

Public Participation Plan



Inclusive Public Participation at Sound Transit

Sound Transit is committed to continuous improvement of our public engagement strategies. We recognize that our services are far-reaching and unique in that we provide rail, light rail, and bus service in the three county region of King County, Pierce County and Snohomish County. We are devoted in our efforts to hear the widest possible spectrum of viewpoints. By prioritizing engagement of historically underserved populations, our organization can ensure that we are good stewards and advocates for all communities. Sound Transit strives to make sure all views are represented, not just those of the outspoken.

To do this Sound Transit has numerous policies, resolutions, principles and tactics to guide and deliver how the agency engages with low income, minority and limited English proficient (LEP) populations.

Policies and Resolutions

Resolution 2011-15 Inclusive Public Participation Policy

Sound Transit's public involvement and community outreach programs will be designed to engage diverse populations by:

- Adopting an inclusive public participation policy to assure meaningful access to public involvement and community outreach programs for minority, low-income, and limited English proficient populations
- Meeting environmental justice requirements and limited English proficiency needs
- Making materials available in multiple formats, holding meetings in accessible facilities and providing meeting and project information to underserved populations
- Providing the public with innovative opportunities and methods for accessing agency and project information
- Engaging diverse populations early in the planning and development process
- Making information available to minority, low-income, and limited English proficient populations

Resolution No. R2022-19: Establishing when the agency conducts equity analyses as required by the FTA and applies to major service changes, fare changes and siting of maintenance facilities.

- The agency measures adverse effects that could cause a disparate impact and/or disproportionate burden before any proposed major service change, fare change or siting of a maintenance facility.
- Determine if the adverse effects result in a "Disparate Impact to Minority Populations", setting as a threshold effects that for minority populations subject to the major service or fare change are greater than the minority population in the Sound Transit District and/or result in "Disproportionate Burdens to Low-Income Populations", setting as a threshold effects that for the low-income populations subject to the major service change are greater than the low-income population in the Sound Transit District.
- If the proposed changes result in disparate impacts to minority populations and/or disproportionate burdens to low-income populations Sound Transit will examine and

develop ways to mitigate or lessen the effect and alert the affected Title VI stakeholders of the proposed changes to allow them to comment on the change and the impacts.

- The Title VI evaluation of the proposed major service changes or fare changes, the impacts, mitigation efforts, outreach to impacted stakeholders, and public comments will be a part of the record before the Sound Transit Board when it makes its decision to approve the major service change, fare change, or siting of facilities in question.

Agency Level Strategies

Equitable Engagement Subcommittee and Equitable Engagement Strategic Plan

In 2018, 15% of Sound Transit employees attended a 3-day Undoing Institutional Racism (UIR) workshop. One outcome of this workshop was the creation of the Equity Steering Committee (ESC) which was responsible for ensuring continued progress toward an inclusive and equitable agency. The committee was responsible for identifying areas of greatest need, setting strategy, providing guidance, and ensuring integration of equity principles into all of Sound Transit's lines of business. One of the first actions taken by the ESC was to create equity subcommittees of which the Equitable Engagement Subcommittee was one. The Equitable Engagement Subcommittee was led by the Office of Civil Rights, Equity and Inclusion (CREI), formerly the Office of EEO, Equity and Inclusion (EEOEI), and was comprised of Sound Transit employees representing various departments and divisions. In the first year, the subcommittee was tasked with defining "Equitable Engagement" and drafting the Agency's first Equitable Engagement Tool (EET) which outlines both an approach to, and establishes consistent practices for, public engagement that proactively centers equity and engagement of historically underinvested and underrepresented populations. Upon completion of the draft EET in 2020, the subcommittee was paused while the tool entered the pilot phase for the following year.

In early 2021, the Equitable Engagement Subcommittee was revived under the leadership of Government and Community Relations (GCR), the Community Engagement division and CREI. A new cross-disciplinary group of subcommittee members was selected and included some staff members who served on the inaugural equitable engagement subcommittee. The second iteration of the subcommittee was tasked with drafting an equitable engagement framework (Fig.1.0) based on the draft EET and developing an agency wide equitable engagement strategy. Feedback from the subcommittee was used to develop a *draft* 3 Year Equitable Engagement Strategic Plan which is included in the appendix of this document and outlined below (Fig. 2.0).

Figure 1.0: The Four Pillars of Equitable Engagement

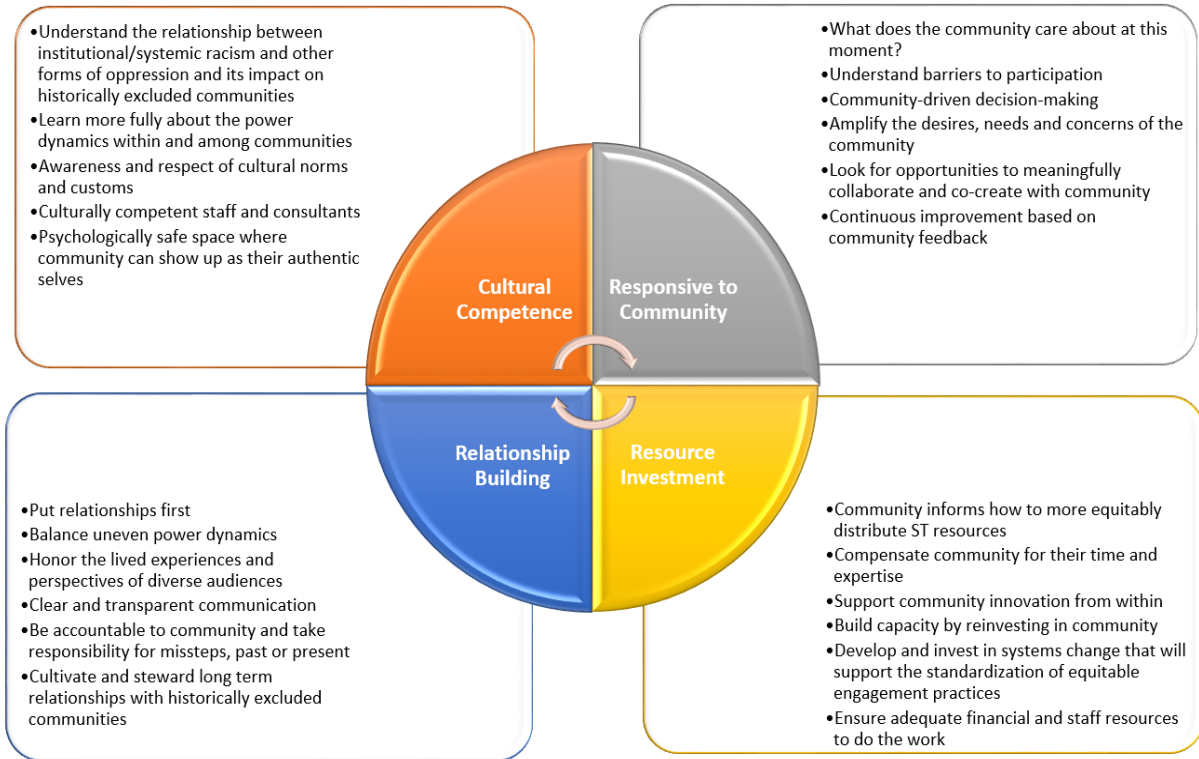
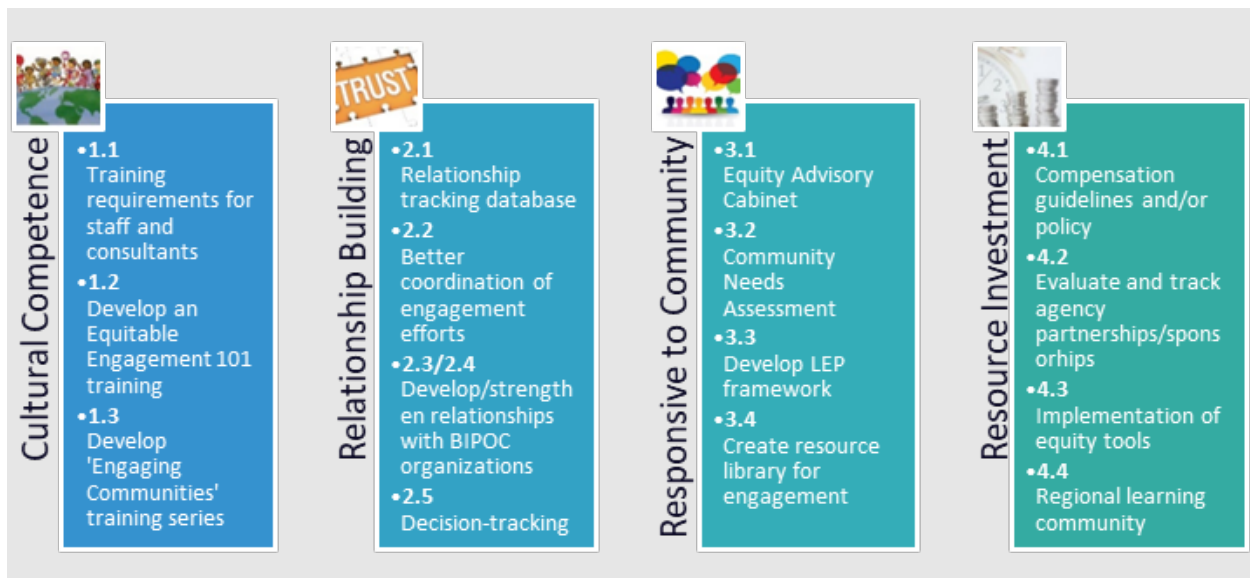


Figure 2.0: Equitable Engagement Strategy Outline



Sound Transit Equity Tools

In December of 2019, Sound Transit adopted its first internal Equity and Inclusion Policy. The policy reaffirms the Agency's commitment to equity and inclusion and provides the following policy directives related to equitable engagement:

3.3.4 Engage, include and collaborate with communities and stakeholders to further effective and equitable agency governance at Sound Transit

3.3.5 Ensure additional, specific and consistent practices to ensure inclusion and equitable engagement of low income and communities of color who historically have been excluded in traditional processes.

The following year in 2020, our CEO made the commitment to begin Sound Transit on a journey towards becoming an anti-racist organization. With these commitments in mind, the Office of Civil Rights, Equity and Inclusion along with other collaborators, drafted, piloted and published three equity tools in February 2022. The tools are available to all Sound Transit staff.

The Racial Equity Toolkit (RET)

The RET is designed to integrate an explicit consideration of racial equity into decision-making processes. As part of a racial equity analysis, teams are asked to conduct equitable engagement using guidance provided in the Equitable Engagement Tool (EET) to further assess potential benefits or burdens of decisions on historically marginalized communities.

The Equitable Engagement Tool (EET)

The Equitable Engagement Tool is designed to integrate an explicit consideration of equity and inclusion into Sound Transit's community engagement efforts as well as ensure consistency in both process and methodology. The tool provides a framework, best practices and guiding questions that will aid users to:

- Identify clear goals, objectives and outcomes for engagement
- Identify the priority populations/audiences for engagement
- Ensure a comprehensive understanding of the communities being engaged
- Select the appropriate level of outreach or engagement
- Develop an engagement plan
- Measure impact
- Sustain relationships into the future

The Equity and Inclusion Shared Language Guide (EISLG)

The EISLG is designed to ensure a shared understanding and shared meaning of common equity and inclusion language. It also provides historical context for certain terms or phrases and recommendations about preferred language.

Term Bank

Developed in 2020, this document provides translation vendors with 100 commonly used terms at Sound Transit with consistent translations in the top six Title VI languages.

Equity Dashboard

The Sound Transit equity dashboard allows Sound Transit staff easy access to data about the communities and riders that the Agency serves. The dashboards feature charts, tables and maps that help users visualize the demographics, travel behavior, and travel needs of people throughout the Sound Transit district. It allows for data to be filtered by demographic identifiers such as race/ethnicity, gender, income, English language proficiency, etc. and is used to inform equity analyses and engagement strategies.

Planning and Advisory Bodies

Citizen's Accessibility Advisory Committee

Founded in 1999, the Citizens Accessibility Advisory Committee (CAAC) provides feedback regarding challenges and solutions for people with disabilities and older adults using Sound Transit buses and trains. The work of this committee enhances other public involvement groups and activities through its crucial focus on ADA compliance and accessibility best practices. It is an important part of the process that helps Sound Transit provide regional transportation that is accessible to everyone.

Community Oversight Panel (COP)

Created in 1997, the Community Oversight Panel (formerly the Citizen's Oversight Panel) independently monitors Sound Transit and its commitment to build and operate the region's high-capacity transit system. The Sound Transit Board of Directors appoints and tasks COP members with asking hard questions, reviewing details and reporting findings back to the board. Its 15 volunteers represent a variety of interests, professional expertise, experience, and real-life insight. The COP is represented by at least two members from each of the five subareas.

In April of 2021, Sound Transit's Board of Directors requested that staff recruit a more diverse group of applicants to the Community Oversight Panel. Immediately, staff reviewed its list of external stakeholders to which recruitment information was provided. Conferring with government and community relations staff, the list of stakeholders was increased to include more community-based organizations serving people of color, and a second recruitment drive was initiated. The panel's application was also updated to include a question asking applicants to share how their participation on the panel would help oversee the agency's commitment to civil rights, equity and inclusion, and to request demographic information so that the Board of Directors can understand the demographic make-up of its applicant pool.

In step with that work, staff reviewed agency legislation identifying the panel's responsibilities, structure, and eligibility and identified several areas for improvement. After approximately a year's worth of work, which included soliciting feedback from Board members and the existing panel members, staff presented a resolution for consideration by the Board updating the panel's responsibilities, changing terms to allow for more flexibility, and reducing some potentially exclusionary eligibility requirements including removing the need to be a registered voter and

therefore a citizen. The Board approved these changes in March 2022 including updating the panel's name to the Community Oversight Panel, reflecting the eligibility change.

The recruitment process seeks to follow Board direction to: (1) establish a process to incorporate input from Board members within the subarea where recruitment is taking place, and (2) provide a process that is inclusive and allows for a diverse COP. The Community Oversight Panel has also switched to evening meetings once a month to be more attractive to a broader group of participants. Vacancies on the panel are advertised to a wide audience by posting on the Sound Transit website and via social media; sending a news release to media outlets, including community groups serving diverse populations, and blogs and forums; and sending a flyer to jurisdictions, agencies, colleges and libraries within the subarea. The web posting, news release and flyer include a statement that persons of color and women are encouraged to apply. Sound Transit staff will also inform all Sound Transit Board members and the Sound Transit Diversity Oversight Committee members of the vacancy.

Diversity Oversight Committee (DOC)

In 2006 Sound Transit's Board of Directors established the Diversity Oversight Committee. The mission of this advisory committee is to report to the CEO and on occasion to the Board regarding the agency's compliance with guiding principles for employment and contracting. The DOC is composed of members from throughout the Sound Transit District, and includes representatives from small business, trade and craft organizations, communities and community organizations in impacted neighborhoods, and other such interested parties as deemed appropriate by the CEO. Committee members are independent of Sound Transit, meaning they have no contracts with Sound Transit and no plan to compete for bid on Sound Transit contracts or subcontracts. The committee reflects the cultural and ethnic diversity of the communities in the Sound Transit District. Recruitment is especially made to the small and minority business, labor and community organizations that engage with Sound Transit's Business Labor Compliance Office on issues regarding employment and contracting on Sound Transit projects.

Community Advisory Groups (CAG)

The CAG includes residents, transit riders, business owners and representatives of organizations that reflect the diversity found throughout the corridor, including groups who've been historically excluded from planning processes like this. The CAG consists of people who know the community and can provide valuable insight as we develop alternatives for the project. The members serving on CAGs for capital projects are compensated for their time.

Integrated website translation

Soundtransit.org was redesigned in 2018 to include Google Translate, an integrated translation function that can automatically translate soundtransit.org content into 103 languages. Sound Transit contracts with vendors that provide translation and interpretation services upon request.

Sound Transit engagement team

Thirty-five engagement staff are dedicated to community and customer engagement. The team's mission is to: *Provide high quality communications that build trust and connect Sound Transit to its customers, stakeholders and the public.* A core value of this team is to be inclusive, with stated objectives of broad participation, two-way communication / engagement and diverse audience engagement. To further staff understanding of foundational equity concepts, staff in

2021 participated in the next iteration of Sound Transit's anti-racist training workshop, *Toward Organizational Equity – Bridging the racial divide through peacemaking, healing, and collective learning* offered by an external consultant. In addition, several members of the engagement team completed one or more of Sound Transit's internal equity and inclusion trainings including implicit bias training.

Equitable Engagement Working Group

In 2019 as part of the three-year plan set forth in Sound Transit's last Public Participation Plan, a working group was convened comprised of staff members from across the engagement division. This group helped to move forward work in the areas of language access, working with community-based organizations (CBOs), and education for engagement staff. While this group helped move work forward for the engagement division, it highlighted a need for more dedicated resources to fully address equitable engagement at Sound Transit.

Equitable Engagement Center of Expertise

In April 2022, Sound Transit created an Equitable Engagement Center of Expertise (COE) within the engagement division. This team will be responsible for articulating a vision for equitable engagement, as well as collaborating and coordinating across Sound Transit to ensure that the procedures, practices and protocols described in the previous efforts as well as those to be developed are being consistently carried out across all engagement efforts. This team will also be responsible for close coordination with other departments to ensure that Sound Transit continues to update and change methods and tactics as we learn and grow as an agency. Currently, Sound Transit engagement staff utilize the following tactics, determining the appropriate mix based on each particular project.

Current Engagement Tactics

Strategies and Tactics for Language Access

- Proactively translate/transcreate printed materials when appropriate
- Provide interpreter services based on demographic information for public hearings
- Provide, on request, interpreter services and/or translated written materials, such as fact sheets.
- Include contact information for in-language interpretation (language block) on all printed materials, such as construction impact notices
- Provide simultaneous interpretation via headset at community meetings
- Run display ads for public engagement opportunities in non-English, community-based publications and/or run-on social media in multiple languages
- Feedback opportunities offered in multiple languages;
 - Surveys proactively translated
 - In-person, translated briefings
 - Workshops held with communities of color
- Provide multiple and varied opportunities to encourage individuals with diverse needs to engage on a topic, such as community meetings, drop-in stations, door-to-door outreach, printed updates, and electronic media
- Partner with service providers, community organizations and other governmental agencies to inform them about a project and to help reduce barriers to access for community members of vulnerable populations.

- Mitigate impacts of construction to local businesses including minority, low income and limited English proficient business owners through our own business relations marketing campaign, wayfinding signage, support, and resources.
- Provide Language Link training to all outreach staff and outreach volunteers to enable exchanges with limited English proficient stakeholders
- Provide buttons/nametags that identify multi-lingual staff and volunteers at outreach events
- Provide “I speak” language assistance cards to offer support for limited English proficient persons

*Additional tactics and strategies specific to language access for LEP populations can be found in the Language Assistance Plan.

Strategies and Tactics for Meaningful Public Participation

<p>Be proactive and targeted in engagement strategies</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Research the community; know the demographic composition and their history in the area <input type="checkbox"/> Work through existing networks of community-based organizations that serve and organize in diverse cultural communities <input type="checkbox"/> Attend community meetings and cultural events as a participant <input type="checkbox"/> Develop awareness of the racial and economic disparities in your city or region <input type="checkbox"/> Seek out relationships with leaders from non-English speaking communities <input type="checkbox"/> Translate materials and provide interpretation at community meetings <input type="checkbox"/> Engage faith-based organizations to help bring residents on board <input type="checkbox"/> Host a “meet and greet” with community organizations and advocacy groups to build connections across sectors and develop partnerships <input type="checkbox"/> Build-incentives for engagement that reduce barriers to participation (child-care, food, etc.)
<p>Strategies for conducting engagement in communities that have been excluded from power</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Provide opportunities to include substantive representation of people of color or organizations that represent low-income communities in various decision-making capacities. <input type="checkbox"/> Create many entry-points for engagement and recognize the relative levels of power, voice, impact and opportunity for knowledge-sharing and relationship-building that they afford <input type="checkbox"/> Stay the course. Listening to the community’s concerns is central to developing and building trust

Strategies to prioritize community knowledge and concerns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Hold listening sessions to surface community concerns by conducting engagement where people already gather. For example; open a food or beverage tab at a local community business and invite the public to stop by □ Incorporate storytelling activities into the process to bring liveliness to the conversation (storytelling is important to many cultures around the world) □ Work with community leaders to facilitate tours of the service area with agency leadership or elected officials to highlight assets, opportunities and challenges in low-income communities and communities of color to develop rapport and sense of shared concerns between decision-makers and local community □ Use diverse communication techniques such as social media, pictures, video, painting, mail, phone, etc.
Strategies for iterative and reflective processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Work with community members and equity organizations to identify benchmarks for success □ Establish regular check-ins to gauge progress and obtain feedback
Strategies to target resources for ongoing engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Contract with local, community-based organizations in low-income communities and communities of color to conduct engagement processes □ Identify a community liaison or community organization who can play an important “bridging” role necessary to close the cultural, relational, racial, language and socio-economic divides. □ Leverage additional funds to support engagement through partnerships/sponsorship opportunities

2019 – 2022 Outreach Public Participation Examples

Sound Transit has a wide array of projects that benefit from meaningful public participation. Five recent examples demonstrating tactics the agency employed that are specific to minority, low-income, and limited English proficient communities are outlined below.

2021 Program Realignment

The COVID-19 pandemic immediately reduced tax revenues Sound Transit relies on to deliver voter-approved projects on schedule. Updated cost estimates for major projects in planning compounded Sound Transit's financial challenges.

In May 2020, staff launched extensive efforts to inform and engage the public in the realignment process the Sound Transit Board initiated in response to these two financial pressures. This comprehensive approach engaged jurisdictional partners, stakeholders, community-based organizations and the general public.

Engagement began with an online town hall on May 29, 2020, to inform local jurisdictions of the potential financial impact to the capital program. Seventy-eight mayors, local elected officials and staff from cities throughout the Sound Transit District attended the event. Over the course of the year, Sound Transit hosted more than 50 jurisdictional briefings that included many city councils, state, county and city elected officials, and several port commissioners. In May 2021, Sound Transit held updates for all jurisdictional staffs active with the agency.

During this same period, staff also engaged a broad range of stakeholder groups through approximately 55 online briefings. These groups ranged from civic organizations, Sound Transit advisory boards and healthcare industry leaders to Rotary clubs, chambers of commerce and disability advocates.

Sound Transit staff also completed a round of listening sessions with organizations that work with communities most affected by institutional and systemic racism and other forms of oppression and who are potentially impacted by program realignment decisions. This effort included organizations that serve or represent Black communities, other people of color, people experiencing economic hardship, limited- or non-English speaking communities, immigrants and refugees. We offered these organizations a stipend for their time.

In these listening sessions, Sound Transit staff asked:

- What are important destinations for your community (e.g., cultural centers, schools, etc.)? Would planned ST projects support your access to these destinations and resources?
- What would you like the Sound Transit Board to understand before delaying, phasing or modifying future projects?
- How can we best stay connected with you to provide updates about Board decisions?

These listening sessions with community-based organizations were intended to supplement the equity analysis completed in 2020 and to supplement on-line survey input. We asked these groups for information that a demographic analysis may not provide

The online survey, promotions and open house content and survey appeared in English and in the region's six most common other languages: Chinese (Traditional), Korean, Russian, Spanish, Tagalog and Vietnamese.

We presented the results of this engagement to the board before their decisions on program realignment. We shared results with the community groups that participated, some of them participated in public comment at the board meetings. Many of the groups have been engaged in additional public engagement activities because of the durable relationships we are building. Compensating organizations, delivering their feedback directly to decision-makers, and following up are crucial to the relationships the agency has with these groups.

Fare Enforcement/Compliance Engagement

In 2019, Sound Transit began reviewing its Link light rail and Sounder commuter train fare compliance systems based on community concerns. Sound Transit's review found that, under existing Sound Transit fare enforcement policy, communities of color – particularly Black transit riders – were disproportionately more likely to be cited, fined or referred to the court system. At that time, Sound Transit started an engagement process. The engagement included:

- Online survey (8,000 responses)
- Onboard surveys (1,100)
- Sounding Board surveys (300)
- Listening sessions (18)
- Virtual and in-person Town Halls (3)
- 2021 Survey (300)

The Sound Transit Board approved a new Fare Engagement Pilot Project to reimagine how the agency handles fare compliance, with a goal of preventing the inequitable and compounding effects that often result from unpaid fines and contact with the court system. The Board directed staff to focus further engagement in communities most impacted by fare enforcement, to gather input, and to come back to them with further proposed policy changes in January 2022.

In spring and summer 2021, Sound Transit held listening sessions with 13 community-based organizations (CBOs) that serve Black communities and other communities of color. CBOs were compensated for their time and expertise. Feedback from the CBO listening sessions was incorporated in the Community Driven Engagement Plan (CDEP), which was developed as a roadmap to guide Sound Transit's efforts to collect feedback from those most impacted in the community.

The guiding principles we heard from engagement outcomes below.

Advance racial equity

To promote and gather feedback for the survey, Sound Transit reached out to CBOs that serve Black communities, other communities of color, refugee and immigrant populations, people experiencing homelessness, and formerly incarcerated individuals. The focus was on door-to-door engagement in South Seattle, a demographic area serving communities of color.

Build trust within communities

Following recommendations provided by CBOs during the summer 2021 listening phase, Sound Transit reached out to CBOs to promote the survey and offered an opportunity to partner further in distribution of the survey. The CBO partnership program was created with two participating CBOs: Urban League of Metropolitan Seattle and the University of Washington.

Meet people where they are

Sound Transit broadened the tools utilized to collect feedback by offering briefings, meetings, and materials to CBOs and social service organizations. Sound Transit tailored their efforts to offer real-time and ongoing support for CBOs throughout the process.

Honor people's time and contributions

Compensation was offered to the CBOs for their participation in the listening sessions at \$100 per session. For the partnership program, Sound Transit strived to tailor the fee structure in accordance with individual organization preferences, including payment amount and logistics. The partnership programs were co-developed together with the CBOs and were driven by the CBOs' time, capacity, and needs.

Follow up, review, and assess

Throughout the process, Sound Transit reviewed and adjusted the engagement strategies. As one example, Sound Transit ran an advertisement with the South Seattle Emerald to focus reach on communities of color in the South Seattle area. Sound Transit also promoted the survey with support from King County Councilmember, Girmay

Zahilay, who serves the Rainier Valley and surrounding areas. These strategies were added during the engagement period to bolster reach to communities of color.

East Link Connections

East Link Connections is a partnership between Sound Transit and King County Metro to create a coordinated regional transit systems on the Eastside that gets people where they need and want to go. Opening the East Link Extension will be the largest bus service restructure in Washington state history when light rail service begins in Bellevue and Redmond via Seattle and Mercer Island.

By the end of 2024, Sound Transit will open 12 new light rail stations connecting downtown Seattle and the Eastside. The 2 Line will offer new high-capacity connections from Judkins Park in Seattle, across I-90 to Mercer Island and South Bellevue, through downtown Bellevue and the Bel-Red area to Redmond Technology Station, and then to downtown Redmond. In order to prepare for the extension of Link light rail service, respond to changing mobility needs, and improve mobility and access for historically underserved populations, Metro and Sound Transit are initiating a joint project. This project is focused on delivering an updated mobility network on the Eastside and in communities surrounding the Judkins Park Station in Seattle that integrates with and complements Sound Transit Link light rail. The project is co-led with Sound Transit in coordination with our many agencies and jurisdictional partners.

The updated mobility network will be implemented at the most immediate service change after the opening of light rail service. The East Link Extension is scheduled to open in 2023, with the additional two stations to downtown Redmond opening in 2024.

Tacoma Dome Link Extension Draft Environmental Impact Statement

The Tacoma Dome Link Extension (TDLE) project is an approximately 10-mile-long extension from Federal Way at 320th Street to Tacoma Dome, with stations at South Federal Way, Fife, Portland Avenue, and Tacoma Dome. The project is currently in the environmental review phase of the project and is preparing a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

Demographics and Project Area

The project area between Federal Way to Tacoma includes a significant proportion of non-English speakers, with Spanish, Korean, and Russian as the top languages spoken at home besides English. As current project alternatives largely runs along I-5 right of way, most of the impacted properties are commercial or industrial properties.

One notable impact is at Freighthouse Square in Tacoma, which is currently affected by the Close to Sounder alternative, which would reimagine the historic structure as a transit hub for Tacoma. Many of the businesses there are immigrant owned and benefit from the low rents charged at Freighthouse Square; but would be displaced if the Close to Sounder alternative moves forward.

Summary of Engagement Efforts

Equitable engagement is a core part of the TDLE project's engagement. The top three languages for translations on the TDLE project include Spanish, Korean, and Cambodian. Project factsheets and property owner folios have been fully translated into those languages.

During comment periods, translated comment forms have been provided, placed translated ads into local non-English publications and social media, along with placing translated flyers in high-traffic businesses. These practices were most recently used for the project's 2019-2020 drop-in sessions, which had project staff set up smaller scale events around the project area in order to provide information on the environmental review phase and answer questions from community members. Looking to the future, the project is looking to expand the use of translated materials by fully translating DEIS comment period mailers, the online open house, and making available live interpretation during public meetings. In addition, the engagement team has partnered with community-based organizations (CBOs) to disseminate information to their respective audiences, provided briefings to key staff, and sponsored community events. Interpretation has been provided at briefings upon request.

With the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic, engagement methods had to shift in light of public health measures. The engagement team has offered virtual briefings to interested CBOs, property owners, and tenants. While in-person field engagement was a commonly used tool, the engagement team shifted to phone calls to affected properties. Most notable have been multiple phone follow-ups to tenants of Freighthouse Square to inform them of project milestones and to answer questions.

Results of Engagement

As a result of the team's community engagement, several long-term relationships have been formed with local CBOs, including the Asia Pacific Cultural Center, Federal Way Black Collective, Multi-Service Center, Salishan Association, and the Rainbow Center. We hope to leverage these relationships to ensure that feedback received on the project's Draft EIS is representative of the wider community. The TDLE project was selected as a pilot program for the agency's Equitable Engagement Tool (EET). The tool was useful in establishing buy-in from the wider project team, along with formalizing equitable engagement practices. Building on this effort, the project team is currently undergoing a wider Racial Equity Tool (RET) process that will help guide project decision-making from now until the project to be built is selected by the Sound Transit Board.

Bus Rapid Transit Engagement

The I-405 BRT Project will provide fast, frequent and reliable bus-based transit service between communities north, east and south of Lake Washington. Riders will be able to transfer between the I-405 BRT, SR 522/NE 145th BRT, Link light rail and other transit service provided by Sound Transit, Community Transit and King County Metro. To maintain travel times, I-405 BRT will operate as two service lines. The north line runs from Lynnwood to Bellevue. The south line runs from Burien to Bellevue. Riders traveling between the north and south lines will need to transfer in Bellevue. The objectives of this project are to:

- Improve the speed, frequency and reliability of transit travel between Lynnwood and Burien in the I-405/SR 518 corridors.
- Increase regional mobility for BRT riders along the I-405/SR 518 corridors.
- Deliver the I-405 BRT Project on time and within budget.
- Develop BRT stations to support safe and convenient access for multiple transportation modes, including pedestrian, bicycles, bus transit, and drop-off/pick up.
- Encourage equitable transit-oriented development in station areas consistent with local land use and transportation plans.
- Promote a healthy and sustainable environment.

The Stride S3 Line, or the SR 522/NE 145th BRT Project, will connect north Lake Washington communities to the regional transit system through fast, frequent and reliable service. Riders will be able to transfer between the SR 522/NE 145th Stride S3 Line, I-405 North Stride S2 Line, Link light rail and other transit service projected by Sound Transit, Community Transit and King County Metro.

From 2019-2022, Stride BRT S1, S2, and S3 went from 10%-60% design with input from the community on the station locations and design through Online Open Houses, community briefings, project email updates, surveys, and virtual public meetings. Stride BRT provided translated materials in common languages along the corridor and partnered with Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) along the corridor such as LETI (Latino Educational Training Institute) and CISC (Chinese Information Service Center). Stride BRT shifted to virtual engagement during the COVID-19 pandemic with specific outreach to BIPOC communities which make up a large portion of the BRT corridor.

Stride BRT has long term relationships with many CBOs such as LETI, CISC, and King County Libraries who provide community input for the project and cities such as the City of Lynnwood with their Race and Social Justice Coordinator. There are ongoing briefings with neighborhood groups, CBOs, and municipalities who are members of an Interagency Group. Sound Transit also considered translation in communities where over 5 percent of residents report speaking a language other than English as part of its commitment to inclusive outreach throughout the I-405 BRT Project area. These languages include Spanish, Chinese, Vietnamese, and various African languages.

Measurement and Evaluation

Sound Transit recognizes the need to continue to evaluate, assess and refine the Agency's approach to, and methods for, equitable engagement including with Title VI communities. In addition, the agency is developing ways to ensure accountability and further transparency in regard to public participation. Over the past three years, Sound Transit has tried and tested many different strategies and tactics to reach our communities, with a particular emphasis on those historically underserved. One such strategy has been post engagement surveys that ask communities about their experience engaging with Sound Transit.

The toolkits and tools that have been developed the past three years are one way that Sound Transit will measure and evaluate public participation. The tools were developed to assist staff in explicitly considering race and equity in processes, and the EET will be instrumental in measuring the impacts of that consideration.

The Equitable Engagement Center of Excellence was created in April 2022. This group will work with other responsible departments to develop and implement sound strategies to measure and evaluate Sound Transit's work in reaching all our communities. This team is currently working to procure a new language access contract that is more comprehensive than Sound Transit's current contract to better serve English Language Learner (ELL) populations. This team is also facilitating a process to develop a new database system that tracks Sound Transit's relationships with Community Based Organizations (CBOs) to improve relationships with these organizations. Both of these strategies are planned to be in place in the next two years.