



West Seattle and Ballard Link Extensions

Elected Leadership Group Meeting #1 – January 4, 2018

Meeting Notes

Agenda Item #1 – Welcome and introductions

Seattle City Councilmember Mike O'Brien, co-chair of the group, welcomed the Elected Leadership Group (ELG) members to the group's first meeting. He noted that the number of Seattle City Councilmembers in the group meant that the ELG meetings would also serve as official City of Seattle Sustainability and Transportation Committee meetings. He highlighted that the meeting is the kick-off to the development of a series of transit projects approved by voters and supported by a partnership agreement signed by the City of Seattle and Sound Transit in December 2017.

King County Councilmember Joe McDermott, co-chair of the group, shared his excitement about having the opportunity to serve on the ELG and to work on system expansion. He noted the planning process reforms for all Sound Transit 3 (ST3) would shift focus on key decisions earlier to accelerate project delivery timelines.

Snohomish County Executive Dave Somers, Sound Transit Board Chair, described how bringing in people from outside the immediate project area furthers the regional focus of key transit projects and that everyone at the table will be working diligently to further the expressed goals of the voting public.

Peter Rogoff, Sound Transit CEO, welcomed ELG members to the Sound Transit campus. He emphasized the need for both a sense of urgency and discussion of complexity in planning system expansion projects. He noted that the urgency stems from worsening congestion in the area, especially on the I-5 corridor, and stressed needing to give citizens throughout Puget Sound a path out. The complexity comes from the geography of the region: transit options must move over busy waterways, under the regions densest job centers and interface with a variety of municipalities and partners. Mr. Rogoff stated that Sound Transit aims to be responsive, straightforward and answer questions thoroughly as they arise. He remarked that ongoing dialogue throughout the alternatives development process would be vital to reach consensus support of a preferred alternative on time. Mr. Rogoff also stated that Port Commissioner Stephanie Bowman is very engaged in this project, but could not attend the meeting today.

Agency directors, project leads and staff in attendance were:

- Peter Rogoff, Sound Transit CEO
- Cathal Ridge, Sound Transit
- Chris Rule, Sound Transit
- Jim Parsons, Sound Transit
- Leda Chahim, Sound Transit
- Diane Adams, Facilitator

ELG members in attendance were:

- Executive Dave Somers, Sound Transit Board Chair



- Mayor Jenny Durkan, Sound Transit Board Member
- Executive Dow Constantine, Sound Transit Board Member
- Councilmember Rob Johnson, Sound Transit Board Member
- Councilmember Joe McDermott, Sound Transit Board Member
- Councilmember Lisa Herbold, Seattle City Council
- Councilmember Bruce Harrell, Seattle City Council
- Councilmember Sally Bagshaw, Seattle City Council
- Councilmember Mike O'Brien, Seattle City Council
- Councilmember Lorena González, Seattle City Council

NOTE – the following member was not in attendance:

- Commissioner Stephanie Bowman, Port of Seattle

Agenda Item #2 – Public comment

Councilmember Mike O'Brien moved onto public comment. He noted that the Seattle Channel would be recording and posting the meeting online to ensure visibility and documentation of the meeting.

Members of the public provided the following comments:

- One attendee cited Sound Transit's environmental justice principles and stated that minority voices should be part of developing solutions. They noted that people of color experience harassment that causes irreparable harm and injury in public and when using public transportation. They asked the group to consider the historical context and experiences of minorities when making decisions that will impact everyone.
- One attendee noted, on behalf of Stand-Up America, their concerns with collusion between large companies and the government. They highlighted how all Washingtonians will foot the bill for transit improvements that will ultimately benefit few. They demanded that an investigation be started to prosecute those guilty of collusion.
- One attendee commented, on behalf of the West Seattle Transit Coalition, that their group has been advocating for transportation solutions that will benefit all of West Seattle, from Alki to Burien. They expressed excitement that the process was kicking off and noted that the West Seattle Transit Coalition has collected comments through a series of workshops that should be considered during the alternatives development phase. They reiterated the West Seattle Transit Coalition's desire to have a voice in the process, whether at the table or as part of the audience.
- One attendee voiced their concerns about environmental justice in the City of Seattle. They cited several ordinances that require the City to uphold justice for all its citizens, no matter their race or ethnicity. They called on recent deaths of African Americans and police misconduct as evidence of systemic racism and demanded that the City take steps to address the issues facing minority populations.
- One attendee said, noting that they are a resident of Ballard, they would like to see their neighborhood represented on the ELG and throughout the process. They expressed excitement about being able to ride the light rail extensions from Ballard to West Seattle.
- One attendee, speaking on behalf of the West Seattle Transit Coalition, asked why the Seattle Department of Transportation was not represented on the ELG. [An ELG member noted that



SDOT staff was in the audience and that they would be an integral part of the conversations moving forward.] They called on the group to work together across agencies and departments to identify and address issues early in the process. As an example, they noted that improvements to Fauntleroy Way SW – projected to start in early 2018 – would have to be redone during construction of the light rail tracks in West Seattle.

Agenda Item #3 – Project background and details

Cathal Ridge, Sound Transit, presented a background on the West Seattle and Ballard Link Light Rail Extensions project. He summarized the series of regional system improvements planned to come on line between 2017 and 2041. Narrowing the focus to West Seattle and Ballard, he described the representative alignment as identifying mode, corridor and station areas, as well as informing cost, schedule and operating needs. The alignment builds on over fifty years of planning efforts and studies which culminated with the ST3 system plan being approved by Puget Sound voters in 2016. Cathal highlighted the volume of public input that was part of developing ST3 through written comments, open houses, an online survey, open-ended commentary and comments from local jurisdictions, agencies and stakeholder organizations.

Cathal also presented the highlights of the West Seattle and Ballard Link Light Rail Extensions. He provided a description of the new Downtown Transit Tunnel, with underground stations at Westlake/6th Ave and the International District/5th Ave S. He noted that transfers between lines would be made at these stations.

Chris Rule, Sound Transit, operated a flythrough of the representative project from West Seattle to Downtown and from Downtown to Ballard. He focused on the stations, elevated sections, key structures, tunnel portal locations, underground stations, and terminal at 15th Ave NW and NW Market St.

Questions from ELG members including the following:

Q: What is the overall length of the proposed new tunnel?

A: *In the representative project, the new tunnel is 3.3 miles.*

Q: Would the tunnel be mostly cut and cover, bored or a mix of the two?

A: *The type of tunnel is to be determined. Those are the types of questions we will be discussing as a group moving forward.*

Q: What would the construction impacts be downtown?

A: *Impacts will vary depending on the alternative. We will be analyzing impacts per option in the coming months.*

Q: How will questions be thoroughly addressed and catalogued? Will the schedule prohibit new ideas from being incorporated if they arise too late in the process?

A: *We will cover public engagement and how it informs the schedule later in the meeting.*

The following comments were provided by ELG members:



- Constituents in Ballard have voiced support for a tunnel west of 15th Ave NW under Salmon Bay. They have cited that this would limit impacts to north/south freight travel on the corridor. This public feedback should be considered during discussions about the Salmon Bay crossing.

Agenda Item #4: Alternatives development

Cathal Ridge presented the new approach to project development Sound Transit plans to use for future system expansion projects. He shared that the approach stems out of voters' expressed desire to improve project delivery timelines. While the old process timeline established a preferred alternative during the environmental process, the new approach would identify a preferred alternative at the start of the environmental process. Cathal noted that the new approach would streamline the environmental review process, permitting, right-of-way acquisition, final design and construction. Alternatives for the West Seattle and Ballard Link Extensions will be developed between late 2017 and 2019. Following the identification of a preferred alternative, the projects will go through environmental review, final design, construction and testing before starting service in 2030 and 2035 for the West Seattle and Ballard lines, respectively. Before closing, Cathal noted that the partnership agreement signed by the City of Seattle and Sound Transit in December 2017 would be instrumental in staying on schedule by providing a mechanism to explore streamlining the permit review process.

Jim Parsons, Sound Transit, began an overview of the process to reach a preferred alternative by April 2019. The planning process will be broken up into three screening levels. During each level of screening, community updates, neighborhood forums, a Stakeholder Advisory Group, an Elected Leadership Group and briefings to the Sound Transit Board will be used to develop recommendations that will culminate in the identification of a preferred alternative by the Sound Transit Board in April 2019.

Jim described the public engagement infrastructure in place to answer questions and solicit feedback throughout the process. He noted that the goals would be to get as much feedback as possible early in the process to get all the ideas on the table and inform the development of alternatives.

Questions from ELG members included the following:

Q: Considerations for the regional transit system should be built into the charter since the projects will have regional implications. How will this process account for issues and concerns at the regional level?

A: *While the entire project budget is available for extensions to West Seattle and Ballard, alternatives with schedule and budget benefits on a regional scale will be considered accordingly.*

Q: How much can the alternatives vary from the representative project? Would variations from the representative project delay the schedule?

A: *The preferred alternative may be different from the representative project. Alternatives will be vetted for their feasibility based on the schedule and budget implications. If they are developed early in the alternatives development process, variations from the representative project would not necessarily delay the schedule.*

Q: How constraining is the new project development approach on receiving and reacting to new ideas? How early do all the options need to be on the table?



A: The options need to be on the table early to develop a preferred alternative at the start of the environmental process. The purpose of moving up the early scoping meeting is to solicit public input early in the process and limit the risk of schedule delay.

Q: Will Sound Transit be able to provide a hierarchy of issues by level-of-importance to focus decision-makers on key matters?

A: The screening process will frontload big-picture issues and allow for ample time to make key decisions related to them. These issues include, but are not limited to, tunnels, right-of-way acquisition and I-5 crossings.

Q: Will a mitigation fund be created to offset impacts, especially to small businesses?

A: We are working on determining how to limit, plan for and mitigate impacts as they arise.

The following comments were provided by ELG members:

- There is a need for authentic community engagement throughout the alternatives development process. Furthermore, there should be processes in place to change plans in accordance with public input, even if ideas arise late in the process.
- Impacts to neighborhoods, such as a cut-and-cover tunnel in the International District and Chinatown and an elevated station in West Seattle, should be minimized.
- The group should receive an update during the first level of alternatives screening between the kick-off and the level one recommendation.
- There has been a lot of planning at the community level. The people who have been working on that planning should be brought to the table early to avoiding losing the good work that has been done to-date.
- Public engagement should aim to build consensus amongst community members and partners. Given the timeline for identifying a preferred alternative, it will be important to achieve broad community buy-in over the next year.
- Impacts of the alternatives should be communicated early and clearly. In order to achieve informed consensus and buy-in, stakeholders must be able to weigh the costs and benefits.

Agenda Item #5 – Elected Leadership Group chartering

Diane Adams, Facilitator, moved onto a discussion on the ELG charter. She noted the aim to have the charter approved following focused comments and clarifying questions on the purpose, goals and guiding principles. She presented the group's purpose. The ELG members' roles, as leaders in the region and their respective communities, is to identify key focus areas and objectives for the people they serve. The ELG will recommend a preferred alternative for consideration by the Sound Transit Board. The recommendation will be based on input from the Stakeholder Advisory Group, the public, and the voter-approved scope, schedule, and budget. Diane presented the project's guiding principles, noting that they will be used to guide the development of the project moving forward.

Questions from ELG members included the following:



Q: The charter states that there will be a rail-only moveable bridge across Salmon Bay. Given public input to-date in support of a tunnel under Salmon Bay, can the language be updated to mention both options?

A: *The language in the charter will be clarified to note that it is based on the representative project and that updates to that alignment resulting from the planning process are not constrained by what is in the charter.*

Q: There is a need to focus on easy and simple intermodal connectivity (i.e. rail to rail, bus to bus and rail to bus) around the new stations and lines. Can language focused on connectivity be added to the guiding principles?

A: *Such language could be added to the bullet about creating additional transit connections.*

Q: Language about equity should be incorporated into the guiding principles. Can we include requirements to review potential impacts and benefits to historically-marginalized communities, especially people of color and low-income populations?

A: *The language is still being developed. We will use this feedback to add to the charter and guiding principles before sending both documents to the group for approval.*

Q: Providing easy connectivity between all modes should be included in the charter. Can we also include limiting impacts to existing transit service in the guiding principles?

A: *This language could be added to the bullet about creating additional transit connections.*

Q: What strategies are we planning to use to encourage active and early public participation? Given the accelerated project schedule, it will be important to suggest ideas early and limit people joining the process after decisions have been made.

A: *We are working on developing and implementing a robust public engagement strategy that encourages the public to provide input early in the planning process.*

The following comments were provided by ELG members:

- Additional language should be included in the charter about the scope, schedule and budget being approved by the voters.
- There should be a focus on intermodal connectivity in all aspects of the planning process.
- Intermodal connectivity and equity are important considerations and should be incorporated into the guiding principles. Regarding intermodal connectivity, improvements for people biking and walking should also be included.
- As new systems and stations come online, King County Metro (Metro) will continue working to realign transit routes to improve connections.
- The overarching goal should be to enhance the existing and future transit systems.

Diane Adams reviewed the ELG operating guidelines, highlighting the leverage ELG members have as community leaders. She noted that the group would strive for consensus to arrive at durable decisions. She proposed making modifications to the language in the charter and guiding principles offline and sending the document out via email for approval. The ELG approved of this process. Proposed updates and additions include the following:

- Including a note in the overview about the project scope, schedule and budget being approved by the voters.
- Adding language about improving multimodal connectivity for all users.
- Adding equity and inclusion into the project guiding principles.
- Including language highlighting a need to enhance current and future transportation options.

Agenda Item #6 – Stakeholder Advisory Group

Leda Chahim, Sound Transit, presented the purpose and role of the Stakeholder Advisory Group (SAG). She noted that the SAG would be providing recommendations to the ELG at key milestones throughout the project development process. She reviewed the group structure, schedule and goals and explained the process in place to appoint members. Diane Adams distributed a working list of appointees for the ELG to discuss and approve.

Questions from ELG members included the following:

Q: What will the operating principles for the SAG be?

A: *The SAG would operate under a charter similar to the ELG.*

Q: How would the SAG structure encourage consensus building and limit the caucuses forming per neighborhood?

A: *The SAG members will represent a variety of geographies and perspectives and operate with the goal of reaching consensus decisions.*

Q: What will the application process be for the remaining SAG members?

A: *The application will go live on Jan. 4, 2018 and remain open through Jan. 22, 2018. Members should represent the diversity of the corridor.*

Q: What will Greg Nichols' affiliation be on the SAG?

A: *He would be serving as the former mayor of Seattle.*

The following comments were provided by ELG members:

- The SAG members should be informed on the regional considerations involved in the project.
- Younger voices should be included in the discussions as much as possible since they will be future riders who rely on the expanded system.
- Recruitment for remaining SAG members should focus on people of color to ensure no voices are left out of the planning process.
- If funding is available, improvements should be made in historically-marginalized areas of Seattle to provide convenient access to public transportation.

Diane Adams asked for the groups' approval of the list of appointees. The group unanimously approved the list of SAG appointees as presented. Additional confirmed appointees will be sent to the ELG for approval before the first stakeholder group meeting on February 8.



Agenda Item #7 – Next steps and next meeting

Councilmember Joe McDermott reiterated the voting public's desire to connect the region through system expansion done well and quickly. He expressed his and the group's excitement to continue building on existing planning efforts and noted the importance of partnerships, such as that between Sound Transit and the City of Seattle.

Councilmember Mike O'Brien thanked the other committee members and highlighted the importance of coming together to stay on schedule and identify a preferred alternative by April 2019. He reviewed the meetings, open houses, forums, and recommendations that would take place between now and the ELG's next meeting. He called on ELG members to start encouraging early engagement in the process, starting with early scoping meetings in January 2018, and stressed the importance of the issues the ELG and the people of the region would be tackling over the coming 16 months.