

City Files Lawsuit to Enforce Terms of 2017 Settlement Agreement with Sound Transit



October 26, 2020 – Factsheet

The Mercer Island Transit Interchange is the integration of bus transit service from the Eastside with East Link light rail. When East Link opens for service in 2023, some bus routes from the Eastside to Seattle will terminate at Mercer Island Station, where passengers will transfer to/from light rail.

Sound Transit is in breach of the 2017 Settlement Agreement that was signed with the City to govern development of the interchange. Sound Transit and King County Metro have insisted that buses be permitted to stop to pick-up and drop-off passengers and to have unlimited layover times on both sides of North Mercer Way, in direct contradiction of the Settlement Agreement. Despite our repeated requests for dialogue to find an outcome that best serves the interests of all parties, Sound Transit has refused to compromise in any manner.

As a result, the City Council has voted to authorize the City Manager to file a lawsuit against Sound Transit to ask for enforcement of the Agreement.

The facts are:

- The City of Mercer Island has provided detailed and expansive technical comments on design plans submitted by Sound Transit, as required by the Settlement Agreement
- City staff has:
 - Provided a thorough review of and comments on design plans at the 30%, 60%, and 90% stage for the Mercer Island Transit Interchange
 - Reviewed 60+ permits related to the East Link project
 - Reviewed 4,500+ pages of plans related to the East Link project
- Sound Transit has ignored the City's offer to enter into mediation and has failed to address the City's questions and concerns, contrary to the cooperative spirit of the Settlement Agreement. This violates the Settlement Agreement.
- The Right-of-Way Use Permit Application submitted by Sound Transit includes extra curb cuts for bus layovers along North Mercer Way, in violation of the Agreement.
- Sound Transit and King County Metro have insisted on bus stops and unlimited bus layover time along both sides of North Mercer Way, in violation of the Agreement.
- These changes would fundamentally alter the nature of the main point of access to the rest of the region for our local commuters to the detriment of our community.
- A substantial expansion of bus stops, layover location and duration could impede access to Island Crest Way and I-90, and does nothing to improve the safety of residents or transit riders.

At the end of the day, a deal is a deal. Sound Transit is not honoring their side of the bargain and we are confident that the courts will agree with the City's position. Residents can find the latest information on the [City's Let's Talk Website](#) and we would urge you to share this information and letter with our neighbors and friends.