



Graham Street Station’s Racial Equity Tool: Phase 1

Fall 2024

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## Introduction

This document provides a summary of initial efforts to apply Sound Transit's and the City of Seattle's respective Racial Equity Tools (RET) to the Graham Street Station project. RET efforts to date have focused on the alternatives analysis phase.

Reaching the outcomes outlined below requires a strong collaboration between Sound Transit and the City of Seattle, of which ST will focus on the station and the City will focus on the area surrounding the station.

During the Alternatives Analysis phase, the desired racial equity outcomes for Graham Street Station are:

- Advance environmental and economic justice to improve economic and health outcomes for communities of color.
- Enhance mobility and access for communities of color and people with low-incomes.
- Optimize opportunities for equitable development and preservation that include expanding and retaining housing and community assets for communities of color.
- Avoid disproportionate impacts on communities of color and low-income populations.
- Create a station that relates to its neighborhood and is a place where communities of color feel welcome, safe, and a sense of belonging.
- Meaningfully engage communities of color and low-income populations in the project.

## Graham Street Station Project Description

Sound Transit's Graham Street Station Project would add a new street-level station to the existing 1 Line of the Link light rail network on Martin Luther King Jr Way South in the vicinity of South Graham Street in the Rainier Valley (see Figure 1-1). The station was studied as part of the Central Link (now 1 Line) environmental review and included in the voter-approved Sound Transit 3 (ST3) system plan to enhance connectivity and accessibility in our region.

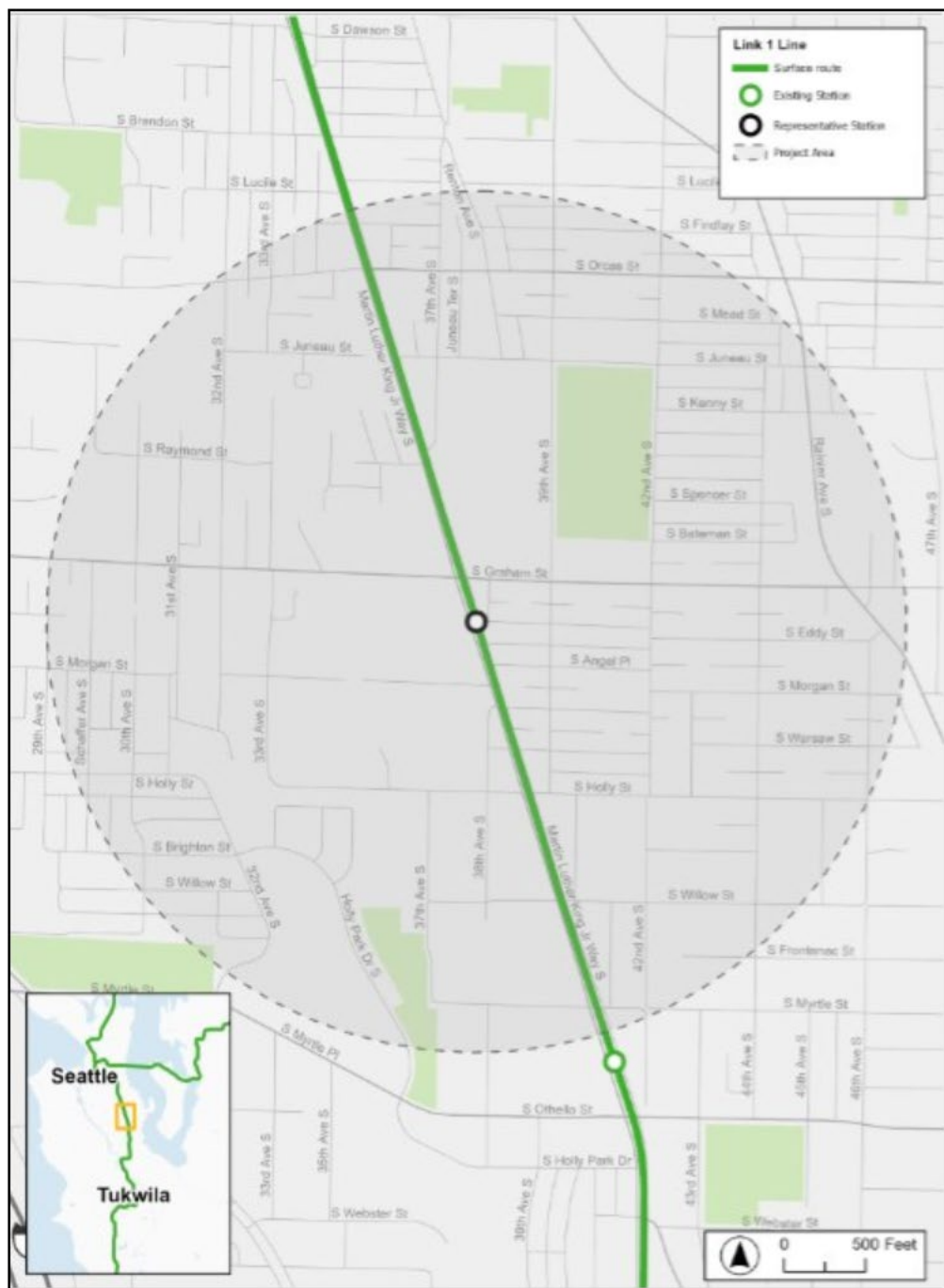
Adding a new station on Martin Luther King Jr Way at South Graham Street would:

- Bridge the 1.6-mile gap between the popular Columbia City and Othello stations, expanding access to high-capacity transit in the region.
- Help people get to the places they need to go daily by increasing access to the 1 Line and larger Link light rail network.
- Accommodate future growth and planned transportation improvements in the project area.

- Improve station area roadways, sidewalks, and pedestrian crossings to support navigating to and from the station.

The project is currently in the alternatives analysis phase, during which the project team evaluates potential station locations and associated elements. Along with technical considerations, community feedback will inform the identification of the preferred station location and associated elements. Community engagement and input helps Sound Transit plan and design a system that reflects the needs and desires of your community. There will be several opportunities to engage throughout the project.

Based on feedback received and the results of the alternatives evaluation, the Sound Transit Board will advance one design option into the next project development phase (Phase II – Conceptual Engineering and Environmental Review) (see Figure 1-2).



### Figure 1-1 – Vicinity Map



*Project schedule is subject to change.*

**Figure 1-2 – Project Timeline**

## Part 1A: Set outcomes & indicators

### i. What are the desired results (in the community) and outcomes (within Sound Transit and the City of Seattle)?

- Advance environmental and economic justice to improve economic and health outcomes for communities of color.
- Enhance mobility and access for communities of color and people with low-incomes.
- Optimize opportunities for equitable development and preservation that include expanding and retaining housing and community assets for communities of color.
- Avoid disproportionate impacts on communities of color and low-income populations.
- Create a station that relates to its neighborhood and is a place where communities of color feel welcome, safe, and a sense of belonging.
- Meaningfully engage communities of color and low-income populations in the project by requesting ongoing feedback, making expectations and information transparent, and meeting people where they are.

Strategies to achieve these results include:

- Focusing on equitable engagement during early project development, community interviews, and community events, and using these venues to learn more about the legacy of racism and inequity.
- Incorporating feedback and recommendations from the community into the project and share why or why not major themes were able to be included.
- Reviewing criteria and measures to ensure that potential effects on underserved populations are included to the full extent possible in the alternatives evaluation, and to strengthen criteria based on information obtained through engagement and research.
- Collaborating with partners within Sound Transit and the City of Seattle to identify tools for small businesses and community assets to access that support understanding and navigating the development and preservation process.

- Collaborating between Sound Transit and the City of Seattle to identify opportunities for equitable mobility, access, and community development.

## ii. Based on your initial assessment, how might the results and outcomes identified above create greater racial equity?

This station was included in ST3 to enhance connectivity and accessibility in the region. By applying racial equity tools, the outcomes of the Graham Street Station can potentially reflect greater consideration of the benefits to historically marginalized populations in project decisions and a higher level of input from these populations to project decisions.

Positive collaboration between community and agency partners may build trust and create opportunities for communities of color to help inform the project and feel pride and ownership for the project.

## iii. How does this proposal aid in the achievement of Sound Transit's and the City of Seattle's strategic priorities?

Sound Transit's strategic priority No. 1 is to "design and deliver a passenger-focused, high-quality and safe service." The outcomes that the project team has identified directly support all three elements of this strategic priority.

At this early phase of the project, outcomes focus on creating a more equitable process for identification of a station design option through both engagement and evaluation. Being passenger-focused means engaging community members with different experiences and perspectives to provide input on our alternatives analysis process of developing and evaluating potential station locations. Passenger-focused also means that the project team identifies both benefits and burdens to historically underrepresented groups and highlight these important tradeoffs and considerations for decision-makers. Bringing different perspectives and additional information into analysis will increase the transparency of decisions and help lead to outcomes that are more equitable and higher quality. The project team is also looking at how to diversify the sources from which it pulls data so that it may be able to measure other ways that the project could create opportunities or burdens on people with these identities.

Lastly, safety starts at this phase of the project. Making decisions now through an inclusive process will help ensure Sound Transit can provide a safe project from planning through design, construction, and future service. The Graham Street Station project is also working in collaboration with the At-grade Crossing Program work throughout the Rainier Valley, centering equity and data to design safer and more accessible stations.

Seattle's Department of Transportation (SDOT) strives to create world-class access to transit and to support making service more frequent and reliable. This is especially important for providing more low-cost transportation options so everyone can take the trips they need to make. We intend to make multi-modal travel the most convenient and enjoyable travel choice for as many trips as possible. The construction of the Graham St station will provide opportunities to achieve all of these goals, but we must concentrate on how we construct and implement projects to address transportation-related

inequities. By centering the voices of communities of color and underrepresented groups in the planning process, we can start to address inequities by prioritizing investments for impacted communities.

## Part 1B: Collect data

### iv. Data from the surrounding station areas

To understand who lives in proximity to potential station locations, the project team used data from the Washington State OFM Small Area Estimate Program and 2022 American Community Survey. Results appear in the tables below. One limitation is the fact this data does not identify those of Hispanic descent as a race, but rather an ethnicity separate from race. Given these limitations, the team plans to supplement it with other forms of data and community-based information. The “Project Area” referenced below refers to a one-miles radius around the representative project station.

#### Project area Populations by Race

Asian	30.6%
Black	22.4%
Native Hawaiian & Pacific Islander	0.7%
Native American	0.6%
White alone	34.1%
Other race	3.4%
More than one race	8.3%

- Non-white population % of total population 65.9% (above ST average)
- Hispanic population % of total population 6.7% (not above ST average)

#### Project area Languages Spoken

	Limited English Proficiency	All levels of English
Chinese	6.4%	9.9%
Korean	0%	0.1%
Vietnamese	5.2%	7.2%
Other Asian language	1.3%	3%
French/Creole	0%	0.2%
German/Dutch	0%	0.5%



Spanish	1.5%	3.7%
Indo-European languages	0.3%	1.3%
Arabic	0.9%	1.2%
Tagalog	2.2%	4.6%
Other language (Somali, Oromo, Tigrinya, Amharic)	5.3%	10.8%

#### Project Area Income Detail

Below 50% of FPL	6.5%
Below 100% of FPL	13.8%
Below 125% of FPL	17.5%
Below 150% of FPL	20.6%
Below 185% of FPL	24.7%
Below 200% of FPL	28.2%
Above 200% of FPL	71.8%

v. Based on the research thus far, which communities of color that live, work, or socialize in the proposal area(s) are *most* likely to experience a higher percentage of *positive* impacts compared to others in the proposal area?

Communities of color located closest to the station area are likely to experience the highest degree of benefit. For example:

- Individuals living within a 10-minute walk of the station will have access to high quality, frequent, reliable transit service.
- Individuals working within a 10-minute walk of the station will have another commuting option available to them.
- Individuals owning businesses in proximity to the station will experience greater activity due to station proximity.
- Individuals owning property near the station will benefit from increased property value.

This census data show that people who identify as Asian, Black or African American, or more than one race are the highest numbers of communities of color population as defined by those who do not self-identified as non-Hispanic White in the project area.

To put the numbers in the project area and station area into context, below are the racial demographics of King County.

#### County Population by Race

	Total Population	% of total population
Non-Hispanic White	1,230,600	54%
Black and African American	147,800	7%
Asian	449,700	20%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	19,400	1%
Native American and races not listed	25,300	1%
Hispanic and Latinx	243,000	11%
Multiracial	153,800	7%
<b>POC Population - Combined</b>	<b>1,039,000</b>	<b>45.8%</b>
<b>Total population</b>	<b>2,269,600</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: <https://kingcounty.gov/en/dept/executive/governance-leadership/performance-strategy-budget/regional-planning/demographics>

A comparison of the county and project area tables shows that the project area includes a higher percentage of communities of color than the county as a whole, and a higher percentage of people identifying as Black or African American, Asian, Native American, and multiracial.

However, the Graham Street project area includes a lower proportion of residents who selected their race as Hispanic and Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander.

vi. Based on the research thus far, which communities of color who live, work, or socialize in the proposal area(s) are *most* likely to experience a higher percentage of *negative* impacts compared to others in the proposal area?

Potential negative effects to communities near the Graham Street Station could include:

- Displacement due to project footprint (right-of-way) impacts.
- Potential long term or temporary visual impacts.

- Potential long term or temporary noise and vibration impacts.
- Potential long term or temporary changes in traffic volumes, patterns and property access, which may be adverse to some.
- Higher rents/property taxes near stations due to increased property values, which may lead to displacement.
- Displacement of renters (residential and commercial) due to redevelopment near stations.

(Please note that specific effects from the Graham Street Station project have not been determined at this time; the above information is insufficient to address environmental justice or Title VI federal requirements.

It is difficult to determine exactly who would experience negative effects, and to what degree, as the station design option has not been chosen. However, there would be business displacements of some kind in every scenario, and these could impact LEP and non-English speaking business owners. Those adjacent to the station area but outside the half-mile radius of stations are less likely to experience positive benefits that would offset negative effects.

Since there are so many unknowns for the next approximately seven years before this station opens, this data is some of the best information currently available. Since people benefit from the project by being able to access a station, proximity to a station is the measure of potentially benefiting from the project. However, because proximity to stations can also lead to displacement, the Sound Transit team plans to work with the City of Seattle to prepare for this potential consequence of market forces associated with a light rail station.

Additionally, there are people who would not experience potential benefits that come with being near a station, but they live in the project area. These people could experience the negative effects of being displaced or living near construction for some period. Notably, in these situations, Sound Transit provides relocation assistance in accordance with federal regulations as well as potential mitigation based on the determined level of construction-related impacts, and the team acknowledges that until they engage with people who may be affected, the team will not know whether they view these potential effects as positive or negative.

#### vii. What, if any, other tools has the project team use to help complete the racial equity analysis? How will they inform this process or decision?

The RET has helped the team add additional considerations to our alternatives analysis framework as well as considerations that we may need to explore in Phase II. The alternatives analysis process cannot cover all equity considerations, so this project team will consider publishing similar documents at future project milestones.

The project team has used community interviews, community feedback and recommendations, and local data from community organizations and services to inform information on communities of color and languages with the most limited English proficiency (LEP) speakers.

The project team used this data to create a Language Translation and Interpretation document to guide effective communication with stakeholders, including project documents and interpretation at events.

### vii. What racial equity-related insights has the project team gained via the collective data gathered in Part B, and how will this inform the process or final decision?

The project team learned that the area of King County where the station would be located has higher than county average populations of communities of color. In general, this means the project has the opportunity to increase access to high-capacity transit for historically underserved communities. However, with that comes the risk of displacing those communities if measures do not take place at the local level.

### ix. What *new* questions, considerations or information will need to be included in the racial equity analysis as a result of the information gathered above?

At this point, the project team has more questions than answers, but it has also developed a strategy to help get those answers, as outlined in the next section.

Two key questions now are:

- How can the project team include community input directly in alternatives analysis and results? (How do we show that input influences analysis and results?)
- How do we include an intersectional evaluation of station design options?

## Part 2: Equitable Engagement Tool

### 1. ID level of engagement

#### I. What potential effects (benefits and harm) could this program, policy, project, etc. have on the riders, residents, businesses, community organizations or other entities located in your proposal area?

See corresponding sections of the RET

#### II. What are the demographics of the individuals and/or organizations that could see negative impacts?

The alternatives evaluation criteria intend to look at potentially negative impacts so that they can be part of the evaluation process to determine the design option to carry forward. The project team is still revising the criteria and measures and will update this with a link upon completing upcoming reviews. One of the current gaps in our methods is that the project team doesn't have a way to consider underserved populations with identities under more than one category. More detailed demographic information will be provided in Phase 2. For example, the project team measures communities of color and people with low incomes in the station area, but the project team doesn't measure communities of color who also have low incomes. The project team will be exploring how to include intersectional

identities in the coming months. We will inform this work with outreach to community assets including food banks, service centers, and community centers to learn more about these populations and how to best connect with them.

Among the first steps in understanding who lives in the project area by their racial identities for the RET, the project team also pulled other demographic information that's available in the census to start looking at the representation of other identities in the project area. From this data, the project team sees a greater proportion of people with most of the identities studied living in the project area than there are in King County as a whole. This includes people 65 and older, people who have low proficiency with English, people with low incomes, families in poverty, households without access to a private vehicle, renter households and cost-burdened renter households. This means that the project is well-positioned to provide increased opportunities to these communities but also needs to take great care not to contribute to undue burdens.

#### **Project Area and King County Demographic Comparison**

	Graham Street	King County	Graham as % of King County
Total Population	31,224	2,269,675	1.3%
Housing unit estimate	12,542	969,234	0.5%
Population under 18	6,182	449,200	1.3%
Population 18 and older	25,041	1,482,600	1.6%
Population 65 and older	4,465	293,200	1.5%
Non-Hispanic White	10,647	1,230,600	0.8%
Black and African American	6,994	147,800	4.7%
Asian	9,554	449,700	2.1%
Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander	218	19,400	1.1%
Native American	187	25,300	0.7%
Hispanic	2092	243,000	0.8%
Multiracial	2,591	153,800	1.6%
Low-income population	8,805		

Limited English Proficiency	7,243		
Home ownership (rent)	16,860		
No vehicles in household	4.059		

*Sources: All data stems from 2010 and 2000 US Census of Population and Housing, US Census Bureau's American Community Survey 2016-20, US Dept of Housing and Urban Development, CHAS data 2014-18, WA Office of Financial Management April 1<sup>st</sup> Population and Housing Estimates, 2021.*

### III. Based on the findings to questions I & II, what potential disparities do you foresee?

Communities located closest to the station area are likely to experience the highest degree of benefit. For example:

- Individuals living within a 10-minute walk of the station will have access to high quality, frequent, reliable transit service.
- Individuals working within a 10-minute walk of the station will have another commuting option available to them.
- Individuals owning businesses in proximity to the station will experience greater activity due to station proximity.
- Individuals owning property near the station will benefit from increased property value.

Potential negative impacts to communities near Graham Street Station could include:

- Business displacement due to project footprint (right-of-way) impacts.
- Residential displacement due to increased property value
- Displacement of community resources
- Construction impacts to businesses, residents, and riders

### IV. Based on your answer to question III, how will this inform your outreach or engagement strategy, and what specifically are you hoping to learn?

These answers led the project team to focus on local community leaders and organizations for initial interviews to establish community concerns, feedback, and questions. The project team also met with communities representing a variety of needs and networks to gain a broader understanding of these community's concerns. The project team is engaging with communities on MLK Jr Way S to understand construction and displacement concerns, and extended outreach through mailers, signage, and community interviews to learn from communities in a one-mile radius of the station area. Our engagement strategy is to center communities representing the populations of highest density as named in the demographic analysis, and to expand from there, sharing information broadly through media, emails, and mailers, as well as community events, briefings, and conversations.

V. How will you use the input gathered through your outreach or engagement process. Be as specific as possible.

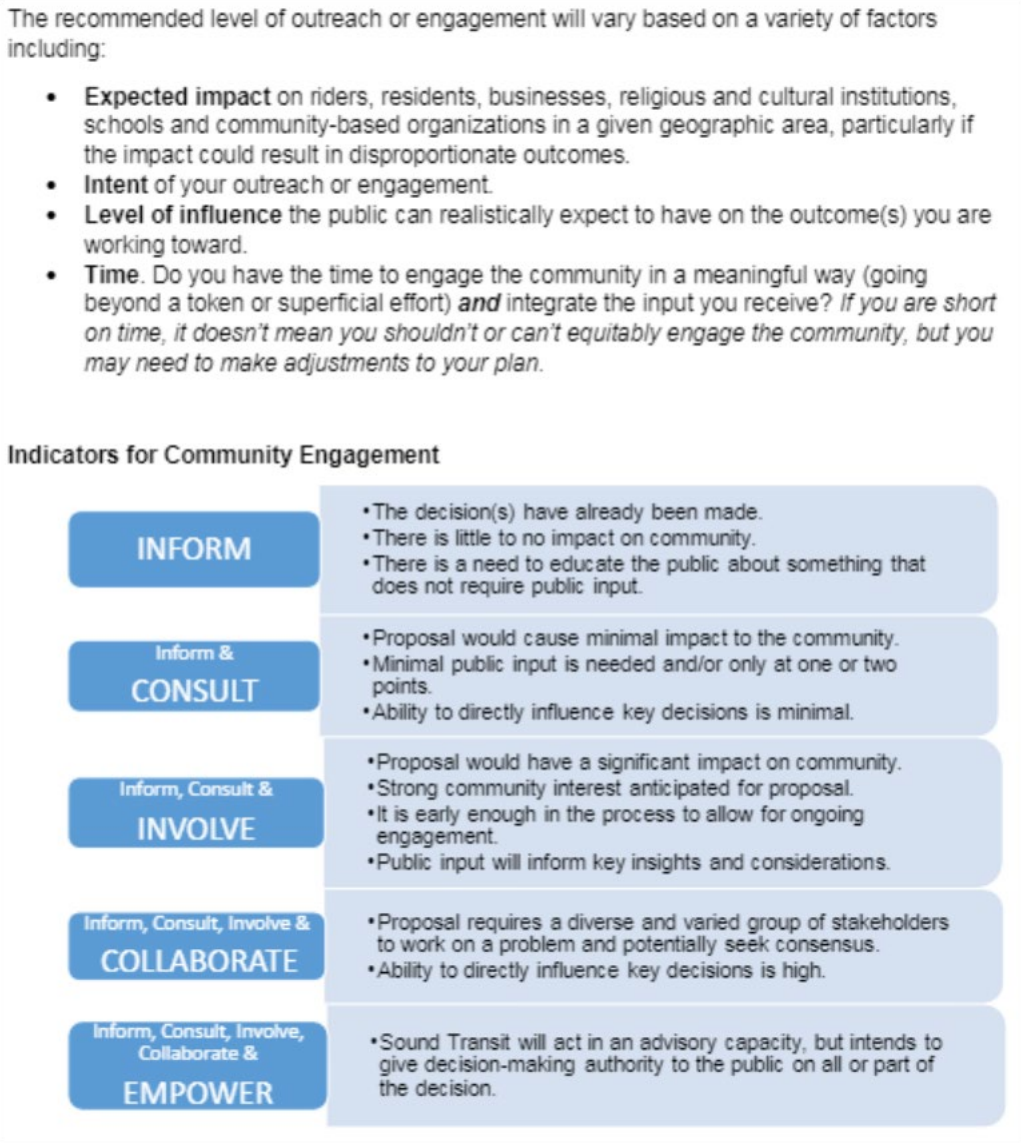
The project team has been using the information gathered through outreach and engagement to inform ongoing and expanding outreach – building relationships with community organizations, business owners, and community leaders, attending community events that are project specific as well as community-wide, and creating a network of related and intersectional partners. Engagement feedback and input have also informed our alternatives evaluation, honing community needs and priorities, and centering safety and equity as critical design considerations.

- Ongoing understanding of existing conditions paired with ongoing re-evaluation and revision of outreach and engagement approach based on criteria and measures used in alternatives evaluation.

VI. Based on your answers to questions I-V, determine the appropriate level of outreach or engagement. Be sure to reference the Indicators for Community Engagement graphic on page 6 (graphic below).

The project will use nearly all levels of engagement during this phase of the project. There are periods of engagement and outreach when the project team will share information, informing communities of updates and areas for education on the project. The project team will also have engagement opportunities when the project team consults, involves, and collaborates with communities to garner feedback, create opportunities for community to impact project decisions, and develop strategies for ongoing and long-term engagement and trust building. The project team wants to conduct outreach in a transparent way, being honest with community about the level of engagement, and avoiding engagement fatigue and mistrust.

Empower is the level of engagement that is missing from our strategy. Opportunities for empowerment are areas of improvement in future phases of the project. However, if empowerment is not a realistic expectation of engagement for this project, it is important to be transparent with community about that, and to establish strong opportunities for other levels of engagement. Regardless of the level of engagement, it is important to share with community how their input will be incorporated into project decisions.



**Figure X-X Levels of Outreach or Engagement**

## 2. ID your audience

### VII. Which groups are *most* vulnerable to the impact of your project?

The station area is majority POC, with minority-owned businesses, social service agencies, and housing. These communities have faced gentrification and displacement across Seattle, and the Graham Street Station area is a longstanding base for communities of color. Many residents are also renters and lower-income populations who could be displaced due to construction, rising costs, etc. These populations have also expressed interest and excitement in the project as a potential benefit for access and mobility.

Another potentially affected population is current riders who could face disruptions and delays during station construction and operations but will also benefit from additional neighborhood access.



### VIII. If applicable in previous engagement efforts, which populations have been underrepresented and/or face barriers to participation? Why?

In our first round of engagement, and in the planning for that phase the project team identified that communities of color, LEP populations, youth and the elderly, people with disabilities, and unhoused communities have faced barriers to participation in this work broadly. Because the project has been proposed and deferred multiple times, these under-representations persist.

There are a number of community groups and service organizations in the area that represent these populations, but Sound Transit has not engaged with their work or communities in the past. Other projects, namely the West Seattle and Ballard Link Extension projects, have valuable insights on how to adjust engagement strategies to form relationships with underrepresented communities, building connections with Community Based Organizations (CBOs), including project information in-language, and meeting people where they already work, live, and gather. Developing these relationships and changing engagement methods to remove barriers to access was integral to reaching higher participation from underrepresented communities and resulted in stronger attendance and feedback.

During the engagement effort in July 2024, 209 of 525 survey respondents shared self-identified responses to demographic questions. These responses showed that respondents were less representative of Communities of Color Populations than the Project Area demographics. 36% of respondents identified as non-White vs 72% of the population of the Project Area. The demographics of respondents were more reflective of overall City of Seattle demographics.

### IX. If applicable in previous outreach and engagement efforts, which populations have been overrepresented? Why?

Generally, white, home-owning, English-speaking, and middle-class communities have been represented in these previous efforts. The Graham Street communities have also been engaged throughout the years of project proposal and deferment, so there is a level of fatigue and mistrust in the communities regarding this project.

### X. What are the top six languages spoken in your specific outreach/engagement areas? Rank them in order from most spoken language to least spoken language.

The top six languages spoken at home, per the census, are Spanish, Vietnamese, Chinese, Tagalog, Somali, and Amharic.

Language spoken at home (limited English proficiency)	(%)	Language spoken at home (All levels of English)	(%)
Chinese	6.4%	Chinese	9.9%
Korean	0.0%	Korean	0.1%
Vietnamese	5.2%	Vietnamese	7.2%

Tagalog	2.2%	Tagalog	4.6%
Other Asian language	1.3%	Other Asian language	3.0%
French/Creole	0.0%	French/Creole	0.2%
German/Dutch	0.0%	German/Dutch	0.5%
Spanish	1.5%	Spanish	3.7%
Russian/Polish/Other Slavic	0.1%	Russian/Polish/Other Slavic	0.2%
Indo-European languages	0.3%	Indo-European languages	1.3%
Arabic	0.9%	Arabic	1.2%
Other language (Somali, Oromo, Tigrinya, Amharic)	5.3%	Other language (Somali, Oromo, Tigrinya, Amharic)	10.8%

XI. Based on the information you've collected above: • Who have you identified for targeted outreach? • What level of engagement will you use? • What tactics/strategies will you deploy?

Communities representing Spanish, Vietnamese, Chinese, Tagalog, Somali, and Amharic speaking populations and those representing immigrant, refugee, and diasporic populations have been identified for targeted outreach. This diasporic community includes communities Cham communities, communities from West and East Africa, and East Asian communities, representing cultural, linguistic, and religious tradition.

Our outreach is translated into our top identified languages, and distributed through mail, email, in-person conversation, and signage. The level of engagement ranges from inform to involve, giving folks project information and requesting input and feedback that will impact the project.

Our tactics range from one-on-one conversations to group briefings to open houses and community event tabling. The project team also shared project information on our site, social media, and through email and a mailer within a one-mile radius of the representation station location.

XII. List any relationships that currently exist between Sound Transit and the leaders in the communities you've identified. Be sure to reach out to Government & Community Relations (GCR) and Community Outreach as they may have preexisting relationships and can connect you to the right people.

### 3. Planning your engagement

#### WHEN will your engagement take place?



- How will you ensure that your event is taking place on a day and time that people are available?
- What other events or cultural or religious observances might be happening in the area that could detract from attendance?
- Are you scheduling your meeting during a meal time? If so, will you provide food/beverages?
- Do you need to offer your event more than once to capture a wider audience?

#### WHERE will your engagement take place?



- Are there community organizations or groups that are willing to partner or co-host your event?
- Is the location of your event accessible and convenient for your target audience (i.e. is it located near public transportation, is there plentiful and free parking, etc.)?
- Is it ADA compliant?

#### TRANSPORTATION: How will people get to and from your event?



- What barriers might exist in regard to transportation? How might you work to reduce or eliminate these barriers?
- Will you provide transit vouchers for attendees?

#### COMPENSATION: How will you compensate people for their time?



- Are there funds or other resources available to provide compensation? If not, how will you show appreciation for people's time and contribution?
- How will you inform yourself as to how people would like to be compensated (i.e. donation, individual stipends, food, etc.)?

#### LANGUAGE SERVICES: Please refer to Title VI Language Assistance Plan in Appendix B. **THIS IS A REQUIRED STEP!**



- Will you need documents, audio or web announcements translated into other languages?
- Will you need to hire a professional interpreter for your event?
- How will you make information accessible to those with hearing or visual impairments and populations that cannot read or write?

#### MARKETING & COMMUNICATION



- How do people want to be communicated with?
- How will you ensure that you are using the most effective communication method(s) throughout the process?
- How will you obtain contact information for attendees/participants?

#### OTHER CONSIDERATIONS



- Will child care be provided?
- What presentation format is most engaging for your audience?
- Who is best suited to deliver the content and facilitate the conversation?
- Who will take minutes to ensure an accurate account for future report-outs?

So far, project outreach has focused on reaching communities of color, especially Black, Asian, and multiracial communities, and people who speak our top six languages (Spanish, Vietnamese, Chinese, Tagalog, Somali, and Amharic). The project team also is focused on reaching people who are more likely to benefit from expanded access to high-capacity transit: People younger than 18 and older than 65, people who don't own a car, people with low incomes and people with limited English proficiency. As the project team approaches working with the City of Seattle on anti-displacement efforts, the project team needs to consider people who are renters and those with low incomes.

Combining what the project team knows now about who needs to be reached, what the project team knows we need to learn more about, and what the project's alternative's development work is this phase, an engagement approach has been mapped out with key activities.

**Community Conversations** (previously Stakeholder Interviews): This was our first external engagement effort and is currently ongoing. Previous projects at the agency have used Stakeholder Interviews to initiate project engagement. The community engagement team of Sound Transit and consultant staff created a list of [community organizations, agencies, and businesses](#) in the project areas using personal and professional knowledge and research. A new step was to review the list and arrange it into the following priority groups:

- High: A clear connection to the community and representing high-priority groups.
- Medium: Community connection and representing priority groups.
- Low: Existing relationships with Sound Transit; will engage through existing channels.

As the project team reached out to stakeholders to request interviews, the project team started with the entities in the high-priority group and moved down.

Sound Transit and consultant staff have conducted interviews with organizations representing the following communities:

- Puget Sound Sage
- DeafBlind Service Center
- Filipino Community of Seattle
- Seattle Housing Authority
- Bellwether Housing
- Rainier Valley Community Development Fund
- International Rescue Committee

The project team offered interviews at flexible times and venues (in-person and virtual). The team has prepared a slide deck for conversations, as well as factsheets in 12 languages so that community members are up to date on project information. The engagement team drafted questions to guide the hour-long conversations the project team had with participants and left room for questions and open discussion.

**Summer infocommunity site:** infocommunity is the type of site that Sound Transit’s engagement consultant, Stepherson and Associate, builds for online engagement events. The project team hosted an online open house through the month of July, as well as an in-person open house on July 16. At this open-house the project team shared information about the project, project benefits and key elements, potential station locations, and site selection considerations. The project team informed participants of the project timeline and upcoming steps and asked for feedback on key priorities and concerns. The project team shared the information in our key languages and provided interpretation at our in-person open houses in line with the Translation Protocol document. This approach allowed the project team to share the most up-to-date and transparent information on the project with the public.

## **Alternative Analysis: March – October 2024: Outreach Summary Report**

**Level 1 findings:** [Graham Street Station Project Engagement Summary Report October 2024](#)

### **4. Collect data and evaluate**

#### **Before engagement:**

**XIII. How will you know that your engagement efforts have been successful? What data will you use to inform this?**

- At the end of Phase 1 use the info from engagement to set a base of trends/take-aways.
- Set a baseline and indicators of success and measure improvement in engagement efforts over time.

Potential things to tally:

- Reach - social media impressions, mailers sent, number of ads in ethnic media, GovDelivery deliveries,
- Participation – opens on emails, views on event pages, in person attendance at events, people talked to at events, use of interpreters,
- Engagement – briefings, community interviews, comments received, clickthrough rate
- Collaboration – conversation attendance, fairs and festivals numbers, relationships with CBOs, activities with CBOs, intentional and focused – attendees at RET specific events, intentional reach with fairs and festivals to historically underserved communities, briefings with RET partners.

**XIV. How and when will you decide to shift your methods if you are unsuccessful in reaching the target populations or are not getting the information you need?**

As the project progresses, the project team will plan new engagement strategies for different phases of the project, building on previous phases and assessing best practices. The project team will build on previous engagement to make future engagement more inclusive and equitable.

The project team will use success metrics (both quantitative and qualitative) to reflect previous engagement and to assess next steps. We will also work closely with our partners at the City of Seattle as

well as community partners to assess if/when outreach strategies should shift to better meet community needs.

So far, populations that have been challenging to reach include homeless communities, Limited English Populations, and the elderly and youth. Strategies we have implemented and will continue to expand to reach these communities include connecting with food banks and service centers, doing outreach at senior centers, schools, and after-school programs, and providing translation and interpretation services. Additional strategies to employ include an expansion of on-hand interpreters, providing compensation for engagement, and working with Sound Transit's youth engagement team to connect with youth.

### **After engagement**

#### **XV. What were the key pieces of public input or feedback you obtained through your engagement efforts?**

Answered with the next question

#### **XVI. How will this feedback inform your next steps and/or decisions?**

Over Phase 1, the project received the following key pieces of public feedback:

- Key priorities: safety and easy station access
- Minimize disruption to local businesses and homes in the neighborhood during construction
- Improved pedestrian, bus, and bicycle connections

### **Phase 1 part 2: engagement summary (October 2024)**

Inform engagement effort (engagement summary shared with CBO partners, GovDelivery lists)

#### **5. Long term engagement -**

#### **XVII. How, when and what will you report out to those who provided input and feedback? Be sure to specify their impact on the outcome.**

After each engagement period, the project team reads and summarizes all comments in a comment summary report. These reports are posted on the project website.

Additionally, the project team is sharing our engagement survey to truth our results and ensure that community members and CBO's can provide additional feedback, be informed on where the project stands, and review our RET outcomes.

In our briefing to the Sound Transit Board of Directors, the project team includes major themes from public engagement.

## XVIII. Who will be responsible for maintaining relationships with the organizations, businesses, and others that were engaged in this process?

During Phase 1, Sound Transit's Community Engagement Specialist and Government and Community Relations Manager along with the City of Seattle's Engagement and Partnerships Advisor, were responsible for maintaining relationships with community partners. These team members worked closely to clarify responsibilities in fostering relationships. They are supported by the RET process, ST and Seattle project managers, and additional engagement staff who serve as support in these discussions as well as monitoring that the team is fulfilling RET commitments.

## XIX. Based on your interactions thus far, how will these groups be most effectively engaged in the future? Use the SMARTIE goal-setting template to develop at least two outreach goals focused on strengthening our relationship(s) and building mutual trust.

Focused business outreach through summer 2025, connecting with POC owned businesses, LEP populations, and businesses likely to be impacted by construction. Engagement to be held through summer 2025 and feedback will be incorporated into Board report and presentation and plans for Phase 3 engagement.

Two to three smaller scale workshops with community groups that represent high priority communities to discuss key issue areas and feedback from Phase 1. Engagement to be held through summer 2025 and feedback will be incorporated into Board report and presentation and plans for Phase 3 engagement.

## Part 3: Impact analysis

### x. Using the data and community feedback collected in Parts I & II, what are the potential *negative* consequences of the proposal for communities of color?

- Potential displacement due to project footprint impacts.
- Higher rents/property taxes near stations due to increased property values, which may lead to displacement.
- Access or other construction impacts on businesses
- Potential temporary or long-term noise and vibration impacts
- Existing light rail service disruptions
- Potential temporary or long-term changes in traffic volumes, patterns, and property access, which may be adverse to some.

### xi. Using the data and community feedback collected in Parts I & II, what are the potential *beneficial* consequences of the proposal for communities of color?

Communities located closest to potential station locations are likely to experience the highest degree of benefit. For example:



- Individuals living within a 10-minute walk of the station will have access to high quality, frequent, reliable transit service.
- Individuals working within a 10-minute walk of the station will have another commuting option available to them.
- Individuals owning businesses in proximity to the station will experience greater activity due to station proximity.
- Individuals owning property near the station will benefit from increased property value.

Please note that specific effects from the project have not been determined at this time; the above information is insufficient to address environmental justice or Title VI federal requirements. Any potential effects will be determined as part of the environmental review process for the project.

It is difficult to determine exactly who would see positive or negative effects, and to what degree, as the station design option has not been chosen. Since there are many unknowns in the next approximately seven years before this station opens, this data is some of the best information currently available.

Since people would benefit from the project by being able to access a station, proximity to a station is a measure of potentially benefiting from the project. However, because proximity to stations can also lead to displacement, the team plans to work with the City of Seattle to prepare for this potential consequence of market forces associated with a light rail station.

Additionally, there are people who will not experience potential benefits that come with being near a station, but they live in the project area. These people could experience the negative effects of being displaced or living near construction for some period. Notably, in these situations, Sound Transit provides relocation assistance in accordance with federal regulations as well as potential mitigation based on the determined level of construction-related impacts, and the team acknowledges that until the project team engages with people who may be affected, the project team will not know whether they view these potential effects as positive or negative.

## xii. What could you remove, change or add to your proposal to ensure a positive outcome, and/or reduce disparities for communities of color?

During Phase 1, the project team has begun to identify aspects of the project that may help to ensure positive outcomes.

- Add weight to community priorities of evaluation criteria:
  - Connect directly with CBOs representing Communities of Color, disability advocates, and low-income communities.
  - Prioritize feedback from these communities in alternatives evaluation, design, and construction
  - Organize station-based workshops to develop community priorities
  - Talk directly with community groups during briefings to hear preferences for types of participation, honing efforts and tactics based on feedback. Tactics include surveys, in-person meetings, attending existing community meetings, email outreach, flyering, etc.



- Anti-displacement/gentrification efforts to help ensure current residents can experience the opportunities brought with light rail and not experience financial or cultural displacement. So far, the project team has identified a few areas ST and the City of Seattle may be able to play a direct role in this complex issue:
  - Convener of local organizations: ST is in a unique position to facilitate collaboration between City of Seattle staff and local organizations working on anti-gentrification efforts through organizing meetings, sharing information, and sponsoring events for CBOs to reach community members who may be directly affected.
  - Model Code: Sound Transit Everett Link Extension has been developing the Model Code Partnership, which includes policy and regulation changes for jurisdictions to consider supporting anti-displacement planning. MCP included a meeting on anti-displacement case studies in the country. The project team can potentially apply lessons from the MCP to the Graham Street Station project.
- Access improvement projects:
  - Coordinate on access improvement, such as bike lanes, sidewalks, or bus/rail integration, refining networks developed in the Seattle Transportation Plan with more localized community input.

xiii. If you and/or your RET team are not the primary decision-makers in this process, what are the *key considerations* you will highlight for the decision-maker(s)?

The Sound Transit Board is the final decision maker on selecting the Project to be Built. Prior to that, the project team may ask the Board to Identify a Preferred Alternative. Both of these actions could include feedback from the informal Interagency Group (City of Seattle, King County Metro, WSDOT, and the Port of Seattle) and the community. Equity considerations and community feedback would be included in Board reports and staff briefings to the board. This feedback and input is considered alongside technical considerations.

xiv. What, if any, additional resources will be needed to make changes to the proposal as a result of this analysis? Whose support or authority will be necessary to make changes?

Additional capacity is needed in consultant support for planning and execution of equity-focused engagement and report development. In Phase 1, the ST and consultant project team worked together to use resources as creatively and effectively as possible, but the project team could not meet all needs. Future needs may include:

- More historic data and context
- Direct engagement with communities of color, low income, and disability communities
- Compensation for community input
- Incorporation of resources into Phase 2/3 scope and budget.

## Part 4: Evaluate and refine

xvi. What indicators will be used to measure progress toward greater racial equity outcomes once the proposal has been implemented (i.e., how will you know that your strategy is working?) We encourage you to use the SMARTIE format to answer this question. Add more pages as needed.

To measure how we are meeting the equity goals set for Phase 1, the project team considers the following indicators for each goal.

**Goal:** Elevate explicit consideration of racial equity in the identification of a station design option for study in environmental review.

**Indicators of success:**

- Are equity evaluation findings communicated to decision makers? How frequently, when compared to other findings?
- Are community concerns related to equity communicated to decision makers? How frequently, when compared to other community concerns?

**Goal:** research the legacy of racism in order to inform engagement planning, prepare the project team to be aware & responsive, and inform evaluation measures

**Indicators of success:**

- Is the project team reaching historically underserved communities through our engagement? How well? Setting the basis for this in the RET so may be setting baseline for now.
- Is the project team building relationships with people and CBOs that work with historically underserved populations? Seeing this as an indicator that the project team is aware enough to be able to build trust with communities new to the agency and us as staff.
- Are evaluation measures showing differences in performance between station design options? In other words, are community characteristics that the project team would expect to see based on research visible in the technical evaluation?

**Goal:** engage historically underserved communities proactively and meaningfully such that concerns are known and integrated early.

**Indicators of success:**

- Given the nature of this large light rail station project and the structural racism in infrastructure projects, the project team knows people will encounter issues, and conflict is a sign that the project team is reaching people. Did the project team hear feedback that centered around equity concerns? Did the project team respond to that feedback with responsiveness and transparency? How was a response received? Has the relationship with the commentor(s) continued?

- How were equity concerns and opportunities elevated beyond the project team? Did they reach decision makers? How did decision makers respond?

**Goal:** Evaluate station design options with equity criteria to help ensure benefits and avoid disproportionate impacts for historically underserved communities.

**Indicators of success:**

- How were potential benefits and burdens of station design options measured?

**xvii. How will the RET team track, address and resolve any racial equity related issues that may arise after implementation of your proposed plan?**

The RET project manager is responsible for tracking racial equity related issues and identifying which team member is responsible for addressing the issue. All team members are responsible for bringing equity issues to the RET PM, or if for any reason the RET PM is not appropriate to inform, any other member of the RET workgroup should be informed and then relay information to the PM.

## Part 5: Accountability and report out - To be completed end of Phase 1

**xviii. How will you share your *overall* findings and/or communicate about the status of your project with affected communities? This should be focused on reporting back on the outcome of the proposal as a whole and not just the pieces directly informed by community input.**

At key milestones for decisions and input opportunities, the project team has sent information to community partners, the City of Seattle, the email listserv, and, at prominent points, via social media posts. The project team also updates the project sites routinely with the most up to date information.

The project team will share the findings of equity evaluation in alternatives development with community through many different methods: engagement surveys, in-person community interviews, private briefings, publicly published evaluation reports, emails notifying the public of all these opportunities, along with all the radio, print, and online advertising.

**xix. Who will be responsible for maintaining relationships built through the equitable engagement process?**

The Community Engagement and Government and Community Relations project team members are responsible for maintaining all external relationships, and equity-focused engagement is included in these responsibilities.

xx. How will the RET team maintain communication with and accountability to those engaged during the outreach process as well as other communities of color within the impacted area(s)?

Covered above