

NEPA Scoping Public Involvement Summary

December 2024



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NEPA Scoping Public Involvement Summary

NEPA SCOPING PERIOD: Oct. 24 – Dec. 9, 2024

PROJECT PHASE: PLANNING

Introduction

In partnership with the Federal Transit Administration, Sound Transit will publish a new National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and Supplemental State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Ballard Link Extension. This second environmental review process will build upon the 2022 West Seattle and Ballard Link Extensions (WSBLE) Draft EIS with analysis of new alternatives and project refinements identified by the Sound Transit Board in March and July of 2023. Given the additional environmental review needed for these project refinements, staff

determined that the WSLE and BLE projects would advance on two different environmental review timelines. Sound Transit has been collecting feedback from Tribes, the public, and agencies to inform the study of the Ballard Link Extension (BLE) alternatives since 2017, with the first scoping phase for the WSBLE Draft EIS being carried out in 2019.

The first stage in this second EIS process is a scoping period, however Sound Transit is not starting over. All comments from the previous environmental review process (scoping, draft EIS, etc.) have been used to inform the current project status and will be carried forward into the new BLE Draft EIS.

Overview

Sound Transit conducted NEPA scoping for the Ballard Link Extension (BLE) project from Oct. 24 through Dec. 9, 2024. This second NEPA scoping phase provided an opportunity for partners and the community to learn about and comment on the project as it stands after six years of analysis, design and public engagement.

This report describes Sound Transit's public involvement efforts during NEPA scoping, which included in-person and online opportunities to review and provide input on the following:

- Current route and station alternatives.
- Topics to study in the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).
- Project Purpose and Need.

Participation by the numbers



Notifications

Sound Transit advertised the NEPA scoping comment period using various notification tools between October and December 2024. Notifications included the following and details are available in the appendix.

- Emails to subscriber lists. •
- Social media (Facebook).
- Media advisory.
- Digital ads in local publications.
- Notice in the Federal Register.

Outreach opportunities: In-person and online

Public meetings:

Sound Transit held two in-person NEPA scoping meetings for two

hours each. The meetings included displays with project information, display boards showing current station and route alternatives, and opportunities to submit scoping comments. Paper comment forms and laptops were available for attendees to use and submit their scoping comments. A court reporter was also in attendance to transcribe scoping comments from attendees (court reporters and interpreters worked together to provide in-language transcription of verbal comments).

Scoping meetings were held in ADA-accessible venues that were transit accessible.

Scoping Meeting #1 (99 attendees)

Thursday, Nov. 7, 2024: 5-7 p.m.

Union Station, 401 S Jackson St, Seattle, WA 98104 Interpretation was available in Mandarin, Cantonese, Vietnamese, and ASL.

Scoping Meeting #2 (80 attendees)

Wednesday, Nov. 13: 5-7 p.m. National Nordic Museum, 2655 NW Market St, Seattle, WA 98107 Interpretation was available in ASL.



Expanding light rail

from downtown

Seattle to Ballard

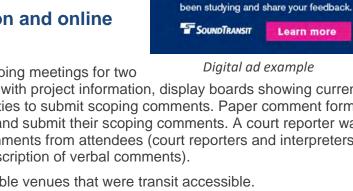
See the routes and stations we have

Online open house:

An online open house was available for

approximately six weeks between Oct. 24 – Dec. 9, 2024. The online open house provided stakeholders the opportunity to review scoping information and provide scoping comments on current route and station alternatives, topics to study in the Draft EIS, and the project Purpose and Need. All materials from inperson events were available on the online open house. The online open house was fully translated into four languages: Traditional and Simplified Chinese, Vietnamese, and Spanish. Additional language translations were available by request and through an embedded Google Translate tool on the site.

The online open house received over 9,600 visitors during the NEPA scoping period.



Materials:

The following materials were developed or made available for the in-person and online open houses. All materials (except where noted) were translated into four languages: Traditional and Simplified Chinese, Vietnamese, and Spanish.

NEPA scoping information handout: A two-page document providing an overview of the environmental review process thus far, the scoping period, a project timeline, and next steps, and highlighting the ways to submit a scoping comment.

Purpose and Need handout: A one-page handout outlining the project Purpose and Need statement (available in English; translated versions of the Purpose and Need statement were available on the online open house).

Presentation: The presentation included a project overview and timeline, information on the planning phase (2017-2023) and the need for a second NEPA scoping period, a map of the current route and station alternatives, an overview of the environmental review process, and information on ways to provide scoping comments.

Display boards: The display boards shared general information about the project and the upcoming environmental review process, including a project timeline, information about NEPA scoping and why it is happening again, how to comment during the scoping period, and maps of the current station and route alternatives by project segment.

Meeting guide: A handout for each meeting attendee that included the presentation slides and meeting display boards.

Project fact sheet: A general project fact sheet highlighting the project map, timeline, and key milestones.

Comment form: A one-page comment form providing space to write comments and a place sign up for BLE email updates.

Appendix M from the West Seattle and Ballard Link Extension Projects Draft EIS: An appendix from the project's previous Draft EIS with information about prior alternatives development processes, which informed current station and alignment alternatives (available in English upon request).

Further Studies Executive Summary: A summary of the further studies that followed the previous Draft EIS; study results that informed the refinement to current alternatives were highlighted. (available in English upon request).

Comment collection

Sound Transit collected NEPA scoping comments in a variety of ways, both in-person and online:

Online open house: Commenters could provide scoping comments online using the project website, available 24/7 during the scoping period.

Comment cards: Commenters could write their feedback on comment cards available at in-person open houses events held during the scoping period.

Speak with a court reporter: Commenters could share a verbal comment with a court reporter at an open house, which would then be transcribed.

Voicemail: Commenters could call the Ballard Link Extension project phone number to record a verbal comment, which would be transcribed.

Email: Commenters could email their scoping comments to blescoping@soundtransit.org

Mailed letter: Commenters could mail letters with their comments to Sound Transit.

Comments received

Nearly 170 scoping comments were received through various channels including comment forms and comments made at in-person events, the online open house, emails, and voicemails.

Overall Scoping Feedback:

- Support for regional transit and for building the BLE as quickly as possible and fulfilling the voter approved ST3 plan.
- Support for building the project right to effectively serve Seattle for generations.
- Support for tunnel alignments where possible.
- Interest in providing effective multimodal access at stations and prioritizing below ground station transfers.
- Concerns related to property acquisitions and construction effects on homes and businesses.
- Interest in an extended 90-day public comment period when the Draft EIS is released.

CID/SODO Segment Scoping Feedback:

- Interest in locating the CID Station on 4th Avenue S to create a transit hub in South Downtown and prioritizing an efficient passenger transfer experience.
- Some interest in locating the CID Station at S Dearborn Street.
- Some concerns that the CID Station at S Dearborn Street is not accessible to existing infrastructure, and that it could affect or displace the nearby artist community.
- Interest in removing the CID Station alternatives at 5th Avenue from consideration.
- Some interest in continued study of the social and economic impacts of CID Station alternatives on nearby communities.
- Concerns about displacement and neighborhood effects to the CID community and small businesses during construction.

Downtown Segment Scoping Feedback:

- Concerns about construction impacts, particularly road closures and construction of multiple stations concurrently, and noise and vibration.
- Some interest in preserving the building housing the Washington State Department of Corrections reentry center and not displacing the program.
- Some support for the Midtown Station location on 5th Ave.

South Interbay and Interbay/Ballard Segments Scoping Feedback:

• Some interest in the preferred Smith Cove station location for its proximity to the cruise ship

terminals.

- Some interest in a tunnel alignment along Elliott Avenue.
- Some concern about business displacements in Interbay.
- Interest in a tunnel under Salmon Bay instead of a bridge.
- Support for a Ballard station located at 15th Avenue NW.
- Some interest in a station farther west or exploring pedestrian tunnels to better connect the Ballard station to the Ballard core.



Community members providing scoping comments at the NEPA Scoping Meeting at Union Station

Next steps

Additional opportunities for public involvement related to the project design will occur throughout the project planning phase and following the release of the Draft EIS, expected in 2025. There are multiple ways for the public to stay informed about the project:

Email the project: ballardlink@soundtransit.org.

Call the Community Outreach Team: 206-903-7223.

Visit the project website: soundtransit.org/ballardlink-design.

Sign up for project updates by email: soundtransit.org/subscribe.

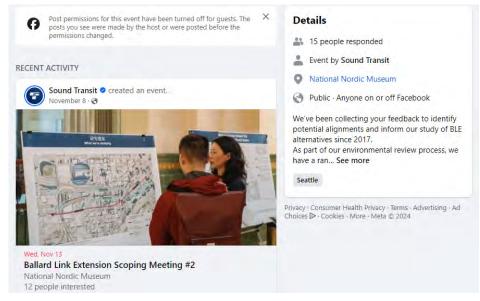
Appendix A: Notifications

Sound Transit advertised the scoping comment period between October and December 2024:

Social media

Sound Transit notified the community about in-person and online opportunities to participate in the scoping comment period through Facebook. An organic post was made to announce the start of the scoping period and share information on how to submit a comment. Following this announcement, two events were created for the Nov. 7 and Nov. 13 scoping meetings and advertised organically on the Sound Transit page.

Sound Transit Facebook event Post



Digital ads

The project team ran digital ads to five local publications (including two in-language Chinese publications) to advertise the scoping meetings. Ads linked to the project online open house with more information on how to make a public comment.

Publication	Run Dates	Impressions
International Examiner	10/24 - 11/7	33,130
NW Asian Weekly	10/24 - 11/7	17,948
Seattle Chinese Post	10/24 - 11/7	8,730
Seattle Chinese Times	10/24 - 11/7	6,400
The Seattle Times	10/24 - 11/7	73,370

Digital ad example



Diwali officially added to Pennsylvania's state holiday calendar

Diwali is now officially a state holiday in Pennsylvania, following Governor Josh Shapiro's signing of Senate Bill 402 on Monday.



NAMES IN THE NEWS

aman Arora

More Editorials



than have the flu

Get Vaccinated >

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In-language digital ad example



Media Advisory

Sound Transit posted a media advisory on the Ballard Link Extension project page on ST.org.



Bailard Link Extension

Public comment period begins on Ballard Link Extension

Opportunity for public to provide feedback on the project; comment period ends Dec. 9

October 28, 2024

Sound Transit has started the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) scoping process for the **Ballard** Link Extension. The extension will add 7.7 miles of light rail service with nine new stations from downtown Seattle to the Ballard neighborhood, including a new downtown Seattle rail-only tunnel.

Sound Transit previously conducted a scoping process and comment period in 2019 to inform the West Seattle and Ballard Link Extensions Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) that was published in 2022. Since then, the West Seattle and Ballard Link projects have separated, and Sound Transit is now developing a new NEPA Draft EIS and Supplemental State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) Draft EIS for the Ballard Link Extension.

The new Ballard Link Extension Draft EIS will carry forward the range of alternatives and all public feedback collected from the project's earlier combined WSBLE Scoping and Draft EIS comment periods.

Community members can learn more about the project and provide additional new feedback through the Ballard Link Extension participate online site and at two public scoping meetings:

Thursday, Nov. 7, 5 – 7 p.m.; short presentation at 5:30 p.m.

- Union Station, Joni Earl Great Hall
- 401 S Jackson Street, Seattle, WA 98104
- Cantonese, Mandarin, and Vietnamese interpretation and translated materials will be available. ASL interpretation will be provided.
- Refreshments and activities for children will be provided.

Wednesday, Nov. 13, 5 – 7 p.m., short presentation at 5:30 p.m.

- National Nordic Museum
- 2655 NW Market Street, Seattle, WA 98107
- ASL interpretation will be provided.
- Refreshments and activities for children will be provided.

Feedback can also be emailed to ballardlink@soundtransit.org or called in at 206-903-7223.

Written comments can be mailed to:

 Ballard Link Extension, c/o Lauren Swift Sound Transit 401 S. Jackson St., Seattle, WA 98104.

Comments are due December 9.

Following the NEPA scoping process, Sound Transit will prepare the Ballard Link Extension Draft EIS in coordination with the Federal Transit Administration. Publication of the Draft EIS is expected in 2025. Start of service for the Ballard Link Extension is scheduled for 2039.

More information is available about the Ballard Link Extension can be accessed here.

Email subscriber list

Sound Transit sent four emails to the project email subscriber list (over 12,200 subscribers) in preparation for the scoping period. The initial email announced the scoping period and in-person events and opportunities to provide comments. Subsequent emails provided updates to the scoping timeline and in-person meeting information.

One of the the four emails sent to email subscribers



BLE scoping begins today!

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) scoping comment period for the Ballard Link Extension (BLE) begins today! This extended comment period will last 45 days, ending on Dec. 9. We are collecting your feedback on the project's Purpose and Need, route and station alternatives, and potential topics for study in the BLE Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). We have collected public input on the project since planning began in 2017, and all your past comments will carry forward in the ongoing environmental review process. We invite you to share new and additional feedback with us.

Learn more at upcoming scoping meetings:

Drop by these open house scoping meetings at any time. Project staff will attend to answer questions and court reporters will be present to capture scoping comments. The scoping meeting content will cover information about the EIS process, project history, and current route and station alternatives.

Scoping Meeting #1

- Nov. 7, 5-7 p.m., short presentation at 5:30 p.m.
 - Union Station, <u>401 S Jackson Street, Seattle, WA 98104</u>
 - Cantonese, Mandarin, and Vietnamese interpretation and translated materials will be available. ASL interpretation will be provided.
 - Refreshments and activities for children will be provided.

Scoping Meeting #2

- Nov. 13, 5-7 p.m., short presentation at 5:30 p.m.
 - National Nordic Museum, <u>2655 NW Market Street</u>, <u>Seattle</u>, <u>WA 98107</u>
 - ASL interpretation will be provided.
 - Refreshments and activities for children will be provided.

To request accommodation, contact project staff in advance of a scoping meeting at <u>ballardlink@soundtransit.org</u>.

How to provide public comment:

- Attend one of our scoping meetings: We will have court reporters and computers available for submission of in-person and online comments.
- Comment online: soundtransit.org/ballardlink-design
- Email us: <u>blescoping@soundtransit.org</u>
- Leave a voicemail: 206-903-7223
- Mail us: Ballard Link Extension, c/o Lauren Swift, Sound Transit, 401 S. Jackson St., Seattle, WA 98104

Review and comment now

Stay up to date

- 2024年10月24日, Sound Transit開始進行Ballard Link擴展項目 (Ballard Link Extension, BLE) 的《國家環境政策法》(NEPA) 選址程序。我們正在徵求對於BLE 《環境影響報告草案》(Draft Environmental Impact Statement, Draft EIS) 中的目的 與需求、備選方案及潛在影響的意見回饋。45天的選址意見徵詢期將於12月9日結 束。隨時掌握Ballard Link擴展項目的最新資訊。
- 2024年10月24日, Sound Transit开始了Ballard Link扩展项目 (BLE) 的《国家环境政策法》(NEPA) 范围界定流程。我们正在寻求有关Ballard Link扩展项目 (Ballard Link Extension, BLE) 《环境影响报告书 (EIS) 草案》中所研究的目的和需求、备选方案以及潜在影响的反馈。为期45天的范围界定评议期将于12月9日结束。获取有关Ballard Link扩展项目的最新消息。
- Vào này 24 thàng 10 năm 2024, Sound Transit đã bắt đầu quy trình xác định phạm vi theo Đạo Luật Chính Sách Môi Trường Quốc Gia (National Environmental Policy Act, NEPA) cho dự án Mở Rộng Tuyến Ballard Link (Ballard Link Extension, BLE) Chúng tôi đang thu thập ý kiến phản hồi về Mục Đích và Nhu Cầu, các lựa chọn thay thế và các tác động tiềm ấn để đưa vào nghiên cứu trong Bản Thảo Báo Cáo Tàc Động Môi Trường (EIS) cho dự án BLE. Giai đoạn đóng góp ý kiến về xác định phạm vi sẽ kéo dài 45 ngày và kết thúc vào ngày 9 tháng 12. Luôn cập nhật thống tin về dự án Mở Rộng Tuyền Ballard Link.
- El 24 de octubre de 2024, Sound Transit inició el proceso de definición del alcance de la Ley de Politica Ambiental Nacional (National Environmental Policy Act, NEPA) para la extensión de Link a Ballard (Ballard Link Extension, BLE). Queremos recibir comentarios sobre el propósito y la necesidad, las alternativas y los posibles impactos que se estudiarán en el borrador de la Declaración de Impacto Ambiental (Draft Environmental Impact Statement, EIS) de la BLE. El 9 de diciembre finaliza el plazo de 45 días para enviar comentarios. Manténgase al tanto del proyecto de Extensión de Ballard Link.
- On Oct. 24, 2024, Sound Transit began the National Environmental Policy Act scoping process for the Ballard Link Extension (BLE). We are seeking feedback on the Purpose and Need, alternatives, and potential topics to be studied in the BLE Draft Environmental Impact Statement. The 45-day scoping comment period ends on Dec. 9. Stay current with the Ballard Link Extension project.

More project info: <u>soundtransit.org/ballardlink</u> Get in touch: <u>ballardlink@soundtransit.org</u> or 206-903-7229

Notice in Federal Register

The Federal Register is the official daily publication for rules, proposed rules, and notices of Federal agencies and organizations. Sound Transit alongside the Federal Transit Administration issued a Notice of Intent to Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) on the Federal Register on Oct. 24, 2024. This notice contained project information like the Purpose and Need and description of proposed alternatives, background on the previously associated WSBLE environmental review process, notice of the 45-day NEPA scoping comment period, and contact information for the Sound Transit Environmental Team.



DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Transit Administration

Notice of Intent to Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement for the Ballard Link Extension Project, King County, Washington

AGENCY: Federal Transit Administration (FTA), Department of Transportation (DOT).

ACTION: Notice of intent to prepare an environmental impact statement (EIS).

SUMMARY: The Federal Transit Administration (FTA), as lead Federal agency, and the Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority (Sound Transit), as local project sponsor and joint lead agency, issue this notice to advise the public that they intend to prepare an environmental impact statement (EIS) pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) for the Ballard Link Extension Project (Project) located in the City of Seattle, King County, Washington.

DATES: Comments related to the NEPA review of this project must be received on or before [INSERT DATE 45 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER]. FTA will consider comments received after that date to the extent practicable.

FTA will consider all comments received during this NEPA scoping period and those previously submitted during the Washington State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) scoping process. Commenters who previously provided SEPA scoping comments do not need to resubmit those same comments for consideration under NEPA, but may elect to do so.

ADDRESSES: Comments on the scope of the EIS should be directed to: Lauren Swift, Central Corridor Environmental Manager, 401 South Jackson Street, Seattle, WA, 98104, by email to: lauren.swift@soundtransit.org, or by phone at 206-398-5301.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: For FTA: Erin Littauer,

erin.littauer@dot.gov, 206-220-7521. For Sound Transit: Lauren Swift, lauren.swift@soundtransit.org, 206-398-5301.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Project would extend existing light rail service along a 7.7-mile corridor through downtown Seattle, from SODO to Ballard, and include a new 3.3-mile light rail-only tunnel from south of the Chinatown-International District to South Lake Union and Seattle Center/Uptown. Stations would serve the following areas: Chinatown-International District, Midtown, Westlake, Denny, South Lake Union, Seattle Center, Smith Cove, Interbay, and Ballard. FTA has created the following "Unique Identification Number" that will be included on all environmental documents for this project: EISX-021-36-R10-1728553542.

FTA, as NEPA Federal lead agency, and Sound Transit, as joint lead agency for NEPA and lead agency under the Washington State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA), issued a Notice of Intent / Scoping Notice in February 2019 and later published a combined NEPA/SEPA Draft EIS in January 2022 that evaluated both the West Seattle Link Extension and the Ballard Link Extension together as a single project: the West Seattle and Ballard Link Extensions Project (WSBLE). The extensions were evaluated together in the WSBLE Draft EIS because of their location, schedule, and review efficiencies for partner agencies.

In July 2022, the Sound Transit Board directed Sound Transit staff to prepare further studies evaluating additional station options and other refinements for the Ballard Link Extension (BLE). Some of these project options and refinements required additional conceptual engineering and environmental review. Rather than delay completion of the environmental review process for the West Seattle Link Extension while additional review was conducted for BLE, Sound Transit and FTA decided to move forward under separate environmental reviews for each extension. As described in the WSBLE Draft EIS, the two extensions will operate as separate lines, and the extensions are stand-alone projects with independent utility. Because the environmental review processes are now separated for the two extensions, Sound Transit is preparing a SEPA Supplemental Draft EIS that evaluates the new station options and refinements for the BLE. FTA has determined that a new NEPA Draft EIS be prepared for the BLE, because it is now being evaluated independently from the West Seattle extension. The NEPA process requires that project scoping be repeated with a 30-day public comment period. Scoping for BLE has been extended with a 45-day public comment period. The scoping process and Draft EIS for the BLE will build on the analysis completed for the WSBLE Draft EIS.

Comments made during the previous scoping process (February 19 through April 2, 2019) will be carried forward and considered, as will all of the relevant analysis of alternatives and environmental impacts included in the 2022 Draft EIS. At the conclusion of the NEPA scoping process, FTA and Sound Transit anticipate issuing the Draft NEPA EIS and SEPA Supplemental Draft EIS, including the new information and analysis.

FTA has determined that the project will not be evaluated as a major project as defined in 23 U.S.C. 139(a)(7).

I. Purpose and Need for the Project

The purpose of the project is to expand the Sound Transit Link light rail system from SODO to Ballard, to make appropriate community investments to improve mobility, and to increase capacity and connectivity for regional connections in order to achieve the following:

- Provide rapid, reliable, and efficient light rail transit service to communities in the project corridor as defined through the local planning process and reflected in the regional transit system plan, Sound Transit 3 Plan (https://www.soundtransit.org/get-to-know-us/documentsreports/sound-transit-3).
- Improve regional mobility by increasing connectivity and capacity through Downtown Seattle to meet the projected transit demand.

- Connect regional centers as described in adopted regional and local land use, transportation, and economic development plans and Sound Transit's *Regional Transit Long-Range Plan* (https://www.soundtransit.org/sites/default/files/documents/2015123_lrpupdate.pdf).
- Implement a system that is technically and financially feasible to build, operate, and maintain.
- Expand mobility for the corridor and the region's residents, which include transit-dependent residents, low-income people, and communities of color.
- Encourage equitable and sustainable urban growth in station areas through support of transitoriented development and multi-modal integration in a manner that is consistent with local land use plans and policies, including Sound Transit's Equitable Transit-Oriented
 Development Policy (https://www.soundtransit.org/system-expansion/creating-vibrantstations/transit-oriented-development) and Sustainability Plan
 (https://www.soundtransit.org/get-to-know-us/documents-reports/2019-sustainability-plan).
- Encourage convenient and safe non-motorized access to stations, such as bicycle and pedestrian connections, consistent with Sound Transit's *System Access Policy* (https://www.soundtransit.org/system-expansion/creating-vibrant-stations/connecting-tostations).
- Preserve and promote a healthy environment and economy by minimizing adverse impacts on the natural, built, and social environments through sustainable practices.

The need for the project is as follows:

When measured using national standards, existing transit routes between SODO and Ballard currently operate with poor reliability. Roadway congestion in the project corridor will continue to degrade transit performance and reliability as the city is expected to add approximately 287,000 people and approximately 214,000 jobs between 2018 and 2050 (Puget Sound Regional Council 2023).

- Increased ridership from regional population and employment growth will increase operational frequency in the existing Downtown Seattle Transit Tunnel, requiring additional tunnel capacity.
- Puget Sound Regional Council (the regional metropolitan planning organization) and local plans call for high-capacity transit in the corridor consistent with VISION 2050 (https://www.psrc.org/planning-2050/vision-2050) and the Regional Transit Long-Range Plan (https://www.soundtransit.org/sites/default/files/documents/2015123_lrpupdate.pdf).
- The region's residents and communities, including transit-dependent people, low-income people, and communities of color, need long-term regional mobility and multi-modal connectivity as called for in the Washington State Growth Management Act (Revised Code of Washington 36.70A.108).
- Regional and local plans call for increased residential and/or employment density at and around high-capacity transit stations, and increased options for multi-modal access. VISION 2050 has a goal for 65 percent of the region's population and 75 percent of the region's employment to occur in regional growth centers and within walking distance of transit.
- Environmental and sustainability goals of the State and region, as established in Washington State law and embodied in Puget Sound Regional Council's VISION 2050 (2020) and 2022-2050 Regional Transportation Plan (2022), include reducing greenhouse gas emissions by prioritizing transportation investments that decrease vehicle miles traveled.

II. Description of Proposed Action and Alternatives

Each light rail extension build alternative is approximately 7.7 miles long and includes up to nine stations that serve the following areas: Chinatown-International District, Midtown, Westlake, Denny, South Lake Union, Seattle Center, Smith Cove, Interbay, and Ballard. FTA and Sound Transit may also examine several design options and potential minimal operable segments for the proposed alternatives. Information about the proposed project, the alternatives development process, scoping, and the EIS process are available on the project website: https://www.soundtransit.org/system-expansion/ballard-link-extension, by contacting the project sponsor at ballardlink@soundtransit.org, or the project phone line at (206) 903-7223. For purposes of this notice, the proposed build alternatives can be generally described as follows:

A new downtown tunnel would begin in the vicinity of the Stadium station in SODO, head north with alignments between 4th Avenue S and 6th Avenue S through the Chinatown-International District, then travel northwest below 4th Avenue, 5th Avenue or 6th Avenue through Midtown and Westlake. The alternatives would continue in a tunnel configuration along Westlake Avenue N to South Lake Union with a station near Denny Way before turning northwest with a station near Aurora Avenue N between Harrison and Roy streets. The alternatives would continue in a tunnel towards Seattle Center with a station on either Republican or Mercer Streets. The alternatives then turn north and begin to transition to elevated or retained cut configurations to serve a Smith Cove station along Elliott Avenue W. From the Smith Cove station, the alternatives either continue in an elevated configuration along 15th Avenue W or transition to a retained cut along the east side of the Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) railway tracks to an elevated or retained cut station in Interbay near W Dravus Street. From the Interbay station, alternatives transition to the east of 15th Avenue W and cross Salmon Bay in a tunnel or on a high-level fixed bridge. One alternative would continue in an elevated alignment along 15th Avenue W and cross Salmon Bay on the west side of 15th Avenue W on a movable bridge. Station options in Ballard include elevated and tunnel stations near NW Market Street on 15th Avenue NW or 14th Avenue NW.

The build alternatives could also include transit-related roadway, bicycle, maritime, and pedestrian projects by Sound Transit or others. These improvements may be eligible for Federal funding and could be part of the transit project or constructed together with it as part of a joint effort with agency partners, thereby meriting joint environmental analysis. This could include access improvements around station areas and over waterway crossings. Sound Transit would identify these improvements and could include them as part of the project as it works with partner agencies.

III. Summary of Expected Impacts

Consistent with NEPA, FTA and Sound Transit will evaluate, with input from the public, Tribes, and agencies, the potential impacts of the alternatives on the natural, built, and social environments. Likely areas of investigation include, transportation (including navigable waterways), land use and consistency with applicable plans, land acquisition and displacements, socioeconomics, park and recreation resources, historic and cultural resources, environmental justice, visual and aesthetic qualities, air quality, noise and vibration, energy use, safety and security, and ecosystems, including threatened and endangered species and marine mammals. The EIS will evaluate short-term construction impacts and long-term operational impacts. It will also consider indirect and cumulative impacts. The EIS will also propose measures to avoid, minimize, or mitigate significant adverse impacts.

FTA and Sound Transit will comply with all Federal environmental laws, regulations, and executive orders applicable to the proposed project during the environmental review process.

IV. Anticipated Federal Permits and Other Authorizations

Federal Transit Administration: NEPA Final Environmental Impact Statement and Record of Decision National Historic Preservation Act Section 106 Review United States Department of Transportation Act of 1966, Section 4(f) Land and Water Conservation Fund Act of 1965, Section 6(f) (if needed)

Federal Emergency Management Agency: Conditional Letter of Map Revision (if needed) Letter of Map Revision (if needed)

United States Army Corps of Engineers: Clean Water Act, Section 404 (if needed) (including WA Department of Ecology Water Quality Certification: Clean Water Act Section 401) Rivers and Harbors Act, Section 10 (if needed) United States Code Title 33 Section 408 Review (if needed)

United States Coast Guard:

United States Coast Guard Bridge Permit (if needed)

United States Fish and Wildlife Service: Federal Endangered Species Review

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Fisheries Service: Federal Endangered Species Review Essential Fish Habitat Review Marine Mammal Take Incidental Harassment Authorization (if needed)

United States Department of the Interior: National Historic Preservation Act Section 106 Review United States Department of Transportation Act of 1966, Section 4(f)

V. Schedule for the Decision-Making Process

Below is a tentative schedule for the decision-making process, including environmental review

milestones:

Draft EIS publication: April 2025 Confirmation or modification of the Preferred Alternative: July 2025 Final EIS publication: May 2026 Record of Decision: October 2026

As noted in the tentative schedule, the Agencies intend to complete the EIS for the Project within two years, measured from the date of the publication of this notice to the date the record of decision (ROD) is signed. The Agencies will accept public comments on the scope of the EIS (*i.e.*, the information presented in this notice and at https://www.soundtransit.org/systemexpansion/ballard-link-extension) until [INSERT DATE 45 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER]. The Agencies will then consider those comments as they prepare the Draft EIS. The Agencies will announce the availability of the Draft EIS in the *Federal Register* and via local media outlets. Sound Transit expects the Draft EIS will be available for a minimum of 45 days for the public comment period in Spring 2025. The Draft EIS will be distributed and available for public and agency review and comment prior to a public hearing. The Agencies will consider substantive comments timely submitted during the public comment period and comments previously submitted for WSBLE and then anticipate preparing a Final EIS in Spring 2026 and ROD in Fall 2026. The Final EIS will identify a preferred alternative and any necessary mitigation commitments. The Agencies expect that all Federal environmental authorization decisions for the construction of the Project will be completed within a reasonable period following issuance of the ROD.

Notices of public meetings, including hearings, have been, and will continue to be, given through a variety of media providing the time and place of the meeting along with other relevant information. Meeting date, time, and location information can be found on the Project website at https://www.soundtransit.org/system-expansion/ballard-link-extension.

Public meeting locations will comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act. People requesting special accommodations should contact Sound Transit via email at ballardlink@soundtransit.org.

Susan K. Fletcher,

Regional Administrator, FTA Region 10.

[FR Doc. 2024-24585 Filed: 10/23/2024 8:45 am; Publication Date: 10/24/2024]

Appendix B: Materials

Scoping information handout (2 pages)

Purpose and Need (2 pages)

Presentation (13 pages)

Display boards (13 pages)

Open house meeting guides – See Presentation and Display Boards

Project fact sheet (2 pages)

Scoping comment form (2 pages)

Scoping information handout

Ballard Link Extension

NEPA Scoping Information

Sound Transit has been collecting feedback to identify potential alignments and inform our study of Ballard Link Extension (BLE) alternatives since 2017. Sound Transit is now developing a new National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and Supplemental State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) Draft EIS for the BLE. The NEPA EIS process includes a scoping comment period.

NEPA scoping comment period Oct. 24 – Dec. 9 2024

This scoping comment period is intended to collect feedback on the project Purpose and Need, project alternatives, and potential topics to be studied in the BLE Draft EIS. Based on public feedback, we are conducting an extended 45-day comment period.

You may have submitted comments during our previous comment period for NEPA/SEPA scoping in 2019 and/or in response to the West Seattle and Ballard Link Extensions (WSBLE) Draft EIS in 2022. We will carry forward public feedback and comments collected from the start of the project as part of the ongoing environmental review phase. We invite you to share additional and new feedback with us.

Visit our online open house to learn more about the BLE project, anticipated timeline, and route and station options (also known as alternatives)



soundtransit.org/ballardlink-design



How to comment

- www
- Online: soundtransit.org/ballardlink-design
- **Email:** blescoping@soundtransit.org
- Mail: Ballard Link Extension,

c/o Lauren Swift, Sound Transit, 401 S. Jackson St. Seattle, WA 98104



Phone: 206-903-7223

Attend a scoping meeting:

Scoping Meeting #1

Nov. 7, 5 – 7 p.m.

Union Station

401 S Jackson St.

Seattle, WA 98104

Cantonese, Mandarin, and Vietnamese interpretation and translated materials will be available. ASL interpretation will be provided. Refreshments and activities for children will be provided.

Sco	ping	Meeting	#2

Nov. 13, 5 – 7 p.m.

National Nordic Museum

2655 NW Market St.

Seattle, WA 98107

ASL interpretation will be provided. Refreshments and activities for children will be provided.

How did we get here?



Project timeline and next steps

At the conclusion of the NEPA scoping process, Sound Transit will publish a new BLE NEPA Draft EIS/SEPA Supplemental Draft EIS in coordination with the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), with publication anticipated in 2025. There will be another comment period after the Draft EIS is published in which we will ask for feedback about the potential environmental impacts and benefits of each alternative as well as proposed actions that will help mitigate impacts.

After consideration of the Draft EIS and comments, including relevant comments from the 2022 West Seattle and Ballard Link Extensions Draft EIS, the Sound Transit Board will confirm or modify the previously identified preferred alternatives. FTA and Sound Transit will then publish a Final EIS, expected in 2026, that includes responses to the comments received on the Draft EIS. After the publication of the Final EIS, the Sound Transit Board is expected to select the project to built. FTA will then issue a Record of Decision for the project, concluding the environmental process and planning phase.



Questions?

Contact the Community Engagement team: <u>ballardlink@soundtransit.org</u> or 206-903-7223.

401 S. Jackson St., Seattle, WA 98104 | main@soundtransit.org soundtransit.org | 888-889-6368/TTY: 711 | To request information in alternative formats call 800-201-4900/TTY: 711 or email accessibility@soundtransit.org.



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Scoping Purpose and Need

October 2024

Ballard Link Extension



Project Purpose and Need

In an environmental process, the Purpose and Need statement establishes the basis for developing and evaluating a range of reasonable alternatives for environmental review and assists with the identification of a Preferred Alternative.

The purpose of the project is to expand the Sound Transit Link light rail system from SODO to Ballard, to make appropriate community investments to improve mobility, and to increase capacity and connectivity for regional connections to achieve the following:

- Provide high-quality rapid, reliable, and efficient light rail transit service to communities in the project corridor as defined through the local planning process and reflected in the Sound Transit 3 Plan (Sound Transit 2016).
- Improve regional mobility by increasing connectivity and capacity through Downtown Seattle to meet the projected transit demand.
- Connect regional centers as described in adopted regional and local land use, transportation, and economic development plans and Sound Transit's Regional Transit Long-Range Plan (Sound Transit 2014a).

- Implement a system that is technically and financially feasible to build, operate, and maintain.
- Expand mobility for the corridor and the region's residents, which include transit-dependent residents, low-income people, and communities of color.
- Encourage equitable and sustainable urban growth in station areas through support of transit-oriented development and multi-modal integration in a manner that is consistent with local land use plans and policies, including Sound Transit's Equitable Transit Oriented Development Policy (Sound Transit 2018) and Sustainability Plan (Sound Transit 2019).
- Encourage convenient and safe non-motorized access to stations, such as bicycle and pedestrian connections, consistent with Sound Transit's System Access Policy (Sound Transit 2013).
- Preserve and promote a healthy environment and economy by minimizing adverse impacts on the natural, built, and social environments through sustainable practices.

The project is needed because:

- When measured using national standards, existing transit routes between SODO and Ballard currently operate with poor reliability. Roadway congestion in the project corridor will continue to degrade transit performance and reliability as the city is expected to add about 287,000 people and about 214,000 jobs between 2018 and 2050 (Puget Sound Regional Council 2023).
- Increased ridership from regional population and employment growth will increase operational frequency in the existing Downtown Seattle Transit Tunnel, requiring additional tunnel capacity.
- Puget Sound Regional Council (the regional metropolitan planning organization) and local plans call for high-capacity transit in the corridor consistent with VISION 2050 (Puget Sound Regional Council 2020) and the Regional Transit Long-Range Plan (Sound Transit 2014a).
- The region's residents and communities, including transit-dependent people, low-income people, and communities of color, need long-term regional mobility and multi-modal connectivity as called for in the Washington State Growth Management Act (Revised Code of Washington 36.70A.108).

- Regional and local plans call for increased residential and/or employment density at and around high-capacity transit stations and increased options for multi-modal access.
 VISION 2050 has a goal for 65 percent of the region's population and 75 percent of the region's employment to occur in regional growth centers and within walking distance of transit.
- Environmental and sustainability goals of the state and region, as established in Washington state law and embodied in Puget Sound Regional Council's VISION 2050 (2020) and 2022-2050 Regional Transportation Plan (2022), include reducing greenhouse gas emissions by prioritizing transportation investments that decrease vehicle miles traveled.

Visit our online open house to learn more about the BLE project, anticipated timeline, and the route and station options (also known as alternatives) developed based on public and agency feedback since 2017. Traditional and Simplified Chinese, Vietnamese, and Spanish versions of the project Purpose and Need statement can be found on the project online open house as well.



Questions?

Contact the Community Engagement team: <u>ballardlink@soundtransit.org</u> or 206-903-7223.

401 S. Jackson St., Seattle, WA 98104 | main@soundtransit.org soundtransit.org | 888-889-6368/TTY: 711 | To request information in alternative formats call 800-201-4900/TTY: 711 or email accessibility@soundtransit.org. soundtransit.org/ballardlink-design



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Presentation

Page A-30 | AE 0036-17 | BLE NEPA Scoping Public Involvement Summary

Ballard Link Extension

Scoping Meeting #1 11/7/2024



Agenda

- Project overview
- Environmental review process
- Next steps



Tonight's event

- Learn: visit informational materials, ask staff questions
- Share: leave a scoping comment on:
 - Latest route and station alternatives
 - Topics to study in the Environmental Impact Statement
 - Project Purpose and Need



SoundTransit

Project Overview



Voter-approved system

Link light rail **1234**

- Five lines
- 116 miles
- 83 stations

Sounder trains N S

- Two lines
- 91 miles
- 14 stations

Stride bus rapid transit **S1 S2 S3**

- Three lines
- 45 miles on I-405 and SR 522
- Serving 12 cities and connecting to light rail in Shoreline, Lynnwood, Bellevue, and Tukwila

SoundTransit



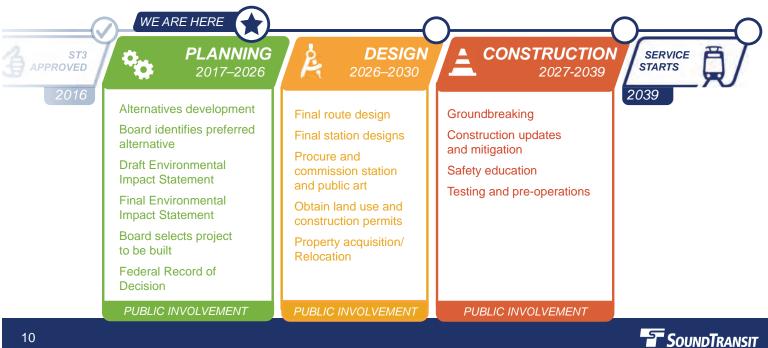
Ballard Link Extension

- Included in Sound Transit 3 (ST3) voter approved plan.
- Adds nearly eight miles of light rail service, including a new light rail-only downtown tunnel.
- Includes nine new stations from Chinatown-International District to Ballard.

Ballard Link Extension project timeline



Ballard Link Extension project timeline



Planning phase

Alternatives development

- 2018: Early scoping
- 2018-2019: Neighborhood forums, Stakeholder Advisory Group, Elected Leadership Group
- 2019: Scoping and public comment period
- 2019: Board identifies preferred alternatives and other alternatives to study in an environmental impact statement (EIS)

2019: Scoping meetings



2019-2020: Station planning neighborhood forums



SoundTransit

Planning phase

Environmental review

- 2022: Publish West Seattle and Ballard Link Extensions Draft EIS and public comment period
- 2022-2023: Further studies and community engagement
- **2023:** Board confirms or modifies preferred alternatives for the BLE project

2022-2023: Further studies open houses and workshops



SoundTransit

Why we are scoping (again)?

Next year, Sound Transit will publish a new BLE Draft EIS that builds upon the 2022 WSBLE Draft EIS with analysis of new alternatives and project refinements.

The first stage in this process is a scoping comment period to collect your feedback. However, we are not starting over.

We have been collecting public input on the project since planning began in 2017, and all past comments will be carried forward in the new BLE Draft EIS.

SoundTransit



Environmental review process

So, what's an **Environmental Impact** Statement?

Or, "EIS" for short.

Provides agencies and the public an understanding of environmental consequences and assists in decision-making.

 Potential mitigation **SoundTransit**

Starts with scoping

Range of alternatives

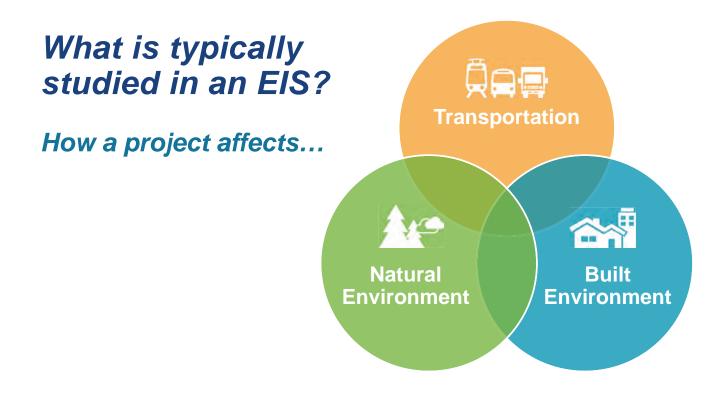
✓ Potential impacts

What is scoping?

The EIS scoping period is an opportunity for the public, Tribes and agencies to provide input on the scope of the EIS, including the project's purpose and need, topics or issues to study in the EIS, and light rail route alternatives.

Part of the environmental review process Extended 45-day Public comment period Seeks public feedback on scope of EIS Informs Board decision on what to study in EIS*

17 * Scope of EIS also subject to Federal Transit Administration (FTA) oversight **F** Sound Transit





What is typically studied in an EIS?

🛱 🚍 🛱 Transportation

- Regional transportation
- Transit services
- Arterial and local street systems
- Parking
- Non-motorized facilities
- Safety
- Navigation
- Freight

Matural environment

- Air quality and greenhouse gas emissions
- Ecosystems
- Water resources
- Geology and soils

📲 Built environment

- Acquisitions, displacements and relocations
- Noise and vibration
- Economic effects
- Visual resources
- Parks and recreation
- Land use
- Energy
- Hazardous materials
- Public services, safety, and security
- · Historic and archaeological resources
- Social resources, community facilities and neighborhoods
- Electromagnetic fields
- Utilities

SoundTransit

Equity and inclusion Environmental justices focus within each area of the EIS



19

EIS studies: Environmental justice

 Describes demographics
 Evaluates whether project disproportionately impacts low-income and communities of color

 Considers potential project benefits such as improved access to opportunity

 Documents what we hear from outreach efforts



Ballard Link Extension *alternatives*

- Preferred alternative
- Other EIS alternatives

21

Draft EIS alternatives – Ballard Link Extension



Next Steps

Tonight's event

- Learn: visit informational materials, ask staff questions
- **Share:** *leave a scoping comment on:*
 - Latest route and station alternatives
 - Topics to study in the Environmental Impact Statement
 - Project Purpose and Need



SoundTransit

How to provide scoping comments

- Comment online: soundtransit.org/ballardlink-design
- Email us: blescoping@soundtransit.org
- Leave a voicemail: 206-903-7223
- Mail us: Ballard Link Extension, c/o Lauren Swift, Sound Transit, 401 S. Jackson St., Seattle, WA 98104
- Join us at our second scoping meeting: Nov. 13, 5 – 7 p.m. National Nordic Museum, 2655 NW Market St.



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Thank you.



soundtransit.org

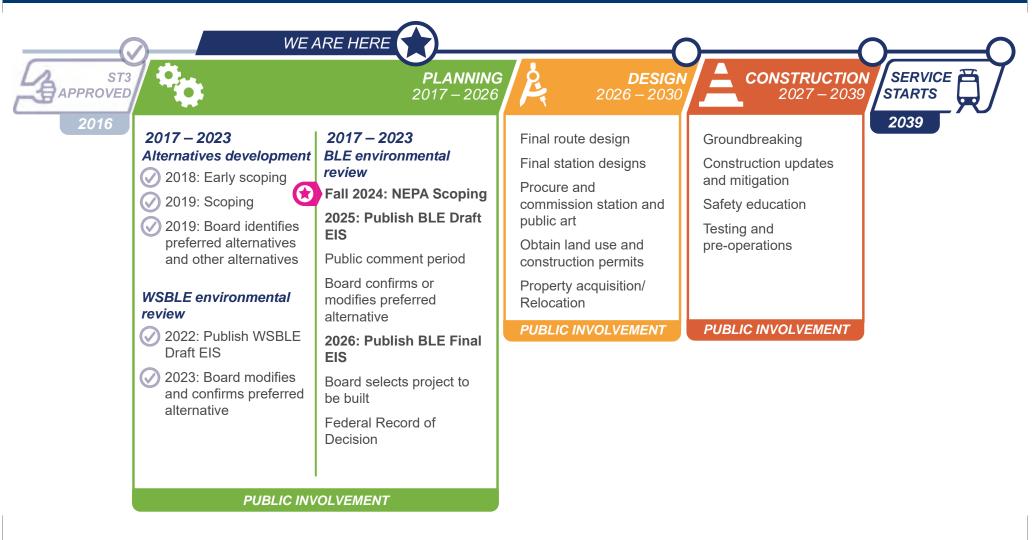


Display Boards

Sound Transit future service

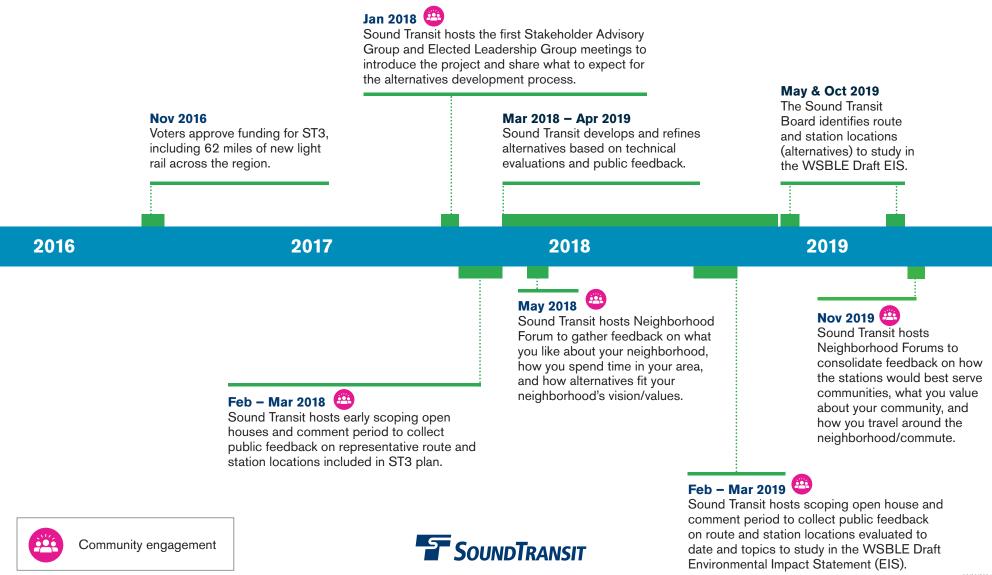


Ballard Link Extension project timeline



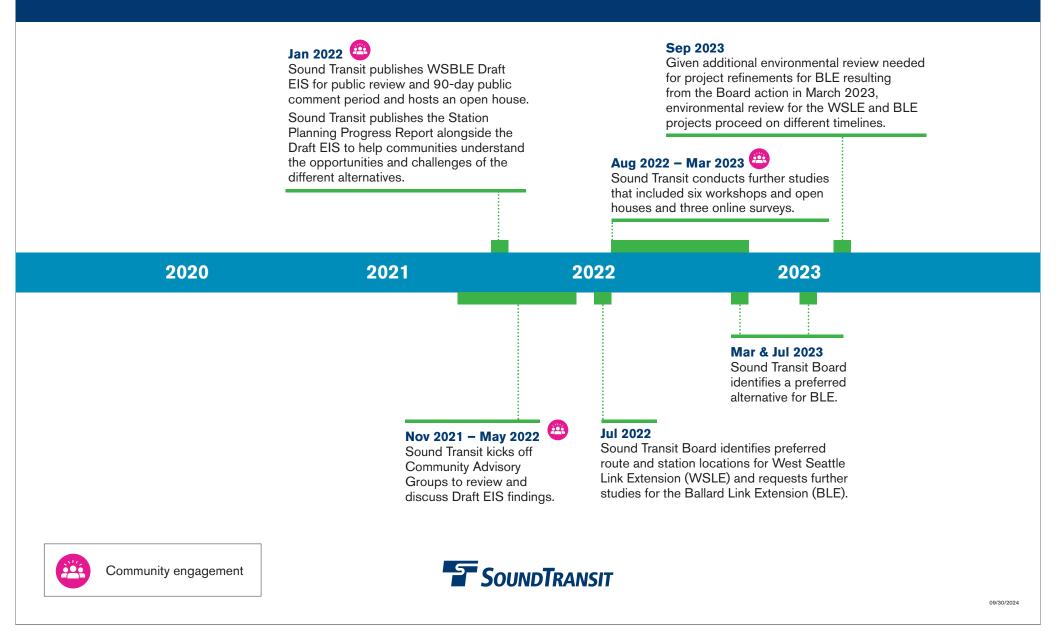


West Seattle and Ballard Link Extensions alternatives development



09/30/2024

West Seattle and Ballard Link Extensions Draft EIS



The EIS process

What is an EIS?

In partnership with the Federal Transit Administration, we will publish a new National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and Supplemental State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) Draft EIS for the Ballard Link Extension with analysis of new alternatives and project refinements.

The Draft EIS will provide agencies and the public with an understanding of environmental consequences and assist in decision making.

The EIS process:



identifying potential impacts and mitigation

preferred alternative project to be built



(ROD)

What's typically studied in an EIS?

Transportation

- Regional transportation Parking
- Transit services
- Arterial and local street systems

Natural Environment

- Air quality and greenhouse Water resources gas emissions

 Navigation Freight

Geology and soils

Non-motorized facilities

Ecosystems



- Acquisitions, displacements and relocations
- Noise and vibration
- Economic effect
- Visual resources
- Parks and recreation
- Land use
- Energy

- Hazardous materials
- Public services
- Historic and archaeological resources
- Social resources. community facilities and neighborhoods
- Electromagnetic fields
- Utilities

What is NEPA scoping?

Why are we scoping (again)?

Next year, Sound Transit will publish a new BLE Draft EIS that builds upon the 2022 WSBLE Draft EIS with analysis of new alternatives and project refinements.

The first stage in this process is a scoping comment period to collect your feedback. However, we are not starting over.

We have been collecting public input on the project since planning began in 2017, and all past comments will be carried forward in the new BLE Draft EIS.

For the BLE, scoping is:



A part of the federal environmental review process

An extended 45-day public comment period

- A process that seeks public feedback on the scope of the EIS
- Something that informs Board decision on what to study in EIS*

* Scope of EIS also subject to Federal Transit Administration oversight



What feedback is collected during the scoping comment period?

The scoping comment period seeks feedback related to...

- Project Purpose and Need
- Alternatives to be studied in the EIS
- Potential topics to study in the EIS

The Draft EIS comment period, anticipated in 2025, seeks feedback on:

- Potential environmental impacts and benefits of each alternative
- Proposed actions that will help mitigate impacts



Environmental Justice in the EIS

In an Environmental Impact Statement, the Environmental Justice chapter:



- **Describes demographics**
- Evaluates whether project disproportionately impacts low-income and communities of color
- Considers potential project benefits such as improved access to opportunity



Documents what we hear from outreach efforts





Comment here!

Share your NEPA scoping comments with a court reporter tonight!



What's a helpful comment during the scoping period?



Feedback related to the project Purpose and Need

Feedback related to the alternatives to be studied in the EIS



Feedback related to potential topics to study in the EIS

You can also provide scoping comments before Dec. 9 by:



Filling out a comment card



Commenting online: soundtransit.org/ballardlink-design



Emailing us: blescoping@soundtransit.org



Leaving a voicemail: 206-903-7223

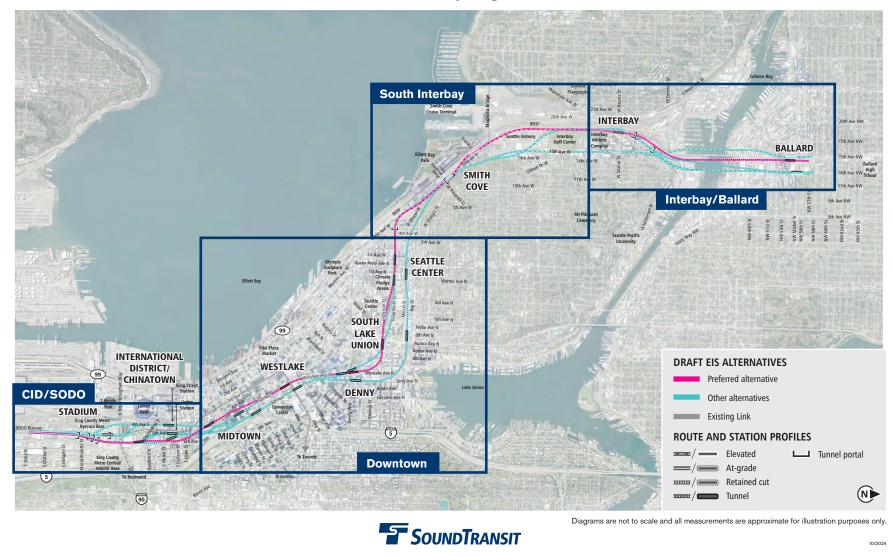


Mailing us: Ballard Link Extension c/o Lauren Swift Sound Transit, 401 S. Jackson St. Seattle, WA 98104



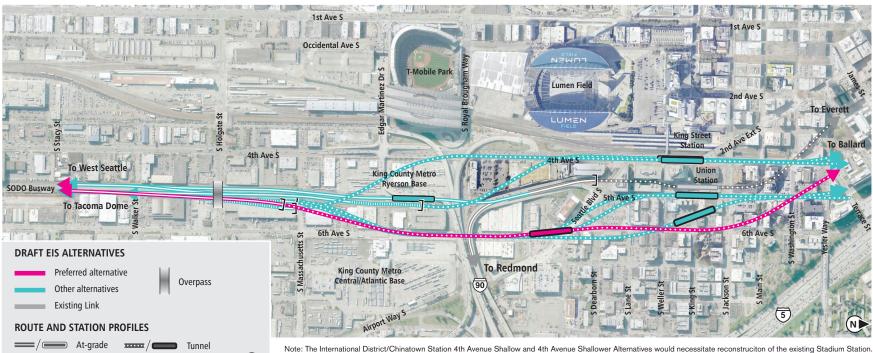
Ballard Link Extension route and station alternatives

Your feedback helped get us here!



Ballard Link Extension alternatives in CID/SODO

Your feedback helped get us here!



Diagrams are not to scale and all measurements are approximate for illustration purposes only.



(N)

Tunnel portal

mmm / Retained cut

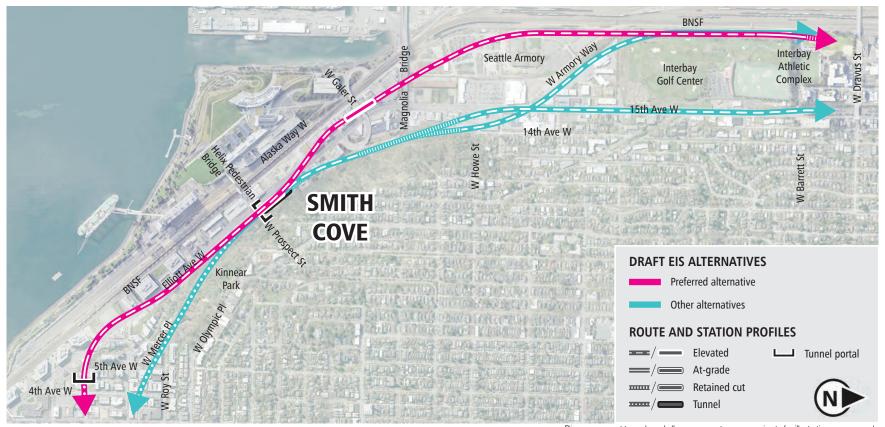
Ballard Link Extension alternatives in Downtown

Your feedback helped get us here!



Ballard Link Extension alternatives in South Interbay

Your feedback helped get us here!

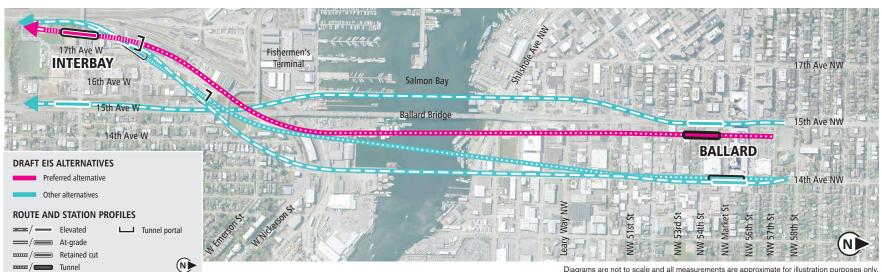


Diagrams are not to scale and all measurements are approximate for illustration purposes only.



Ballard Link Extension alternatives in Interbay/Ballard

Your feedback helped get us here!



Diagrams are not to scale and all measurements are approximate for illustration purposes only



10/2024

Project fact sheet

Ballard Link Extension

Expanding light rail in Seattle

About the project

The Ballard Link Extension will provide fast, reliable light rail connections to dense residential and job centers between Chinatown-International District and Ballard. In addition, a new downtown Seattle light-rail only tunnel will increase capacity and improve efficiency for the entire regional system.

CURRENT PHASE **Planning: Environmental review**

Project benefits

- Adds 7.7 miles of light rail service from downtown Seattle to the Ballard neighborhood, including a new downtown Seattle rail-only tunnel.
- Includes nine new stations from Chinatown-International District to Ballard.

Learn more, subscribe for email updates, and find out how to get involved:

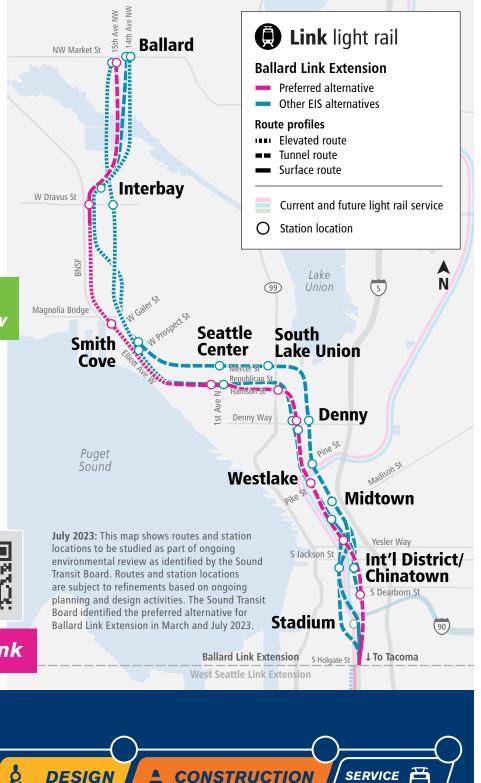
Project timeline

APPROVED

ST3

2016

soundtransit.org/ballardlink



STARTS

2039

SoundTransit / Powering progress

WE ARE HERE

ANNIN

2017-2026

2026-2030

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT



What's next for Ballard Link?

A new Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) will be completed for Ballard Link. Service is scheduled to start in 2039.

Stay involved

Sound Transit is committed to meaningful public participation. We offer both in-person and virtual engagement opportunities to accommodate the community's needs. Reach out with questions, thoughts, or to request a briefing for your community group.

Equity and inclusion

We are also committed to inclusively engaging historically-underrepresented communities. If you are interested in learning more about this project and how it may affect your community, please contact us and we will work with you to find an appropriate medium for providing project information.

How did we get here?

From 2017-2019, project staff conducted an extensive alternatives development process that resulted in the Sound Transit Board identifying preferred alternatives and other alternatives to study in a Draft EIS.

The West Seattle and Ballard Link Extensions were evaluated together in a Draft EIS published in January 2022. The public comment period lasted for 90 days between January and April 2022.

The Sound Transit Board requested further studies for the Ballard Link Extension (BLE) in July 2022. Sound Transit staff held community workshops, open houses, stakeholder meetings, and surveys between September 2022 and January 2023. The Sound Transit Board identified a preferred alternative for the Ballard Link Extension in March and July 2023. Given additional environmental review needed for project refinements for BLE, environmental review for the West Seattle Link Extension and BLE projects are proceeding on different timelines.

Questions?

Contact the Community Engagement team: <u>ballardlink@soundtransit.org</u> or 206-903-7223.

401 S. Jackson St., Seattle, WA 98104 | <u>main@soundtransit.org</u> <u>soundtransit.org</u> | 888-889-6368/TTY: 711 | To request information in alternative formats call 800-201-4900/TTY: 711 or email <u>accessibility@soundtransit.org</u>.



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Scoping comment form

Ballard Link Extension

Share	your	scoping	g comments	by	Dec.	9,	2024
						-,	

在12月9日前分享您對範圍界定的意見

在12月9日前分享您对范围界定的意见

Hãy chia sẻ ý kiến của quý vị về việc xác định phạm vi chậm nhất vào ngày 9 tháng 12 Comparta sus comentarios sobre el alcance antes del 9 de dec. de 2024

Optional/選修的/选修的/Không bắt buộc/Opcional
Please provide your contact information and check the box below if you would like to receive project updates.
如果您想要獲取項目的更新資訊,請提供您的聯絡資訊,並勾選下列方塊。
如果您想收到项目的更新信息,请提供您的联系信息并勾选下面的方框。
Vui lòng cung cấp thông tin liên lạc của quý vị và đánh dấu vào hộp bên dưới nếu quý vị muốn nhận thông tin cập nhật về dự án.
Proporcione su información de contacto y marque la siguiente casilla si le gustaría recibir las últimas noticias del proyecto.
Name/姓名/姓名/Tên/Nombre
Organization/ 機構/组织/Tổ chức/Organización
Address/地址/地址 /Ðịa chỉ/Dirección
Email/電子郵件/电子邮箱 /Email/Correo electrónico
Phone/電話/电话 /Điện thoại/Teléfono
Sign me up for Ballard Link Extension email updates
□ 注冊以接收Ballard Link擴展項目的最新消息電子郵件。
□ 注册以接收Ballard Link扩展项目的最新消息电子邮件。
🗌 Đăng ký nhận thông tin cập nhật qua email về Dự Án Mở Rộng Tuyến Ballard Link.
Regístrenme para recibir por correo electrónico las últimas noticias de la Extensión de Link a Ballard





Questions?

Contact the Community Engagement team: <u>ballardlink@soundtransit.org</u> or 206-903-7223.

401 S. Jackson St., Seattle, WA 98104 | main@soundtransit.org soundtransit.org | 888-889-6368/TTY: 711 | To request information in alternative formats call 800-201-4900/TTY: 711 or email accessibility@soundtransit.org.



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Appendix C: Online Open House

SoundTransit

ESPAÑOL | TIÉNG VIỆT | 正體字/繁體字 | 简化字 | 한국인 | TAGALOG | 차뗵ርኛ | Русский

Ballard Link Extension

About NEPA scoping Alternatives
Comment Additional studies
2022 WSBLE Draft EIS Property owners Resource library

On Oct. 24, 2024, Sound Transit began the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) scoping process for the Ballard Link Extension (BLE). We are seeking feedback on the Purpose and Need, alternatives, and potential topics to be studied in the BLE Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The 45-day scoping comment period ends on Dec. 9.

About the Ballard Link Extension

The Ballard Link Extension (BLE) will provide fast, reliable light rail connections to dense residential and job centers in the Chinatown-International District (CID), Downtown, Interbay, and Ballard neighborhoods. In addition, a new downtown Seattle light rail tunnel will provide capacity for the entire regional system to operate efficiently. The BLE is part of the Sound Transit 3 system expansion approved by voters in November 2016. The project is currently in the planning phase.

Ballard Link Extension

- Adds 7.7 miles of light rail service from downtown Seattle to the Ballard neighborhood, including a new downtown Seattle rail-only tunnel.
- Includes nine new stations from Chinatown-International District to Ballard.
- Will greatly improve local and regional transit service frequency, reliability, and capacity.
- Facilitates redevelopment near stations, focusing on equitable transit-oriented development (eTOD).
- Start of service is scheduled for 2039.

Ballard Link Extension project timeline

2016 Voter Approval 🗸

2017-2023 WSBLE Planning

- Alternatives development ✓
- ST Board identifies preferred and other WSBLE Draft EIS alternatives
- WSBLE Draft EIS and public comment period
- Further Studies V
- ST Board modifies the Preferred Alternative for BLE

2024-2026 BLE Planning

- NEPA scoping (we are here)
- BLE Draft EIS publication and public comment period (2025)
- ST Board confirms or modifies the BLE Preferred Alternative (mid-2025)
- BLE Final EIS (2026)
- ST Board selects BLE project to be built (2026)
- Federal Transit Administration issues Record of Decision on BLE (2026)

2026-2030 Design

- Procure final design and construction contracts
- Obtain land use and construction permits
- Begin property acquisition / relocation
- Advance utility relocation / early work contracts

2027-2039 Construction

- · Demolition and clearing where necessary to build and operate the light rail guideway
- Earth work such as stormwater systems, column footings, retaining walls and tunneling
- Guideway and station construction
- Ongoing conversations with anyone affected by construction
- Safety education
- Testing and preparations

2039 Start of Service

Ballard Link Extension project map





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NEPA scoping

We've been collecting your feedback to identify potential alignments and inform our study of the Ballard Link Extension (BLE) alternatives since 2017. As part of our environmental review process, we have a range of alternatives that are being carried forward into the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) scoping. This scoping comment period is intended to collect feedback on the Purpose and Need, alternatives, and potential topics to be studied in the **BLE Draft Environmental Impact** Statement (EIS).

The 45-day NEPA scoping comment period ends on Dec. 9.

Attend an event or comment now

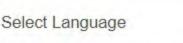
-

Following scoping, Sound Transit will publish a new BLE Draft EIS including a public comment period to gather feedback on the environmental impacts and benefits of each alternative and proposed actions that will help mitigate impacts.

CID Station Additional Study Results

Learn more about construction approach and duration CID Station alternatives, efforts to maximize regional and local connections and accessibility, including opportunities to advance improvement projects and public transit connections through the South Downtown Hub planning process.





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Preferred and other alternatives we are currently evaluating. | Click on image to enlarge

NEPA scoping

For those following along, we have done project scoping before. In 2018 and 2019, Sound Transit hosted <u>scoping events</u> and offered a comment period to collect <u>public feedback</u> on the West Seattle and Ballard Link Extensions (WSBLE) project. What does this second round of scoping look like for BLE? Many of you have provided thoughtful comments and feedback over several years of engagement. Your input, concerns, and ideas have, and will continue to, inform the BLE Draft EIS alternatives and Sound Transit Board decisions. As we enter this new scoping period, we invite you to <u>share additional and new feedback with us</u>.

After release of the <u>WSBLE Draft EIS</u> and a 90-day comment period in 2022, the Sound Transit Board directed Further Studies of BLE alternatives. These Further Studies led to Board actions in March and July 2023 which added new alternatives and modified the preferred alternatives for the BLE. As a result, it was determined that the WSLE and BLE projects would move on two separate environmental review timelines. The West Seattle Link Extension (WSLE) proceeded to a Final EIS, and the BLE requires a new National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Draft EIS/State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) Supplemental Draft EIS.

Scoping offers an opportunity to gather feedback on project alternatives, project purpose and need, and potential benefits and topics to study at the beginning of the environmental review process. Sound Transit is planning for this scoping process and public comment period by preparing materials and engagement opportunities to inform community members about the BLE project history, development of alternatives and identification of the Preferred Alternative alignment by the Board. We will carry forward public feedback and comments collected from the start of the project as part of the ongoing environmental review phase.

At the conclusion of the NEPA scoping process, we will prepare a Draft EIS in coordination with the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), with publication anticipated in 2025.

What feedback is collected during the scoping comment period?

The **scoping** comment period seeks feedback related to...

- Project Purpose and Need
- · Alternatives to be studied in the EIS
- Potential topics to study in the EIS
- The **Draft EIS** comment period, anticipated in 2025, seeks feedback on...
- Potential environmental impacts and benefits of each alternative
- · Proposed actions that will help mitigate impacts

Project purpose and need

The purpose of the project is to expand the Sound Transit Link light rail system from SODO to Ballard, to make appropriate community investments to improve mobility, and to increase capacity and connectivity for regional connections to achieve the following:

- Provide high-quality rapid, reliable, and efficient light rail transit service to communities in the project corridor as defined through the local planning process and reflected in the Sound Transit 3 Plan (Sound Transit 2016).
- Improve regional mobility by increasing connectivity and capacity through Downtown Seattle to meet the projected transit demand.
- Connect regional centers as described in adopted regional and local land use, transportation, and economic development plans and Sound Transit's Regional Transit Long-Range Plan (Sound Transit 2014a).
- Implement a system that is technically and financially feasible to build, operate, and maintain.
- Expand mobility for the corridor and the region's residents, which include transit-dependent residents, low-income people, and communities of color.
- Encourage equitable and sustainable urban growth in station areas through support of transit-oriented development and multimodal integration in a manner that is consistent with local land use plans and policies, including Sound Transit's Equitable Transit Oriented Development Policy (Sound Transit 2018) and Sustainability Plan (Sound Transit 2019).
- Encourage convenient and safe non-motorized access to stations, such as bicycle and pedestrian connections, consistent with Sound Transit's System Access Policy (Sound Transit 2013).
- Preserve and promote a healthy environment and economy by minimizing adverse impacts on the natural, built, and social environments through sustainable practices.

The project is needed because:

- When measured using national standards, existing transit routes between SODO and Ballard currently operate with poor reliability. Roadway congestion in the project corridor will continue to degrade transit performance and reliability as the city is expected to add about 287,000 people and about 214,000 jobs between 2018 and 2050 (Puget Sound Regional Council 2023).
- Increased ridership from regional population and employment growth will increase operational frequency in the existing Downtown Seattle Transit Tunnel, requiring additional tunnel capacity.
- Puget Sound Regional Council (the regional metropolitan planning organization) and local plans call for high-capacity transit in the corridor consistent with VISION 2050 (Puget Sound Regional Council 2020) and the Regional Transit Long-Range Plan (Sound Transit 2014a).
- The region's residents and communities, including transit-dependent people, low-income people, and communities of color, need long-term regional mobility and multi-modal connectivity as called for in the Washington State Growth Management Act (Revised Code of Washington 36.70A.108).
- Regional and local plans call for increased residential and/or employment density at and around high-capacity transit stations and increased options for multi-modal access. VISION 2050 has a goal for 65 percent of the region's population and 75 percent of the region's employment to occur in regional growth centers and within walking distance of transit.
- Environmental and sustainability goals of the state and region, as established in Washington state law and embodied in Puget Sound Regional Council's VISION 2050 (2020) and 2022-2050 Regional Transportation Plan (2022), include reducing greenhouse gas emissions by prioritizing transportation investments that decrease vehicle miles traveled.

November 2016: Sound Transit 3 Ballot Measure

Sound Transit 3 (ST3) is approved by voters. This plan includes adding 62 new miles of light rail, totaling more than 116 miles with over 80 stations added to the region. Part of this plan includes the West Seattle Link and Ballard Link Extensions (WSBLE) projects, other projects like the bus Rapid Transit (BRT) on the Eastside, additional capacity for the Sounder South line, and access improvements to stations for all modes of travel.

2017 – 2019: WSBLE Alternatives Development

- October 2017: West Seattle Link and Ballard Link Extensions project kicks off the planning phase of the project. The
 phase is part of the Federal Transit Administration's (FTA) environmental review process.
- January 2018: Sound Transit hosts the first <u>Stakeholder Advisory Group</u> and <u>Elected Leadership Group</u> meetings to introduce the project and share what to expect for the alternatives development phase.
- February March 2018: Sound Transit hosts early scoping open houses and a comment period to collect public feedback on the ST3 representative project and gather new ideas to inform development of additional route and station location alternatives.
- March 2018 April 2019: Sound Transit develops and refines alternatives based on technical evaluations, as well as feedback from the public, Stakeholder Advisory Group, Elected Leadership Group, and Sound Transit Board of Directors. The project goes through three levels of evaluation between early scoping and scoping to help further refine alternatives.
- February March 2019: Sound Transit hosts scoping open houses and a comment period to collect public feedback on the alternatives to date and topics to study in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).
- May 2019: The Sound Transit Board reviews the alternatives, evaluation results, public feedback, and the
 recommendations of the Elected Leadership Group and identifies the preferred alternative and other alternatives to
 study in the WSBLE Draft EIS.
- May October 2019: The Sound Transit Board directs staff to conduct initial assessments on additional route and station options that were suggested during the public scoping period, to establish whether further study in the WSBLE Draft EIS is appropriate.

2019 – 2023 WSBLE Draft Environmental Impact Statement

- May 2019 December 2021: Sound Transit develops the WSBLE Draft EIS, a document that describes the multiple
 alternatives being considered, and how each alternative might affect the natural and built environment and
 transportation systems, both during construction and final operation of the light rail lines.
- November 2019 January 2020: Sound Transit conducts extensive engagement efforts to gather public feedback regarding WSBLE Station Planning. Sound Transit hosts neighborhood forums and community briefings throughout the project corridor.
- November 2021 May 2022: Sound Transit kicks off <u>Community Advisory Groups</u> to review and discuss WSBLE Draft EIS findings with community members throughout the corridor. Meetings are online and open to the public.
- January 2022 April 2022: The Draft EIS is published for a 90-day public review and comment period. Comments are
 accepted via email, mail, voicemail, comment form, at a virtual public hearing, or an in-person open house. All the
 details can be found <u>here</u>. Sound Transit receives over 5,000 comments. Additionally, in partnership with the City of
 Seattle and King County, Sound Transit publishes the <u>WSBLE Station Planning Progress Report</u> alongside the
 WSBLE Draft EIS to help communities understand the opportunities and challenges of the different alternatives.
- July 2022: After reviewing the Draft EIS and the comments from Tribes, the public and agency partners, the Sound Transit Board identifies the preferred alternative for the West Seattle Link Extension (WSLE) and requested further studies for the Ballard Link Extension (BLE). Read the July 2022 <u>Board Motion</u> and <u>press release</u> for more information.
- August 2022 March 2023: Sound Transit conducts further studies that included six workshops and open houses and three online surveys for WSBLE. For an overview of the further studies conducted for both extensions and the results, read the <u>Further Studies Executive Summary and reports</u>.
- March and July 2023: The Sound Transit Board identifies a preferred alternative for the BLE. Refinements to WSLE alternatives from the further studies are being incorporated into the WSLE Final EIS. Read the <u>March Board Motion</u>, <u>July Board Motion</u>, and <u>press release</u> for more information.
- September 2023: Given additional environmental review needed for project refinements for BLE resulting from the Sound Transit Board action in March 2023, environmental review for the WSLE and BLE projects proceed on different timelines.

2023 – 2026: Ballard Link Extension (BLE)'s Draft and Final Environmental Impact Statement

- 2023 2024: Sound Transit and FTA will begin development of a Draft EIS for BLE.
- December 2023: The Sound Transit Board directs Sound Transit staff to conduct a feasibility study of a new alternative location in the area of 5th Avenue North and Harrison for the South Lake Union (SLU) Station. Read the <u>Board Motion</u> for more information.

Alternatives

Choose a segment below to view the BLE route and station options. The preferred alternatives indicate a preference for alternatives based on currently available information, and is not a decision on the project to be built.

CID/SODO	Downtown		
South Interbay	Interbay-Ballard		

Comment

We've been collecting your feedback to identify potential alignments and inform our study of BLE alternatives since 2017. As part of our environmental review process, we have a range of alternatives that are being carried forward into the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) scoping. This scoping comment period is intended to collect feedback on the <u>Purpose and Need</u>, <u>alternatives</u>, and potential topics to be studied in the BLE Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

Comment online, in person, via mail or by phone. All comments are due by Dec. 9. Learn more at a scoping drop-in event (details below).

1. First Name			
2. Last Name			
3. Email			
4. Zip Code			
5. Submit your scoping c	omment		
		6	

Email: <u>blescoping@soundtransit.org</u>

Voicemail: 206-903-7223

Mail: Ballard Link Extension, Attn: Lauren Swift, Sound Transit, 401 S. Jackson St. Seattle, WA 98104

In-person:

Scoping Meeting #1

Nov. 7 from 5 – 7 p.m. Union Station

401 S Jackson St. Seattle, WA 98104

Cantonese, Mandarin, and Vietnamese interpretation and translated materials will be available. ASL interpretation will be provided. Refreshments and activities for children will be provided. Nov. 13 from 5 – 7 p.m. National Nordic Museum 2655 NW Market St. Seattle, WA 98107

Scoping Meeting #2

ASL interpretation will be provided. Refreshments and activities for children will be provided.

There will be another comment period after the Draft EIS is published where we will share information and ask for feedback about the potential environmental impacts and benefits of each alternative as well as proposed actions that will help mitigate impacts.

Additional Studies

BLE Further Studies (2022 - 2023)

In July 2022, the Sound Transit Board directed the project team to complete additional further studies. Staff held community workshops, open houses, stakeholder meetings and surveys between September 2022 and January 2023.

For an overview of the further studies conducted for both extensions and the results, read the <u>Further Studies Executive</u> <u>Summary</u> and reports or the <u>Further Studies Engagement Summary</u>. Descriptions and key findings for each further study are included below by segment.

Chinatown-International District/SODO Downtown Interbay/Ballard

South Lake Union Additional Studies

In 2023 and 2024, the Sound Transit Board directed the project team to study additional station locations and alignment concepts in the South Lake Union area. Materials from these further study periods are included below.

SLU Further Studies (2023)

SLU Feasibility Study (2024)

General questions? Contact us:

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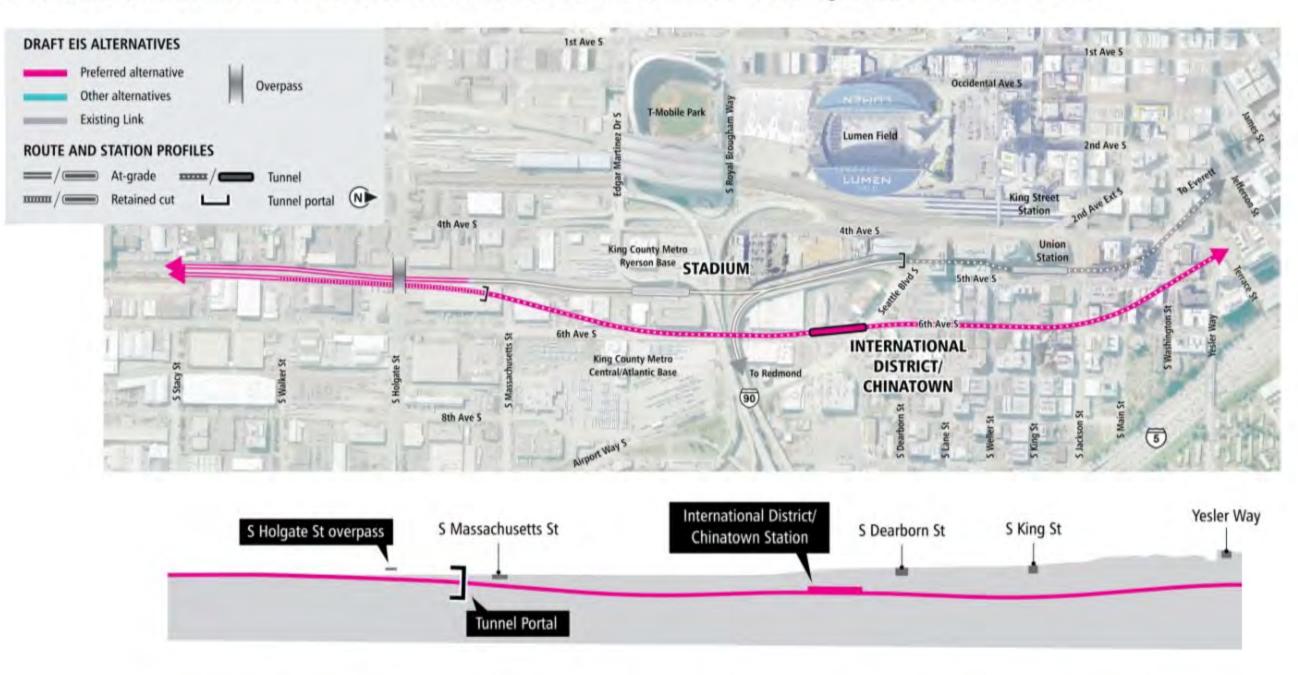
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Chinatown-International District/SODO (CID/SODO)

Preferred Alternative: Dearborn Street

The Dearborn Street Alternative would begin north of the SODO station and continue east of the existing Link light rail line and extend north. The alternative would then enter a tunnel heading north beneath 6th Avenue. The tunnel alignment would continue north beneath 6th Avenue South to South Jackson Street and then transition to continue northwest passing under 5th Avenue South.



Station location: The station would be located beneath 6th Avenue South, straddling Seattle Boulevard South.

Diagrams are not to scale and all measurements are approximate for illustration purposes only. | Click on image to enlarge

Chinatown-International District/SODO - other alternatives

4th Avenue Shallow

The 4th Avenue Shallow Alternative would begin north of the SODO station and continue east of the existing Link light rail line and extend north. The alternative would then enter a tunnel and continue northwest and then north under 4th Avenue. This alternative would necessitate reconstruction of the existing Stadium Station.

Station location: The station would be located beneath 4th Avenue South, west of and with underground pedestrian connection to the existing International District/Chinatown Station.

DRAFT EIS ALTERNATIVES Preferred alternative Other alternatives Existing Link Overpass	1st Ave 5 T-Mobile Park	Decidental Ave S
ROUTE AND STATION PROFILES	4th Ave S King County Metro Ryerson Base STADIUM	INTERNATIONAL DISTRICT/ CHINATOWN Street Station 2nd Ave Ents Union
stary St aller St	55 6th Ave S 55 King County Metro	Redmond

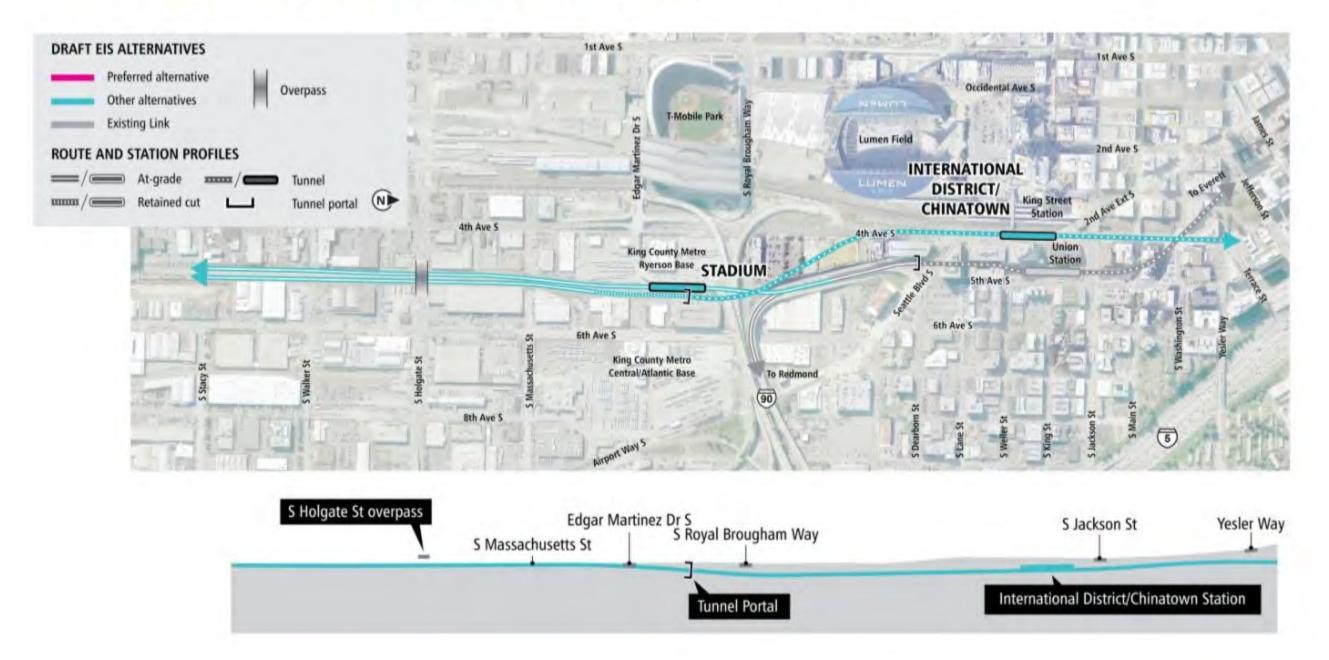


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4th Avenue Shallower

The 4th Avenue Shallower Alternative would be the same as the 4th Avenue Shallow Alternative, except it would be shallower in the station area and north of the station. This alternative would necessitate reconstruction of the existing Stadium Station

Station location: The station would be located beneath 4th Avenue South, west of and with underground pedestrian connection to the existing International District/Chinatown Station.



Diagrams are not to scale and all measurements are approximate for illustration purposes only. | Click on image to enlarge

4th Avenue Deep

The 4th Avenue Deep Alternative would begin north of the SODO station and continue east of the existing Link light rail line and extend north. The alternative would then enter a tunnel heading northwest to continue north beneath 4th Avenue South with a deep tunnel and station.

Station location: The station would be located beneath 4th Avenue South, west of and with underground pedestrian connection to the existing International District/Chinatown Station.





Chinatown Station

S Jackson St

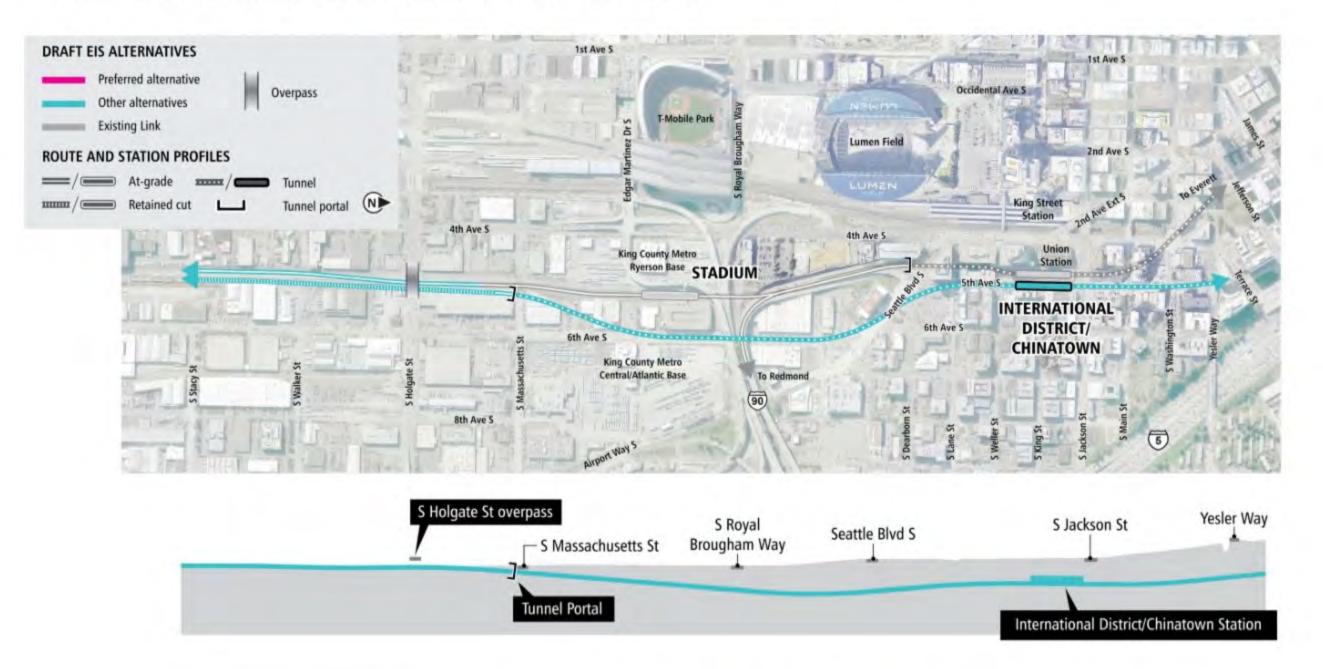
Yesler Way

Diagrams are not to scale and all measurements are approximate for illustration purposes only. | Click on image to enlarge

5th Avenue Shallow

The 5th Avenue Shallow Alternative would begin north of the SODO station and continue east of the existing Link light rail line and extend north. The alternative would then enter a tunnel heading north beneath 6th Avenue and then transition to under 5th Avenue South.

Station location: The station would be located beneath 5th Avenue South, east of and with underground pedestrian connection to the existing International District/Chinatown Station.



Diagrams are not to scale and all measurements are approximate for illustration purposes only. | Click on image to enlarge

5th Avenue Deep

The 5th Avenue Deep Alternative would generally follow the same route as the 5th Avenue Shallow Alternative, except that the tunnel and the station would be deeper.

Station location: The station would be located beneath 5th Avenue South, east of and with underground pedestrian connection to the existing International District/Chinatown Station.

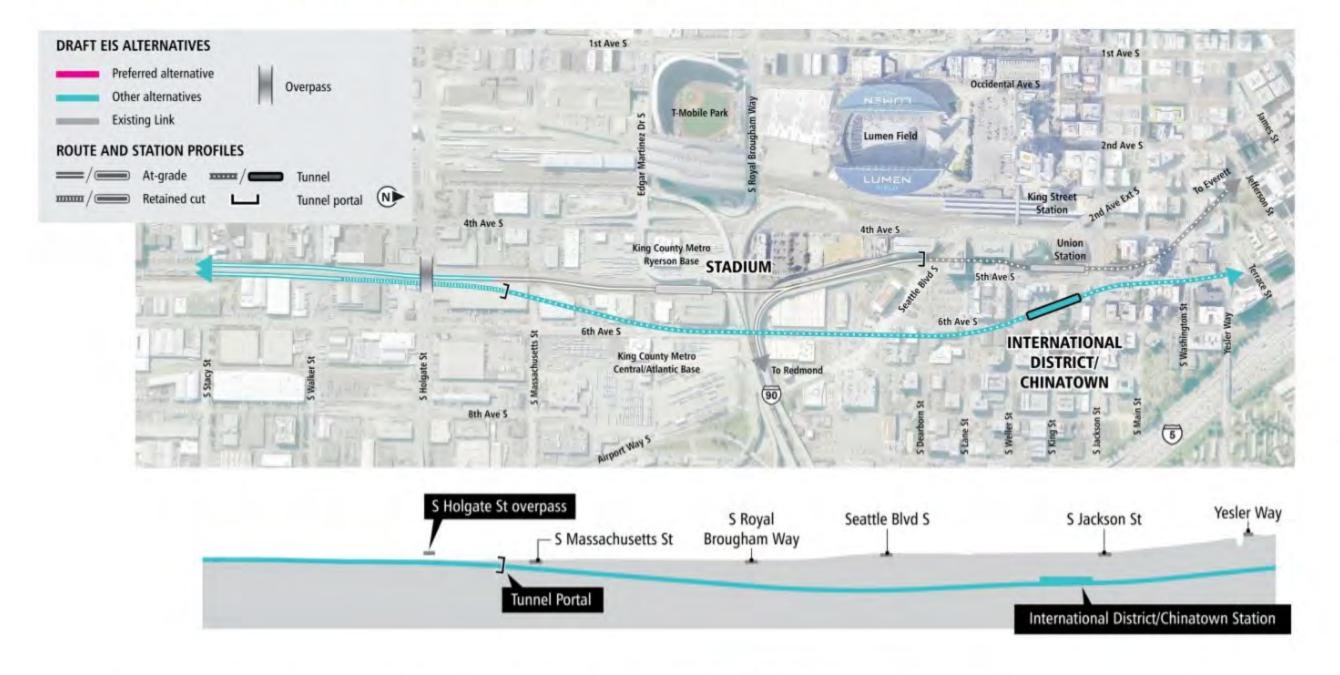
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S Holgate St ove	erpass International District/Chinatown Station	Way
	Tunnel Portal	-

Diagrams are not to scale and all measurements are approximate for illustration purposes only. | Click on image to enlarge

5th Avenue Shallow Diagonal

The 5th Avenue Shallow Diagonal Alternative would be the same as the 5th Avenue Shallow Alternative except that it would transition towards 5th Avenue South further north of Seattle Boulevard South.

Station location: The station would be located beneath the area between 5th Avenue South and 6th Avenue South, east of and with underground pedestrian connection to the existing International District/Chinatown Station.



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The alternatives presented were developed through years of planning and community engagement. To learn more about the alternatives raised but not carried forward for study in the Draft EIS, see the <u>Further Studies: Community Engagement Summary (2023)</u>, and <u>Appendix M</u> from the previous WSLE Draft EIS.

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Downtown

Preferred Alternative: 5th Avenue/Harrison Street Refined (Connects to Preferred CID/SODO Alternative)

The 5th Avenue/Harrison Street Refined (Connects to Preferred CID/SODO Alternative) would be in a tunnel generally from south heading north between 4th Avenue and 5th Avenue and beneath Westlake Avenue then heading west under Harrison Street and Republican Street.

Station locations:

Midtown: The station would be located east of 4th Avenue between Terrace Street and James Street, east of and with underground pedestrian connection to the existing Pioneer Square Station.

Westlake: The station would be located beneath 5th Avenue between Pike Street and Pine Street with entrance consolidation and with underground pedestrian connection to the existing Westlake Station.

Denny: The station would be located beneath Westlake Avenue between 9th Avenue and John Street.

South Lake Union: The station would be located beneath Harrison Street, between Dexter Avenue North and west of 7th Avenue North.

Seattle Center: The station would be located beneath Republican Street between 1st Avenue North and 2nd Avenue West.



Diagrams are not to scale and all measurements are approximate for illustration purposes only. | Click on image to enlarge

Downtown – other alternatives

5th Avenue/Harrison Street

The 5th Avenue/Harrison Street Alternative would be in a tunnel generally from south heading north under 5th Avenue and Westlake Avenue and then heading west under Harrison Street and Republican Street.

Station locations:

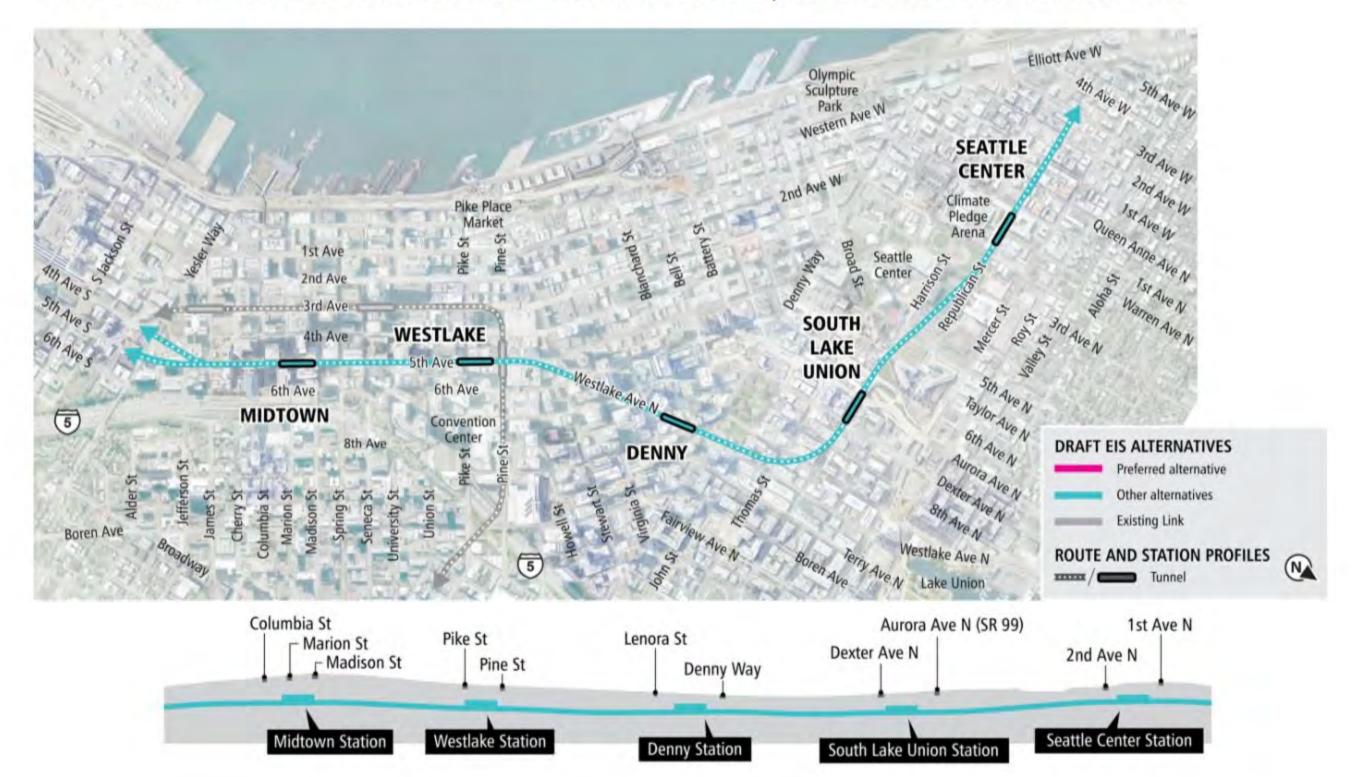
Midtown: The station would be located beneath 5th Avenue between Columbia Street and Madison Street.

Westlake: The station would be located beneath 5th Avenue between Pike Street and Pine Street and with underground pedestrian connection to the existing Westlake Station.

Denny: The station would be located beneath Westlake Avenue between Lenora Street and Denny Way.

South Lake Union: The station in South Lake Union would be located beneath Harrison Street, between Dexter Avenue North and just west of 7th Avenue North.

Seattle Center: The station in Seattle Center would be located beneath Republican Street, east of 1st Avenue North.



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6th Avenue/Mercer Street

The 6th Avenue/Mercer Street Alternative would be in a tunnel generally from south heading north under 6th Avenue and Terry Avenue, and then west under Mercer Street.

Station locations:

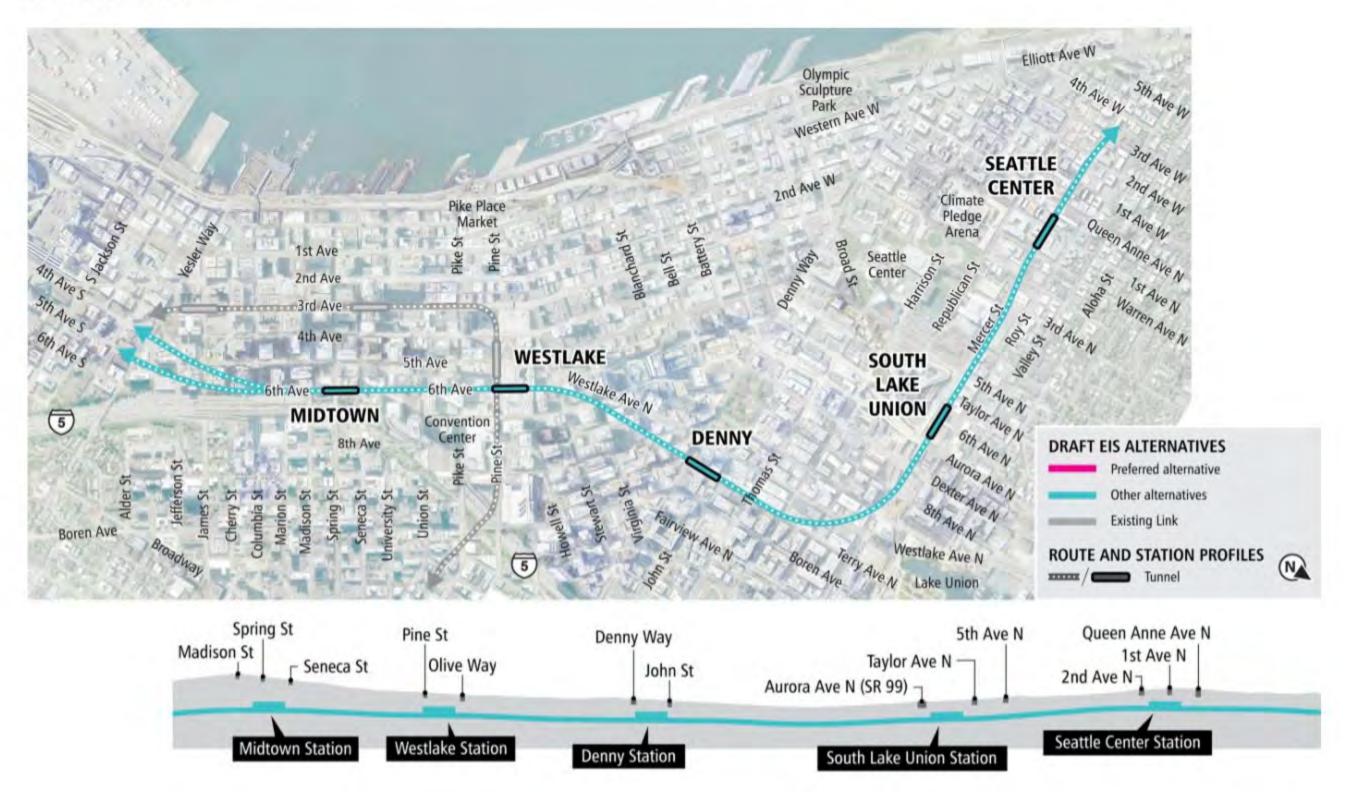
Midtown: The station in Midtown would be located beneath 6th Avenue, between Madison Street and Seneca Street.

Westlake: The station in Westlake would be located beneath 6th Avenue, between Pine Street and Olive Way and with underground pedestrian connection to the existing Westlake Station.

Denny: The station in Denny would be located beneath Terry Avenue North, between Denny Way and John Street.

South Lake Union: The station in South Lake Union would be located beneath north of Mercer Street between Aurora Avenue North and Taylor Avenue North.

Seattle Center: The station in Seattle Center would be located beneath Mercer Street, between Warren Avenue North and Queen Anne Avenue North.



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5th Avenue/Harrison Street Refined (Connects to Other CID/SODO Alternatives)

The 5th Avenue/Harrison Street Refined (Connects to Other CID/SODO Alternatives) would be in a tunnel generally from south heading north under 5th Avenue and Westlake Avenue and then heading west under Harrison Street and Republican Street.

Station locations:

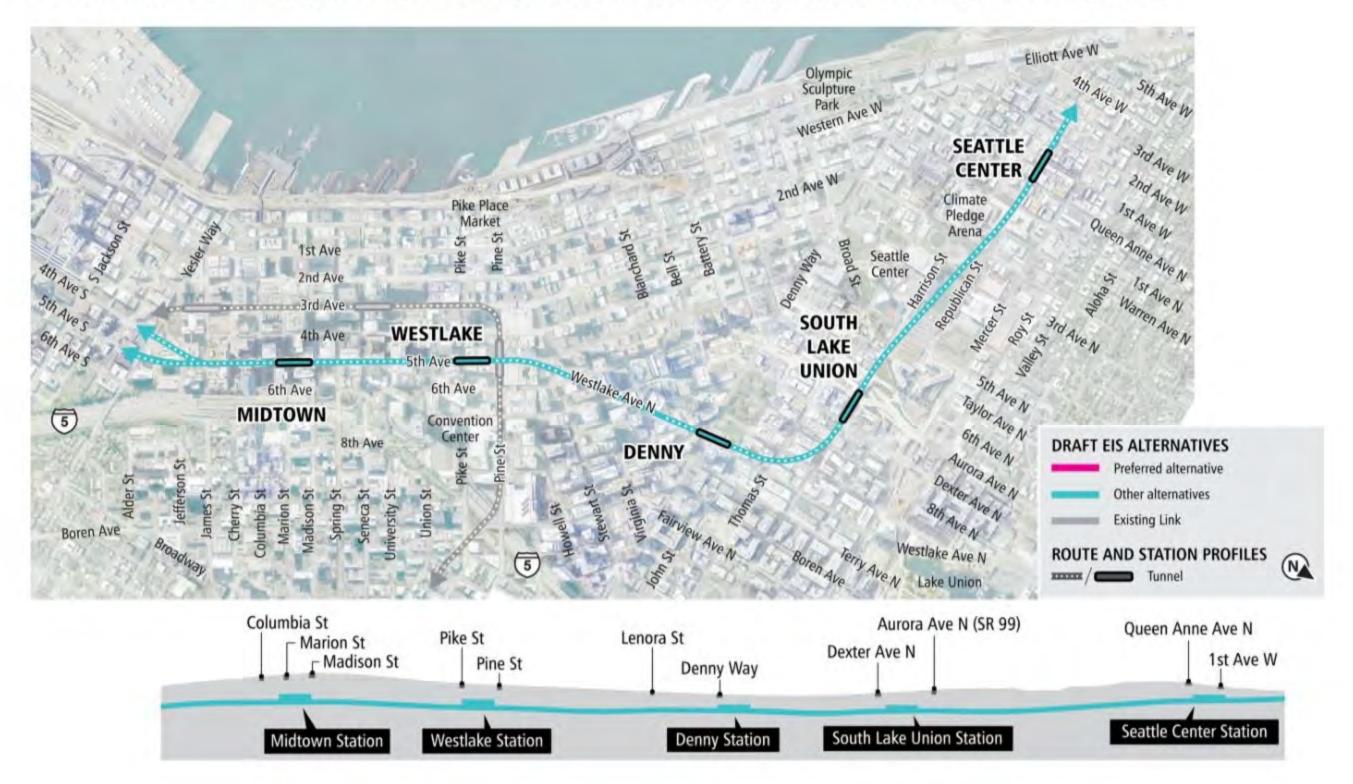
Midtown: The station in Midtown would be located beneath 5th Avenue between Columbia Street and Madison Street.

Westlake: The station would be beneath 5th Avenue between Pike Street and Pine Street and with underground pedestrian connection to the existing Westlake Station.

Denny: The station would be beneath Westlake Avenue between 9th Avenue and John Street.

South Lake Union: The station would be beneath Harrison Street, between Dexter Avenue North and west of 7th Avenue North.

Seattle Center: The station would be beneath Republican Street between 1st Avenue North and 2nd Avenue West.



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5th Avenue Consolidated Denny/South Lake Union Station Alternative

The 5th Avenue Consolidated Denny/South Lake Union Station Alternative would be in a tunnel generally heading north between 4th Avenue and 5th Avenue and beneath Westlake Avenue then heading west under Republican Street.

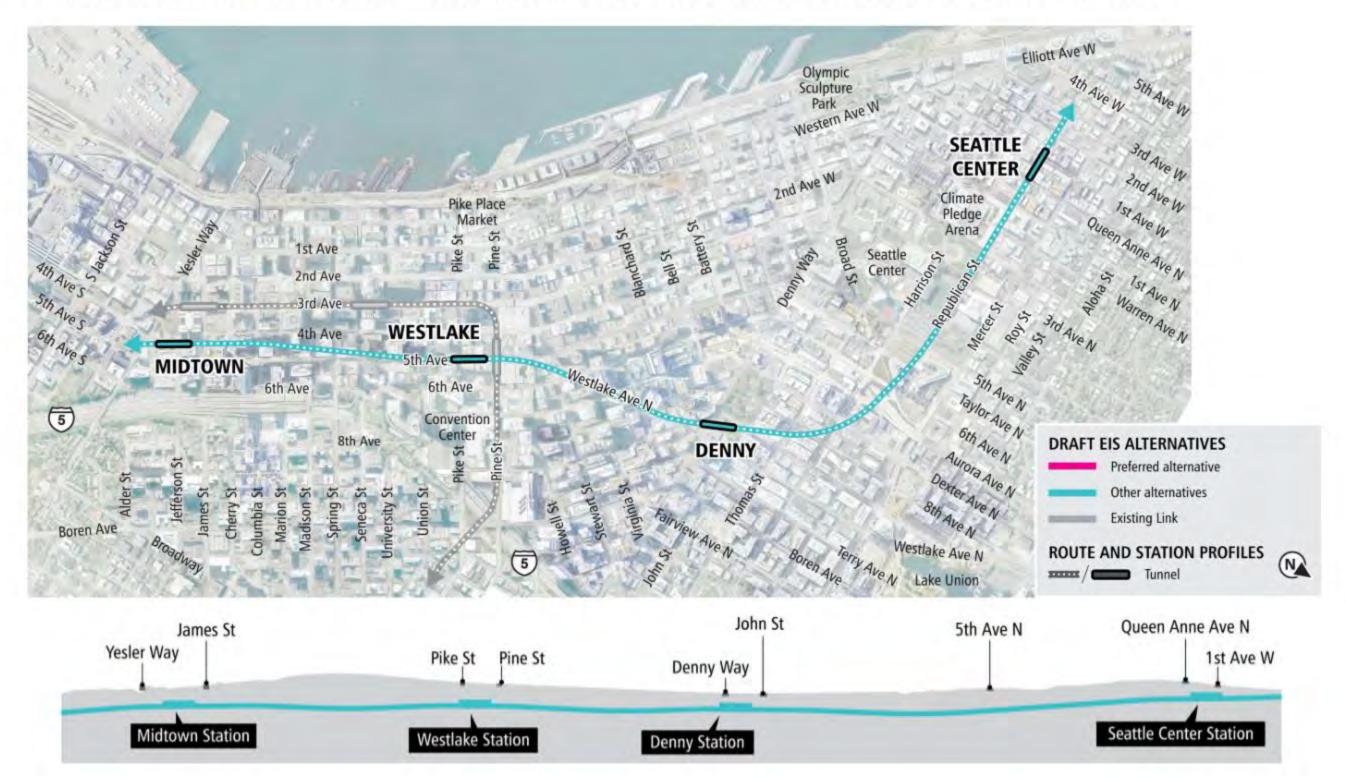
Station locations:

Midtown: The station would be east of 4th Avenue between Terrace Street and James Street, with underground pedestrian connection to the existing Pioneer Square Station.

Westlake: The station would be beneath 5th Avenue between Pike Street and Pine Street with entrance consolidation and with underground pedestrian connection to the existing Westlake Station.

Denny: The station would be west of Westlake Avenue between 9th Avenue and John Street.

Seattle Center: The station would be beneath Republican Street between 1st Avenue North and 2nd Avenue West.



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The alternatives presented were developed through years of planning and community engagement. To learn more about the alternatives raised but not carried forward for study in the Draft EIS, see the <u>South Lake Union Feasibility Study (2024)</u>, <u>Further</u> <u>Studies: Community Engagement Summary (2023)</u>, and <u>Appendix M</u> from the previous WSLE Draft EIS.

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Ballard Link Extension

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South Interbay

Preferred Alternative: Galer Street Station/Central Interbay

The Galer Street Station/Central Interbay Alternative would exit a tunnel portal at West Republican Street and Elliott Avenue West and transition to an elevated guideway. The guideway would continue northwest along Elliott Avenue West to an elevated Smith Cove Station at the West Galer Street Flyover. The elevated track would continue north over the Magnolia Bridge, through the Interbay Armory, and along the west side of the Interbay Athletic Complex.

Station location: The station at Smith Cove would be located above and straddling the West Galer Street Flyover.



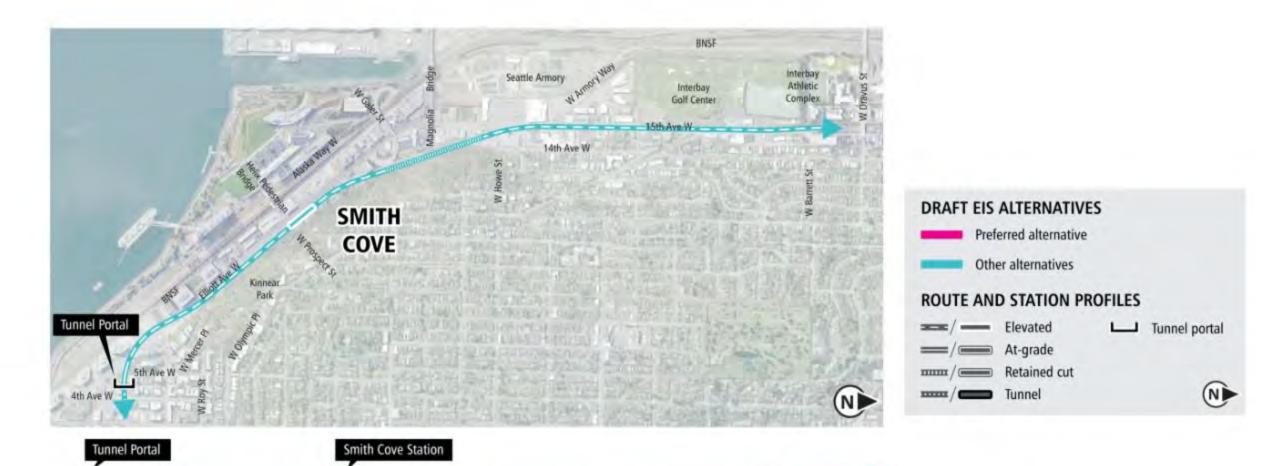
Diagrams are not to scale and all measurements are approximate for illustration purposes only. | Click on image to enlarge

South Interbay - Other alternatives

Prospect Street Station/15th Avenue

The Prospect Street Station/15th Avenue Alternative would exit a tunnel portal at West Republican Street and Elliott Avenue West and transition to an elevated guideway. The guideway would continue northwest along Elliott Avenue West and enter the Smith Cove Station just north of West Prospect Street. From the Smith Cove Station, the elevated guideway would transition into a retained cut before again becoming an elevated guideway in the center of 15th Avenue West.

Station location: The elevated station at Smith Cove would be located north of Kinnear Park on the east side of Elliott Avenue West.



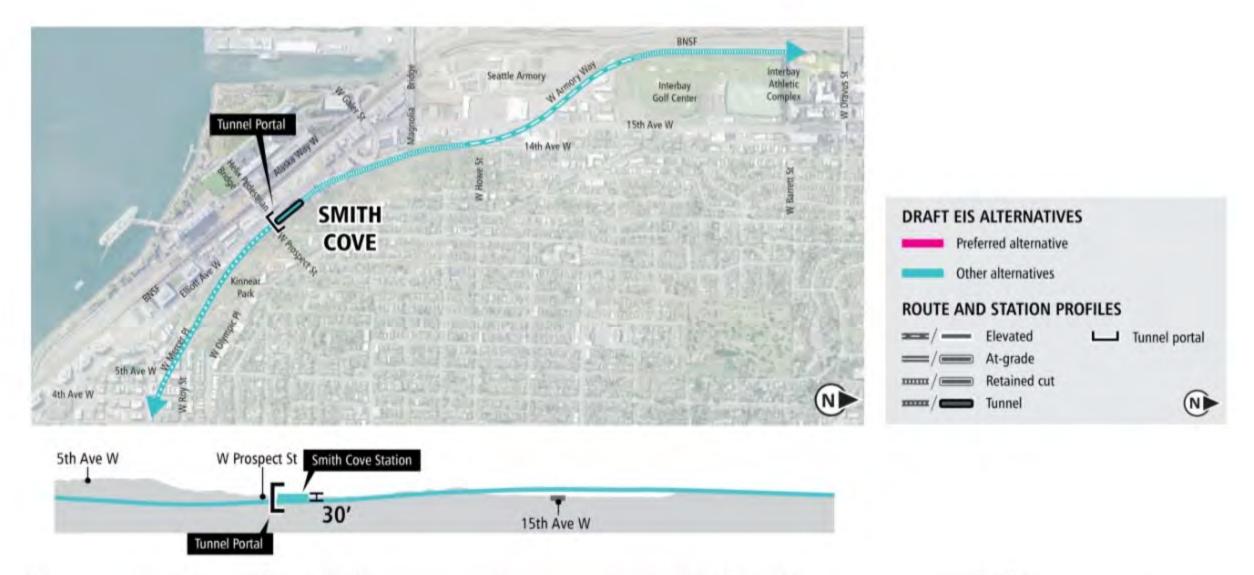


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Prospect Street Station/Central Interbay

The Prospect Street/Central Interbay Alternative would continue as a tunnel from downtown to a tunnel portal on the east side of Elliott Avenue West near West Prospect Street. The alternative would continue north from the tunnel portal in a retained cut to the Smith Cove Station just north of West Prospect Street. From the station, the alternative would transition to an elevated guideway and continue north along West Armory Way and west of the Interbay Athletic Complex to connect to the Elevated 14th Avenue Alternative in the Interbay/Ballard segment.

Station location: The retained cut station in Smith Cove would be located north of West Prospect Street on the east side of Elliott Avenue West.



Diagrams are not to scale and all measurements are approximate for illustration purposes only. | Click on image to enlarge

The alternatives presented were developed through years of planning and community engagement. To learn more about the alternatives raised but not carried forward for study in the Draft EIS, see <u>Further Studies: Community Engagement Summary</u> (2023), and <u>Appendix M</u> from the previous WSLE Draft EIS.

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Interbay / Ballard

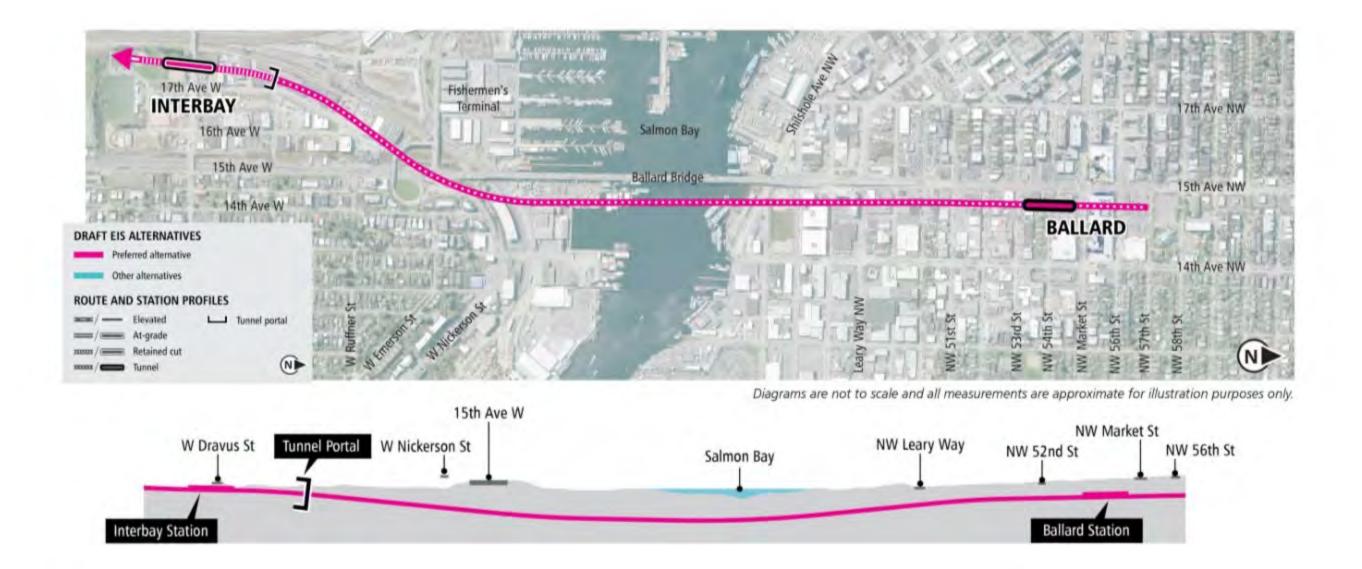
Preferred Alternative: Tunnel 15th Avenue

The alternative would begin at Interbay station straddling below West Dravus Street and continue in a retained cut to a tunnel portal traveling northeast under Salmon Bay (east of the Ballard Bridge), and then continue north in a tunnel east of 15th Avenue Northwest to the Ballard Station.

Station locations:

Interbay: The retained cut station at Interbay would be located through the Interbay Athletic Complex, below and straddling the existing West Dravus Street roadway bridge.

Ballard: The Ballard tunnel station would be east of 15th Avenue Northwest and south of Northwest Market Street.



Diagrams are not to scale and all measurements are approximate for illustration purposes only. | Click on image to enlarge

Interbay/Ballard - other alternatives

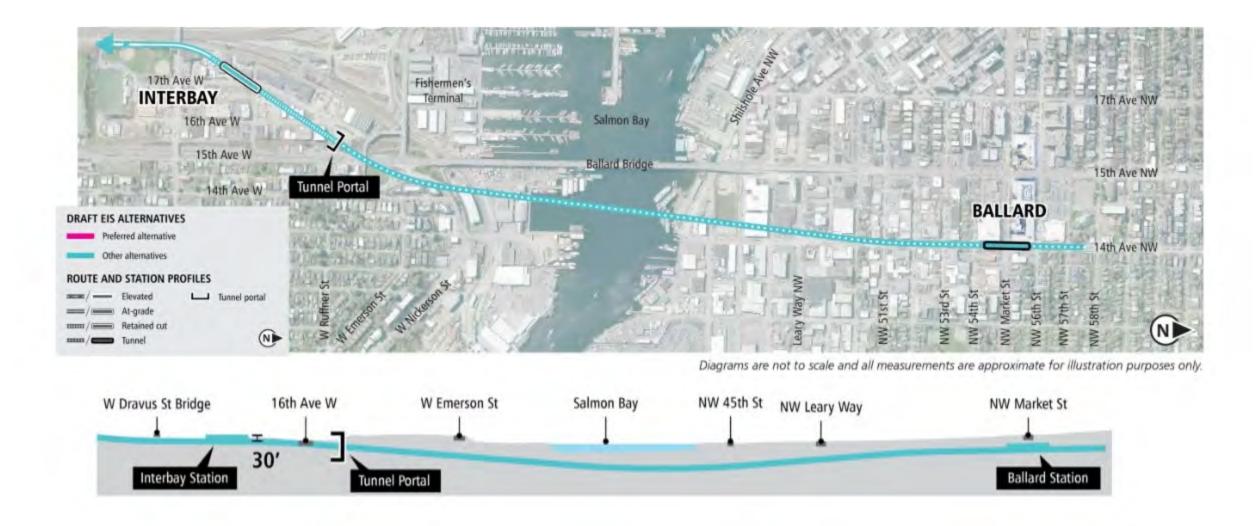
Tunnel 14th Avenue

The Tunnel 14th Avenue Alternative would enter a retained cut parallel to the BNSF tracks and then curve northeast to the Interbay Station. The alternative would continue in a retained cut from Interbay Station to a tunnel portal. The tunnel would travel northeast, under Salmon Bay (east of the Ballard Bridge), and then curve north beneath 14th Avenue Northwest to the Ballard Station.

Station locations:

Interbay: The retained cut Interbay station would be located north of West Dravus Street, between 17th Avenue West and Thorndyke Avenue West.

Ballard: The Ballard station would be located under 14th Avenue Northwest and Northwest Market Street.



Diagrams are not to scale and all measurements are approximate for illustration purposes only. | Click on image to enlarge

Elevated 14th Avenue

The Elevated 14th Avenue Alternative would travel parallel to the BNSF tracks over West Dravus Street and continue northeast to the Interbay Station. The alternative would continue elevated to a fixed-span bridge on the east side of the Ballard Bridge (15th Avenue Bridge). The alternative would continue north within 14th Avenue Northwest to the Ballard Station.

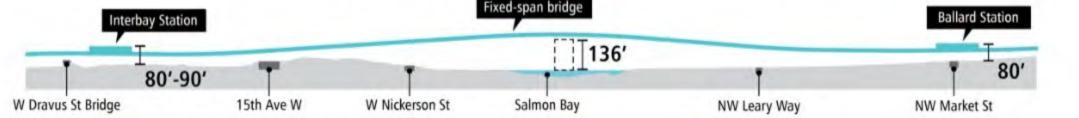
Station locations:

Interbay: The elevated Interbay Station would be located north of West Dravus Street between the railroad tracks and 17th Avenue West.

Ballard: The elevated Ballard station would be located on the east side of 14th Avenue Northwest, straddling Northwest Market Street.







Diagrams are not to scale and all measurements are approximate for illustration purposes only. | Click on image to enlarge

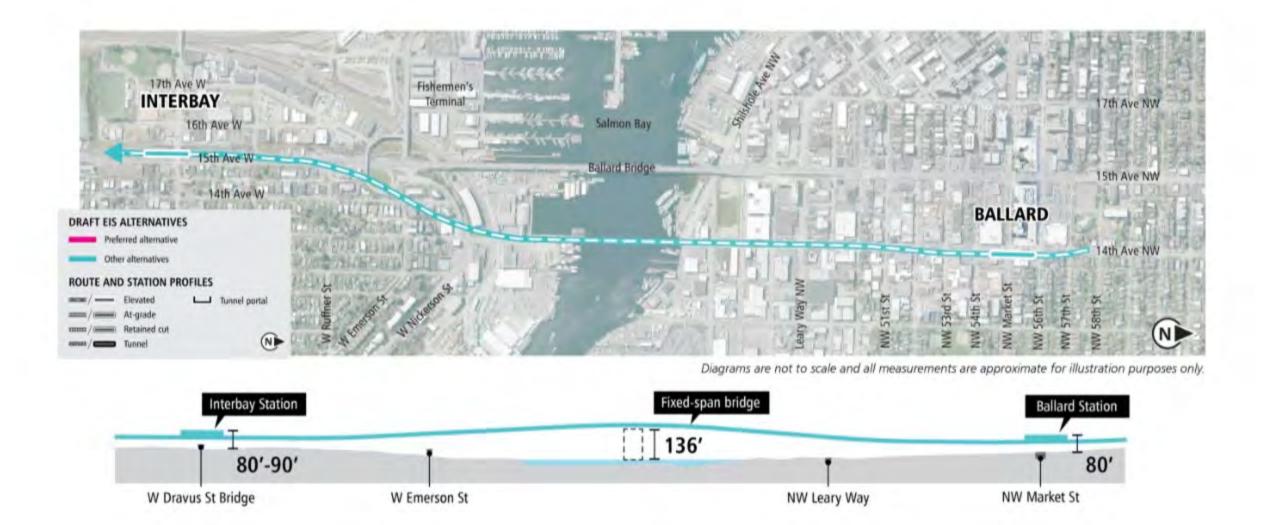
Elevated 14th Avenue (from Prospect Street Station/15th Avenue)

The Elevated 14th Avenue (From Prospect Street Station/15th Avenue) Alternative is a design option for connecting the Prospect Street Station/15th Avenue Alternative in the South Interbay segment to the Elevated 14th Avenue Alternative bridge over Salmon Bay. The alignment would start south of the Interbay Station on 15th Avenue West. From the Interbay Station, the alternative would connect to the 14th Avenue alignment bridge over Salmon Bay. The bridge over Salmon Bay, the elevated guideway to the north, and the Ballard Station would be the same as for the Elevated 14th Avenue Alternative.

Station locations:

Interbay: The elevated Interbay Station would be located north of West Dravus Street between the railroad tracks and 17th Avenue West.

Ballard: The elevated Ballard station would be located on the east side of 14th Avenue Northwest, straddling Northwest Market Street.



Diagrams are not to scale and all measurements are approximate for illustration purposes only. | Click on image to enlarge

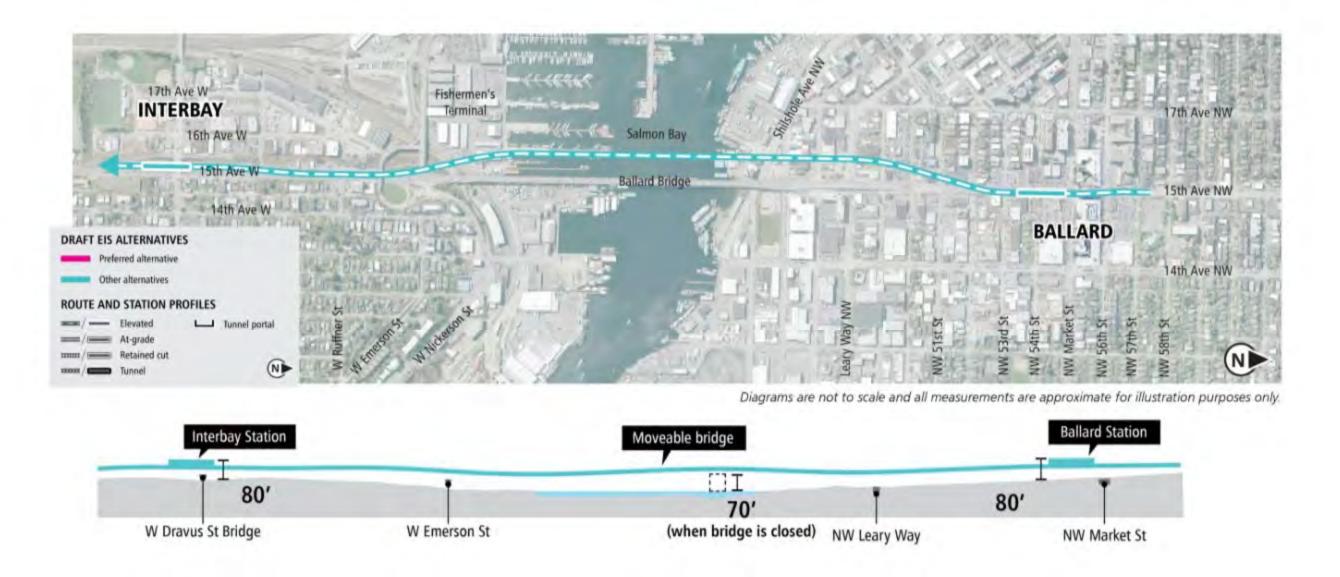
Elevated 15th Avenue

The Elevated 15th Avenue Alternative would be in the median of 15th Avenue West approaching the Interbay Station. From the station, the alternative would continue on an elevated guideway and cross Salmon Bay on a moveable bridge west of the Ballard Bridge. The alternative would continue north from the bridge on an elevated guideway to the Ballard Station.

Station locations:

Interbay: The elevated Interbay Station would be located above 15th Avenue West, straddling West Dravus Street.

Ballard: The elevated Ballard station would be located above the east edge of 15th Avenue Northwest, south of Northwest Market Street.



Diagrams are not to scale and all measurements are approximate for illustration purposes only. | Click on image to enlarge

The alternatives presented were developed through years of planning and community engagement. To learn more about the alternatives raised but not carried forward for study in the Draft EIS, see the Further Studies: Community Engagement Summary (2023), and Appendix M from the previous WSLE Draft EIS.

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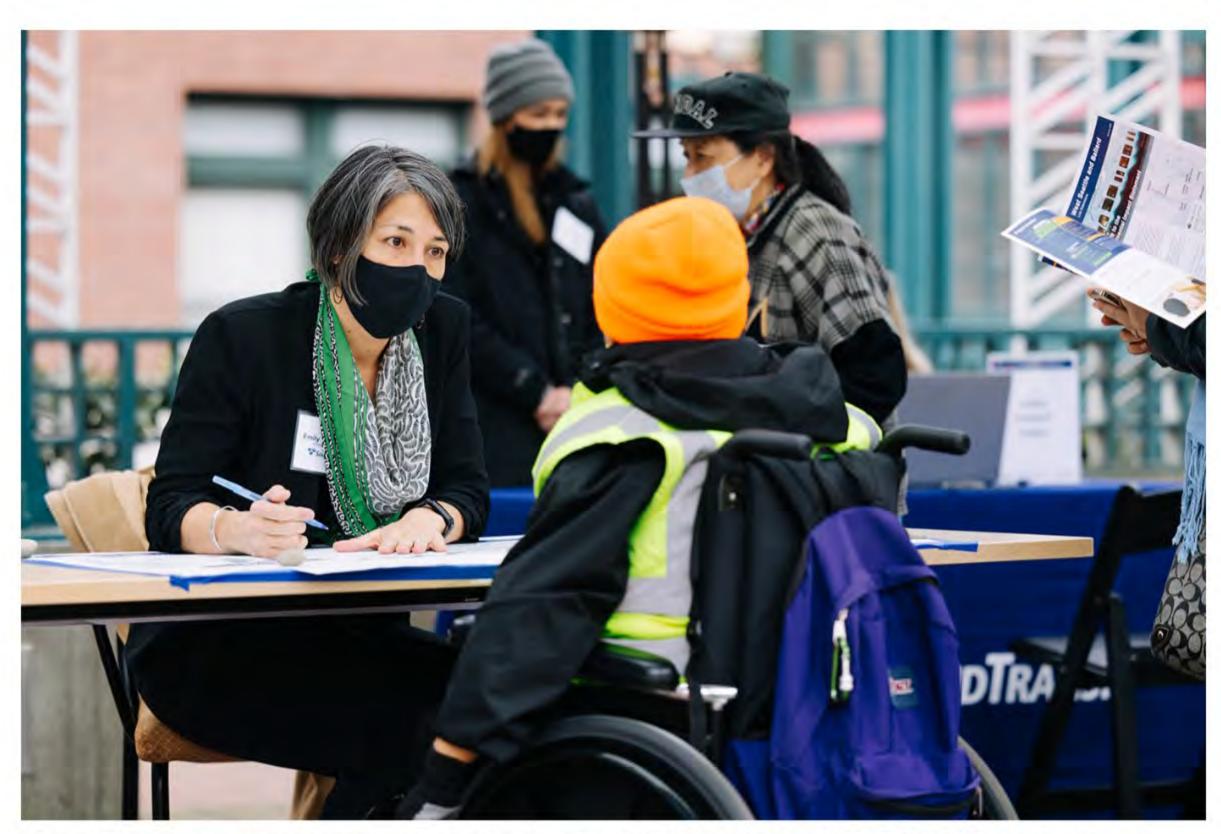
Ballard Link Extension

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2022 WSBLE Draft EIS



Sound Transit took public comments at an open house in February 2022 during the WSBLE Draft EIS comment period.

Sound Transit evaluated the WSBLE projects in a **Draft Environmental Impact Statement** (EIS), published on Jan. 28, 2022. After publication, a 90-day public comment period followed. The WSBLE Draft EIS was developed to help Sound Transit, partner agencies, and the public better understand the potential effects of the alternatives on the natural and built environment and transportation system and find potential mitigation measures.

Sound Transit Board's preferred alternatives

In July 2022, after reviewing the WSBLE Draft EIS and <u>the comments from Tribes, the public and agency partners</u>, the Sound Transit Board identified the **preferred alternative** for the WSLE and requested further study for the BLE. Read the July 2022 <u>press release</u> and <u>Board Motion</u> for more information.

After further studies from August 2022 to February 2023, the Sound Transit Board identified a preferred alternative for the Ballard Link Extension. Read the March 2023 <u>Board Motion</u>, the <u>press release</u>, and <u>July Board Motion</u> for more information.

Environmental review timelines

The extensions were initially on the same environmental review timeline. However, given additional environmental review needed for project refinements for BLE resulting from the Sound Transit Board action in March 2023, environmental review for the two extensions will now proceed on different timelines.

The WSLE proceeded to a Final EIS, expected to be published in 2024. A new BLE Draft EIS will be published in early 2025, reflecting actions by the Sound Transit Board in March and July 2023. The BLE alternatives will be updated, including an analysis of the preferred alternative and other refinements and alternatives identified in March 2023 and July 2023 Board Motions. The new BLE Draft EIS will build upon and incorporate the analysis in the WSBLE Draft EIS, including all previous scoping comments, public outreach and feedback, and environmental analysis.

Want to take another look at the WSBLE Draft EIS?

You can still explore the Draft EIS. The Executive Summary provides an overview of the Draft EIS. It condenses the larger Draft EIS to help readers quickly become acquainted with the project.

WSBLE Draft EIS Executive Summary

- English
- Spanish
- <u>Simplified Chinese</u>
- Traditional Chinese
- <u>Vietnamese</u>

Chapter 2

You can view the entire WSBLE Draft EIS document online.

*After the WSBLE Draft EIS was published in January 2022, the Sound Transit Board identified different preferred alternatives than what are shown in the WSBLE Draft EIS. To learn more, visit the <u>West Seattle Link Extension project page</u> and the <u>Ballard Link Extension project page</u>.

Draft EIS Table of Contents

Draft EIS Fact Sheet	-
Cover, Letter, Signature page, Fact sheet, TOC	
Chapter 1: Purpose and Need	-
Chapter 1 States what problems the project will address and why the investment in this transit project is needed.	
Chapter 2: Alternatives Considered	-

Describes the alternatives evaluated in the Draft EIS, including alignment and station locations, how they will be

constructed, and how long construction will take.
Chapter 3: Transportation
Chapter 3
Presents analysis of the existing transportation system in the project area and discusses potential impacts of the alternatives to regional facilities and travel and transit operations. Discusses ridership and travel times for each alternative as well as parking impacts in addition to pedestrian and bicyclist access at each station area.
 <u>Transportation impacts for the West Seattle Extension</u> <u>Transportation impacts for the Ballard Extension</u>
Chapter 4: Environmental Consequences
Chapter 4
Discusses the affected environment and environmental consequences of the project.
Environmental consequences for the West Seattle Extension
 Environmental consequences for the Ballard Extension
Chapter 5: Cumulative
Chapter 5
Describes the project's effects on a particular resource, combined with past, present and future effects of other projects. The cumulative impact assessment can identify consequences that might not be apparent when the project is considered in isolation.
Chapter 6: Alternatives Evaluation
Chapter 6
Evaluates how the West Seattle and Ballard Link Extensions alternatives meet the project's purpose and need. also summarizes the benefits and impacts of each alternative.
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<u>B: Distribution List</u>
<u>C: Acronyms & Abbreviations</u>
D: Glossary
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L: Supporting Information
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<u>M: Summary of Alternatives Development and Initial Assessment Process</u> <u>Appendix N1: Transportation Technical Report</u>
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*Appendix I is reserved for the mitigation plan and will be included in the Final EIS.

Equity and inclusion

Sound Transit is committed to centering communities along the project corridor and engaging communities of color and lowincome and other vulnerable populations throughout the public involvement process. During the environmental review process, Sound Transit conducted an <u>environmental justice analysis</u>, which is included in the WSBLE Draft EIS. The analysis:

- Describes the demographics of the project corridor.
- Evaluates whether the projects would result in disproportionately high and adverse effects to communities of color and low-income communities.
- Considers potential project benefits such as improved access to opportunity.
- Documents our efforts to involve communities of color and low-income populations in the planning process and what we have heard so far from outreach efforts.

Along with the Draft EIS environmental justice analysis, Sound Transit and the City of Seattle have partnered on the Racial Equity Toolkit (RET) process for the projects. The RET lays out a process and a set of questions to guide the development, implementation and evaluation of the projects to advance racial equity. The RET process began early in project development, informing data analysis, technical evaluation and the focus and extent of community engagement. During the environmental review phase, the RET builds on the environmental justice assessment for the projects, documenting potential project impacts and benefits, and community feedback. However, given that the RET process is guided by a different framework than the EIS environmental justice requirements, the report on the RET process and findings is structured differently, and is oriented around **RET outcomes** for the projects. Our <u>RET report</u> on the process, requirements, outcomes, findings and community feedback is available for your reference.

Additional studies



Chinatown-International District (CID) Additional Study Results (2023 - 2024)

In March 2023, the Sound Transit Board adopted motion M2023-18 which identified a preferred alternative for the Ballard Link Extension project. As part of this motion, the Board directed staff to further study ways to minimize or eliminate construction impacts to the Chinatown-International District (CID) to significantly reduce the duration and effects of construction and maximize connections to all regional and local transit modes. Materials from these additional studies are included below.

Construction approach and duration

- System Expansion Committee 11/14/24 presentation
- CID Construction Click & Learn Activity
- Memo on construction approach and duration for CID Station alternatives [English] [Traditional Chinese] [Simplified Chinese] [Vietnamese]

Maximizing regional and local connections

- System Expansion Committee 11/14/24 presentation
- CID regional and local access connections video [English] [Cantonese] [Mandarin]

Additionally, the Board directed Sound Transit staff to work with the City of Seattle and King County and in partnership with the community to explore opportunities to advance improvement projects and public transit connections through the South Downtown Hub plan. Check out the <u>South Downtown Hub Online Open House</u> to learn more.

CID additional study materials are being provided for informational purposes and as resources for the Sound Transit Board and the public in advance of Ballard Link Extension Draft EIS publication in 2025, which will be followed by a public comment period and potential Board action to confirm or modify the preferred alternative.

South Lake Union Additional Studies (2023 – 2024)

In 2023 and 2024, the Sound Transit Board directed the project team to study additional station locations and alignment concepts in the South Lake Union area. Materials from these further study periods are included below.

SLU Feasibility Study (2024) SLU Further Studies (mid-2023)

BLE Further Studies (late 2022 - early 2023)

In July 2022, the Sound Transit Board directed the project team to complete additional further studies. Staff held community workshops, open houses, stakeholder meetings and surveys between September 2022 and January 2023.

For an overview of the further studies results, read the Further Studies <u>Executive Summary and reports</u> or the <u>Further</u> <u>Studies Engagement Summary</u>. Descriptions and key findings are included below by segment.

Chinatown-International District (CID) Downtown Interbay/Ballard

SLU Feasibility Study (2024)

In December 2023, the Sound Transit Board directed staff to assess the feasibility of a potential new alternative in the South Lake Union (SLU) and Denny area. This light rail alignment concept would locate the SLU Station roughly two blocks west of the current preferred alternative, near 5th Avenue North and Harrison Street, in tandem with a Denny Station Shifted West, outside of the Westlake Avenue right of way.

Between December 2023 and May 2024, Sound Transit engaged the public in various forums to share information and gather feedback about the SLU Feasibility Study and its findings. These engagement activities included an online survey, two live webinars, and over 40 stakeholder and community briefings.

At the May 23 Sound Transit Board of Directors meeting, Board members discussed and reviewed SLU Feasibility Study findings and community feedback about a potential new alternative in the SLU and Denny area. Board members also considered the staff opinion recommending that the Board take No Action, keep the current preferred alternative, and not carry forward the potential new alternative.

After discussion, the Board took No Action, keeping the existing alternatives and the current timeline for the BLE Draft Environmental Impact Statement, expected in early 2025. This meant that the BLE preferred alternative remained Denny Station Shifted North and an SLU Station at 7th Avenue North & Harrison Street.

In arriving at this outcome, Board members weighed community priorities, regional needs, input from stakeholders and agency partners, and community feedback. Thousands of community members engaged with us during the feasibility study process. Thank you for your input. You can access a summary of recent engagement activities related to this work and community feedback themes online.

For more information:

- Sound Transit Board SLU Feasibility Study Assessment and Public Engagement Report (5/24)
- Sound Transit Board Feasibility Study Results (4/24)
- Sound Transit Board Feasibility Study Report (12/23)
- Sound Transit Board Feasibility Study Report (11/23)

SLU Further Studies (mid-2023)

Starting in March 2023, following direction from the Board, staff convened technical work sessions and associated engagement activities to clarify the technical, financial, schedule and risk implications of the Denny route and station locations and share findings with the community. Technical work focused on a range of topics including utility relocations, constructability, construction schedule, roadway closures, and cost. New station and alignment concepts explored in these studies and engagement included:

- A Denny Station shifted north
- A Denny Station shifted west (consolidated station concept with the Harrison St Station)

Sound Transit hosted numerous community briefings and two public webinars to gather feedback from transit users and inform the July 27 Board status report and action.

- For more information:
 - Sound Transit Board Denny Station Status Report (7/23)
 - Sound Transit Board Denny Station Status Report (5/23)

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Property Owners

To build the Ballard Link Extension project, Sound Transit will need to purchase and use private property. In some cases, this means moving people from their homes or businesses.

Sound Transit's property acquisition process treats affected property owners and tenants fairly, provides appropriate Just Compensation and relocation benefits and minimizes hardships with all parties involved. We realize the possibility of being relocated from your home or business may be difficult, and we are here to answer questions and provide support throughout the process.

Sound Transit has specific policies and procedures that describe how the agency will work with property owners and tenants throughout the acquisition process. We follow federal, state and local laws in our property acquisition process, specifically the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act, and state law.

Property owners and tenants that were contacted as part of the WSBLE Draft EIS process, will be contacted again as part of the BLE Draft EIS process. The property acquisition milestones will apply to the BLE Draft EIS publication.

Property acquisition milestones

Pre-Draft EIS publication

· Sound Transit contacts potentially affected property owners

Draft EIS publication

- · Draft EIS available for public review and comments
- Sound Transit Board confirms or modifies the preferred alternative based on comments from the public, agency partners and Tribes

Final EIS publication

Sound Transit Board selects projects to be built

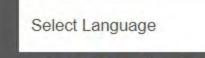
Final Design

· Sound Transit identifies property rights needed to construct, operate

Need more info?

For more information about property acquisition and relocation, please refer to the following resources:

- Property Owners Folio
- Property Acquisition and Residential
 Relocation Handbook
- Property Acquisition and Business
 Relocation Handbook



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- and maintain the system
- Sound Transit Board authorizes property purchases
- Sound Transit will prepare an appraisal to determine fair market value of property needed for the projects
- Sound Transit will provide relocation assistance to people and businesses displaced by the projects, including referrals to comparable properties and payment of moving costs
- Sound Transit staff are available to support property owners and tenants through this process

Without concrete decisions until the release of Final EIS, we know this period of uncertainty can be stressful and are here to help. If you have additional questions or would like to set up a virtual meeting, contact our outreach team at <u>ballardlink@soundtransit.org</u> or <u>206-903-7223</u>.

Frequently Asked Questions

When will I be notified if my property may be affected?

Potentially affected property owners are notified prior to the release of a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). Being a potentially affected property owner means that your property is close to one or more alternatives we are currently studying. This notification of potential impact <u>does not</u> mean a decision has been made to purchase your property.

What happens if Sound Transit identifies my property as potentially affected?

Notification that your property is potentially affected does not mean a decision has been made to purchase your property. But it does mean there's a possibility Sound Transit may need to acquire all or a portion of your property at a later project phase. As we refine project design, we'll continue updating our list of potentially affected properties. We won't make final determinations on which properties to purchase until after a Final EIS and the Sound Transit Board selects the projects to be built.

If I am required to move, what types of relocation assistance can I expect?

Residential relocation

For residential property owners and tenants, Sound Transit provides three primary types of relocation assistance: advisory assistance, moving expenses and replacement housing payments. A qualified relocation specialist will work with displaced residents to determine needs, explain benefits, and provide referrals to current housing inventories as well as assistance and advice with filing claims.

Business relocation

Sound Transit provides three primary types of relocation assistance: advisory assistance, moving expenses and business reestablishment expenses. The level of benefits and advisory services may be different for each displaced business depending on complexity of the business operation.

What does the acquisition process look like?

After the Sound Transit Board has selected the projects to be built and the Federal Transit Administration has issued a Record of Decision, the Board will authorize property purchases along the final project corridors. Several steps will take place before this authorization can occur, including:

- Preparing property information to inform the Sound Transit Board's authorization.
- · Identifying the type of acquisition (i.e., full or partial acquisition, temporary or permanent easement).
- Officially notifying property owners that their property is being considered for acquisition by the Sound Transit Board and providing the date of the meeting at which the Board will consider authorizing acquisitions. Staff will notify property owners in advance of the Sound Transit Board meeting date where property acquisition will be discussed followed by an opportunity to provide public comments on the matter.

After authorization by the Sound Transit Board, Sound Transit will begin the property acquisition process, which follows these steps:

- 1. Appraisal is conducted by an independent appraiser to determine fair market value.
- 2. Appraisal is reviewed by a second appraiser for compliance with proper methodology and appropriate value conclusions.
- 3. Sound Transit prepares an offer package and delivers it to the property owner to review and negotiate. Property owners are also provided a copy of the appraisal.
- 4. Sound Transit negotiates to purchase the property.
- 5. Sound Transit may also reimburse for some or all of the following:
 - a. Owner's own appraisal
 - b. Legal review of offer
 - c. Accounting review for tax purposes
- 6. For people and businesses displaced by the projects, a relocation agent will meet with the property owner to explain relocation assistance, eligibility and entitlements.

Other Frequently Asked Questions

- Q: What is the average timeframe from the offer to closure of sale?
- A: While each acquisition is unique, most processes can take anywhere between 12-18 months to complete.
- Q: Does Sound Transit pay closing costs?

A: Sound Transit will pay for all normal sale expenses including escrow fees, title insurance, pre-payment penalties, mortgage release fee, recording fees and all typical costs related to conveying title. The sale will be exempt from real estate excise tax.

Q: If my house does have to be acquired and I have to relocate, am I able to stay in the same school district or buy a similar home?

A: Sound Transit will make every effort to find comparable properties within the desired market.

- Q: Is there a geographical boundary limit for relocation?
- A: No, there is no geographical limit on where you can move. Sound Transit will pay moving expenses within a 50-mile range.

Q: If there is a long delay between acquisition and when construction starts, will there be empty houses in neighborhoods for several years?

A: While acquisitions are tied to the project schedule, it is possible that homes could be vacated prior to construction starting. If that occurs, Sound Transit will take appropriate measures to secure the properties until demolition can take place.



The alternatives reviewed within the WSBLE Draft EIS included both underground and elevated tracks like the one above.

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