrow Band of Plantings Softens the Impact of the Wall and Road

In Kenmore, Vines and Hanging Plants Need Minimal Space and Care to Provide Greening



Who is CORE? We are concerned neighbors who live in LFP, sharing information about ST3 and its impacts on our community.

Contact: info@lfpcore.org www.lfpcore.org

May 17, 2023

To: Stephen Fesler, info@theurbanist.org

From: Vicki Scuri, vicki@vickiscuri.com

I appreciate your taking an interest in ST3 as it runs through Lake Forest Park. I just finished reading your article, *Stride Bus Projects Fall Further Behind Schedule, Controversy Brews in Lake Forest Park*. I would like to respond to several misconceptions. Also, I have read Jeff Snedden’s response to you, and I concur with his research and conclusions. CORE is an all-volunteer community group with professionals sharing their expertise to promote responsible transit in Lake Forest Park. We are diligent, passionate, and informed, not “well connected.”

For the past 38 years, my background has been in humanizing transportation systems, connecting infrastructure with communities across the US. I found the images in your article to be very misleading. The side-by-side comparisons of “now” and “proposed” images show an area for comparison before the impact of the extensive walls, starting near 38th Ave NE and running nearly 4,000 linear feet to across the street from 41st Ave NE. This series of retaining walls cuts into the west bank of Bothell Way, up to 16’ inside private property, intruding on homeowner’s backyards, in some cases, only a dozen feet away from bedroom windows. This is hardly a no impact situation. This is a continuous cut for nearly 4,000 linear feet, into a hillside, requiring massive walls.

The wall footprint does not allow for landscaping or noise mitigation. The walls are located 2’ off the shoulder of the highway, adjacent to a jersey barrier, creating a curb-to-curb expanse of concrete that is approximately 77’-wide, without including a left turn lane. The typical medians are concrete, unlike those in Bothell and Kenmore. The wall construction as proposed goes against Sound Transit’s own **Visual and Aesthetic Technical Report** where the impact of removing mature trees creates a **negative High Level Visual Change**. The report recommends installing climbing vines either above or below the proposed walls.

Below: CORE visual summary incorporating the middle image from the ST Report in March 2021



Bothell Way at 165th, above.



Bothell Way at 165th, as proposed by ST3, above. Bothell Way at 165th, envisioned with sound walls and vines, below.



**SR 522 / Bothell Way Impact
Bus Rapid Transit Lake Forest Park**

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The SR 522 corridor through Lake Forest Park is defined by the consistent mature vegetation on both sides of the road, as seen to the left. The corridor reflects the character of Lake Forest Park.

The Visual Aesthetic Resources Technical Report, dated March 2021, notes the **Adverse Visual Quality Impact** of removing the mature trees, replacing the vegetation with walls and fencing on the west side.

This creates a negative **High Level Visual Change**.

This becomes especially clear when viewing the proposed visual simulations shown in the ST3 report, on left.

The new roadway alignment widens and shifts the road away from the lake, to accommodate a new sidewalk, planting strip and bus lane. This curves into the backyards of the west side, moving the loud roadway closer to these homes, removing all mature trees and vegetation along the alignment which provide a visual and psychological buffer to the noisy road. This expansion requires new retaining walls, which will have an adverse impact on the entry to Lake Forest Park. This impact is further exacerbated by the unequal allotment of amenity resulting in only the east side of the road getting a 10’ buffer in an improved landscaped, pedestrian experience.

The composite visualization collage, left, shows a preferred alternative to the proposed infrastructure, adding a sound wall, color and greening.

It follows the **Visual and Aesthetic Resources Technical Report** recommendations to “install climbing vine plant species either above, or at the base of, retaining walls.”

The sound wall is proposed behind the retaining wall, along the easement, mitigating the visual impact and extreme noise of the road.

This approach provides mitigation to both sides of Bothell Way, not solely on the east side as currently proposed. Also, it provides a more harmonious entry reflecting the character of Lake Forest Park.



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23.05.17

From my point of view, these are some of the hardships about to befall LFP and all its nearly 14,000 citizens. See pros and cons below.

Pros:

1) In LFP, a savings of 2.3 minutes during the afternoon Eastbound/Northbound commute for a diminishing number of riders, predicted to increase someday in the future. (By the way, slower by a factor of 2, than the old 522 ST Express to downtown.)

Cons:

- 1) Removal of over 500 trees (490 with calipers 6" or greater).
- 2) Removal of over 500 shrubs.
- 3) Deforestation of Bothell Way causing heat islands along the alignment.
- 4) Increased untreated groundwater runoff into streams and properties.
- 5) Increased slide potential on steep slopes.
- 6) Further degradation to Bsche'tla Creek (with the removal of 28 trees within the creek and buffer zone).
- 7) Roadway expansion requiring regrading the alignment and constructing nearly 4,000 linear feet of concrete retaining walls, without sound mitigation or landscape.
- 8) Denigrating the City Entryway, transforming the now tree-lined highway into a concrete corridor with little to no real amenity (untended mow strip, and 80 decibel or higher pedestrian walkway with no pedestrian lighting: it's dark at 4pm in the winter).
- 9) Attractive nuisance promoted through the construction of nearly 4,000 linear feet of blank (or minimal relief) solid concrete walls, rising to a height of 16', that will attract graffiti and crime, by making this an aggressive highway, disproportionate in scale to the site and to humans.
- 10) Increase noise levels (already topping 80 decibels at the Sheridan Market and along the highway) created by the monstrous, sound reflecting retaining walls, the additional volumes of traffic and buses created by the addition of the EB BRT lane, and an additional EB traffic lane.
- 11) A permanent easement, up to 5' wide, within private properties stretching from 38th Ave NE to across from 41st Ave NE, over 4,000 linear feet, creating a vagrant landscape, so that WSDOT can maintain their walls. This affects privacy, security and promotes crime: a no man's land.
- 12) The removal and movement of 90,000 cubic yards of earth and debris (trees) moved in and out of LFP, creating traffic diversion through neighborhoods and difficulty and slowdowns moving through LFP for up to 3-years.
- 13) Decreased tax revenues to the Town Center from all businesses located in the Town Center, and along the corridor, including the Sheridan Market. Small businesses may be forced to close over the 3-year potential construction phases. ST is delayed everywhere. (If ST says construction is 18-months to 2-years, more likely it is 3-years.) Also, in the next three years the Town may be teetering on bankruptcy, according to the Mayor.
- 14) Increased taxes to homeowners despite decreased property values due to the proximity of the road to residences, which no longer can use their front or back yards, due to noise pollution, creating potential health hazards.
- 15) LFP will become the "poor sister" to both Kenmore and Bothell, that can afford to maintain landscape and trees, attractive walls and sidewalks, and growth without impacting private residences. (The expansion through these areas is primarily in commercial development: parking lots. There is not nearly the pain to achieve the transit gain in these areas. They have room to expand. LFP does not.)