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Seattle Subway Calls for Transparency in Sound Transit CEO Search Amidst Public Trust Concerns

SEATTLE, WA — Seattle Subway urges the Sound Transit Board to ensure a transparent and public-driven CEO search as the agency nears its final selection in early March. With the board expected to announce its choice soon, concerns over secrecy in the hiring process—including the agency’s history of non-disclosure agreements (NDAs) in past searches and a lack of public input—have alarmed transit advocates.

“Sound Transit must release the full list of finalists and invite public dialogue before any final decision,” said David Scott of Seattle Subway. “Riders deserve to know who will shape our region’s transit future, especially given ongoing issues like disruptive maintenance closures, weak real-time bus data, and significant schedule delays.”

While confidentiality is standard in executive hiring, Sound Transit has historically gone beyond typical practices, including requiring candidates to sign post-interview NDAs in a previous CEO search. Such practices, combined with a pattern of closed-door decision-making on major transit projects, have eroded public trust. To restore confidence, Sound Transit must demonstrate that this search is conducted openly, fairly, and in the best interest of riders.

At a pivotal moment for Sound Transit, with billions in public funds invested and major Link extensions repeatedly delayed, the next CEO must be a leader who ensures resources are directed toward reliable, high-quality service for riders. Among the five rumored finalists is King County Executive Dow Constantine, an active member of the Sound Transit Board, whose current position on the Sound Transit Board presents an inherent conflict of interest.

Seattle Subway calls on Sound Transit to commit to a fairer, more open process, including:

- Public disclosure of the finalist list before a decision is made.
- Opportunities for public comment and engagement.
- A commitment to selecting a CEO based on merit, not political maneuvering.

“Sound Transit must ensure its CEO selection process includes meaningful public input and accountability,” said Francois Kaepelin, Director of Legislative Advocacy at Seattle Subway. “Riders deserve a leader who will champion reliability, streamline service delivery, and ensure that public investments translate into tangible improvements. The future of Sound Transit depends on a CEO who listens to the public, prioritizes service quality, and keeps projects on schedule.”

Seattle Subway urges transit riders and community members to hold Sound Transit accountable by demanding a fair, open hiring process through public comments and direct engagement with the Board before a final decision is made.

About Seattle Subway

Seattle Subway is a grassroots organization advocating for rapid, reliable, and equitable transit solutions across the Puget Sound region. Founded and operated by local volunteers who share a vision for world-class transit, Seattle Subway works collaboratively with public agencies, community partners, and elected officials to ensure that rail and bus networks are built out to serve the public effectively for generations to come.

For more information or to schedule an interview, please contact David Scott at david.scott@seattlesubway.org.

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