

Seattle Subway 2024 General Election Endorsements

Summary of 2024 General Election Endorsements:

Seattle City Council Position 8: Alexis Mercedes Rinck.

Legislative District 43, State Representative Pos. 2: Shaun Scott.

Vote NO on Initiative 2117; See <https://No2117.com/>.

Vote NO on Initiative 2124; See <https://www.NoOn2124.org/>.

Vote NO on Initiative 2109; See <https://www.No2109.org/>.

Seattle Transportation Levy: A very unimpressed lack of endorsement either way, see below.

Methodology

We sadly didn't have the energy to conduct endorsements in time for the primary election, but we do have general election endorsements! We chose these two races to endorse in as they are both competitive races whose outcome will have a direct impact on sustainable transportation in the Puget Sound region.

To each of the four candidates across the two contests we sent a short, 4-question survey:

1. Do you support building the Sound Transit 3 stations serving the Chinatown/International District on 4th Ave and serving Midtown near 5th Ave/Madison St, as originally promised to voters and endorsed by the 43rd legislative district Democrats?
2. With the recent issues causing a shutdown of the South Lake Union streetcar line, do you support shuttering the line permanently, or do you support reinvesting in the Seattle Streetcar network, as detailed in the Seattle Transportation Plan, to build the Center City Connector and further extensions north and south along 1st Ave?
3. Will you work to provide state and/or local funds to study the Link Light Rail expansions beyond ST3 detailed in the Seattle Transportation Plan?
4. What do you think are the biggest challenges facing Seattle-area public transit riders today and how will you help solve them?

Seattle City Council Position 8

We are excited to enthusiastically endorse Alexis Mercedes Rinck for the Seattle City Council! Her responses to our questions demonstrated a deep understanding of transit issues and the intention to make our system work better for riders. Alexis' response to our last question was so strong and comprehensive we didn't feel right cutting anything from it, so here it is in its entirety:

As a transit rider who chooses not to own a car, I am personally aware of the challenges we face as a city to provide carbon-free (and car-free) mobility options. I rely on public transit daily, and this experience fuels my commitment to expanding and improving our public transportation system for everyone in Seattle. I deeply respect the essential role that transit workers play in making our city more accessible, connected, and equitable. I believe that reliability, frequency, and safety are top priorities for riders today.

I am committed to creating a safe, multi-modal transportation system that truly serves everyone. My focus will be on building an integrated network that prioritizes walking, biking, rolling, and public transit, making it easier for people to get around the city. This includes expanding public transit, electrifying our transportation infrastructure, and adding new sidewalks, safer bike routes, and more accessible pedestrian signals. I will work to ensure that transit-oriented development is equitable and benefits all communities, and I will explore progressive revenue options to fund changes to our public transit to align with community priorities for safety, mobility, maintenance, and livability.

Public safety on our transit systems is a top priority, and it requires a thoughtful, community-centered approach. Physical assaults and drug use on public transit are symptoms of larger issues that our city must address, such as the lack of mental health services, housing instability, and addiction support. Rather than just criminalizing these behaviors, we need to invest in solutions that get to the root of the problem. First, we must ensure our transit systems are safe and welcoming for both drivers and passengers. This can be achieved through increased staffing of transit-specific safety personnel who are trained in de-escalation and mental health crisis intervention, as well as through partnerships with social service organizations that can provide immediate support and resources for individuals in need. I am committed to working with community organizations, labor partners, and city agencies to expand these services, improve safety on public transit, and ensure that both riders and transit workers feel secure.

Boom. Done. Endorsed. Her other answers were just as good. Alexis Mercedes Rinck's really impressive, thoughtful responses deserve more airtime. In her own words, responding to our first three questions:

...[The Sound Transit 3 CID and Midtown] stations are crucial for improving public transit access, reducing traffic congestion, and advancing our city's climate goals. However, while these projects are essential, we must also ensure that the communities impacted by construction, especially the historically marginalized Chinatown/International District, are given the attention and resources they deserve...

I support reinvesting in the Seattle Streetcar network...to build the Center City Connector...Additionally, we should prioritize...funding to complete the streetcar

network, ensuring that it plays a more effective role in our city's multi-modal transportation system...

I am committed to working...to secure funding for studying expansions of the Link Light Rail network beyond...ST3. As our city continues to grow, it's essential that we plan for a future where public transit is the primary way people move around the city. By investing in these studies, we can ensure that future expansions are thoughtful, equitable, and aligned with the needs of our communities...ST4 should be focused on delivering an improved network within Seattle's borders.

It's clear that Alexis wants to build a world class transit system that gets Seattleites where they are going quickly and comfortably. Her experience as a frequent transit rider will help center the concerns of riders, who are often overlooked and have their perspective sidelined by the current council.

In the interest of fairness, we should mention that while incumbent unelected Councilmember Tanya Woo did not return our latest survey, we have her responses from our 2023 survey as well as her actions during her year in office to tell us that she is not the candidate who will be a strong advocate for sustainable transportation.

The contrast could not be clearer. **Vote Alexis Mercedes Rinck.**

Legislative District 43, State Representative Pos. 2

Seattle Subway is happy to endorse Shaun Scott for State Representative Pos. 2 for the 43rd Legislative District. Rinck is a tough act to follow, and comparatively Shaun Scott didn't blow us away with his answers, but he's clearly interested in finding additional progressive revenue sources to improve rail transit in the Puget Sound region as well as statewide. When he earned our endorsement for Seattle City Council District 4 in 2019, he was much more focused on Seattle's mass transit shortcomings than he has been in his current contest. And that makes sense, as he will be much better positioned to help with bigger-picture funding from an office in Olympia than to get into the details of our mass transit system.

And aside from all of those good things about Scott, in this race the choice is obvious.

While Republican-trying-to-pass-as-a-Democrat Andrea Suarez did respond to our survey, her responses actually made us dislike her even more than we thought they would. Our working assumption is that she scooped up really bad takes off the KOMO editorial board's cutting room floor and then glued them onto the page like a ransom note of nonsense.

According to her, one of the biggest issues facing our region's transit riders is that "buses are super loud". Of all of the things to say, that sure is one of them. She even went as far as to suggest that Link was not needed at all — an impressively baffling statement when talking to an organization called Seattle Subway! You heard it from Suarez first: mass transit should be canceled for being too noisy.

Please do not vote for this person. She has earned one of the only anti-endorsements that our organization has ever written.

Once again, the contrast between the candidates is clear: **Vote Shaun Scott.**

Seattle Transportation Levy

Regarding Seattle Proposition No. 1 (Property Tax Levy Renewal for Transportation), as the proposed new eight year transportation measure emerged, we at Seattle Subway weren't happy with what we saw. Instead of funding transit, City Council chose to focus the levy on climate-arson-inducing car infrastructure. Adjusting for inflation and the change in term, this levy brings a 34% reduction in transit funding compared to the currently expiring Move Seattle levy. Worse, there are no metrics or guardrails defining how the few remaining transit investments will improve the system. There is no funding for future Link expansion planning to ensure Sound Transit doesn't paint itself into a corner, and this could make the city's own vision map (in the Seattle Transportation Plan) impossible.

Despite the clear shortcomings for transit, this levy might not be all bad. There are some good things in it and many good people who care about those things will ask you to vote for it. But transit is not one of those things, and we simply cannot endorse a transportation levy that cuts transit funding. The City Council should have done better, and we are very disappointed that they don't care about transit nearly as much as the people of this city do. We can't afford to go backwards on transit investments for the next eight years.