



**Racial Equity Toolkit Report:
Environmental Review Phase**

Table of Contents

PREFACE	IV
1 INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Racial Equity Toolkit.....	1
1.2 Purpose of Report.....	2
1.3 Project Description	2
1.4 Environmental Review Process	3
1.5 Community Engagement	4
1.6 Racial Equity Toolkit Collaborative	5
2 RET OUTCOMES	6
3 EIS ALTERNATIVES	7
4 DELRIDGE STATION EVALUATION.....	9
4.1 Neighborhood Context and Overview	9
4.2 RET Outcomes.....	10
4.3 Delridge Segment EIS Alternatives.....	12
4.4 Evaluation Summary.....	24
4.5 Delridge Community Engagement and Input.....	34
4.6 Delridge Summary	35
5 CORRIDOR WIDE EVALUATION	37
5.1 Evaluation Summary.....	37

5.2	Corridor Wide Engagement and Input	38
6	WHAT'S NEXT: FUTURE PHASES OF THE PROJECT.....	40
6.1	Final Environmental Review Phase	40
6.2	Opportunities for Future Engagement	40

List of Figures

Figure 1. Racial Equity Toolkit process steps (Source: City of Seattle)	1
Figure 2. How the RET informs decision-making during the planning phase of the WSLE project.....	2
Figure 3. WSBLE project phases and schedule	3
Figure 4. WSLE EIS alternatives.....	8
Figure 5. Final EIS alternatives in the Delridge segment	13
Figure 6. Plan and Profile for Dakota Street Station Alternative (DEL-1a).....	14
Figure 7. Plan and Profile for Dakota Street Station North Alignment Option (DEL-1b).....	15
Figure 8. Plan and Profile for Dakota Street Station Lower Height Alternative (DEL-2a)	16
Figure 9. Plan and Profile for Dakota Street Station Lower Height North Alignment Option (DEL 2b).....	17
Figure 10. Plan and Profile for Delridge Way Station Alternative (DEL-3).....	18
Figure 11. Plan and Profile for Delridge Way Station Lower Height Alternative (DEL-4)	19
Figure 12. Plan and Profile for Andover Street Station Alternative (DEL-5)	20
Figure 13. Plan and Profile for Andover Street Station Lower Height Alternative (DEL-6a)	21
Figure 14. Plan and Profile for Andover Street Station Lower Height South Alignment Option (DEL-6b)	22
Figure 15. Plan and Profile for Andover Street Station Lower Height No Avalon Station Tunnel Connection (DEL-7)	23
Figure 16. Transit integration diagram for Dakota Street Station alternatives	25
Figure 17. Transit integration diagram for Delridge Way Station alternatives.....	26
Figure 18. Transit integration diagram for Andover Street alternatives DEL-5 and DEL-6a	27
Figure 19. Transit integration diagram for Andover Street alternatives DEL-6b and DEL-7	28
Figure 20. Area of analysis for displacements and equitable development potential in Delridge Station area	29
Figure 21. Potential equitable transit-oriented development areas for Dakota Street Station alternatives (DEL-1a, DEL-1b, DEL-2a, DEL-2b)	31
Figure 22. Potential equitable transit-oriented development areas for Andover Street Station alternatives (DEL-5, DEL-6a)	32
Figure 23. Potential equitable transit-oriented development areas for Andover Street Station alternatives (DEL-6b, DEL-7)	33

PREFACE

The West Seattle and Ballard Link Extensions (WSBLE) project Racial Equity Toolkit (RET) report for the environmental review phase was published in July 2022 following the publication of the project's Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and subsequent public comment period. That same month, the Sound Transit Board acted to confirm/modify the West Seattle Link Extension (WSLE) Preferred Alternative to be carried forward into the Final EIS. Related actions by the Sound Transit Board on the Ballard Link Extension (BLE) led to the divergence of project timelines for the WSLE and BLE projects. The WSLE project moved into development of a Final EIS, while the BLE project began work on a new Draft EIS.

This RET report for the WSLE environmental review phase has been updated based on additional feedback received during the development of the Final EIS and will be shared with the Sound Transit Board in advance of their potential action identifying the project to be built, anticipated in October, 2024.

Guide to this Report

This report is divided into six chapters. Updates to the July 2022 report are highlighted with ➤ an arrow symbol.

Chapter 1 provides information on the RET process and the partnership between Sound Transit and the City of Seattle, the purpose of this report, and project background, including information on the project timeline and environmental review process.

- See Section 1.5 for updated information on community engagement during the RET process. Community input continues to inform our understanding of benefit and

burden and potential approaches to advance opportunity and minimize harm.

Chapter 2 describes the RET outcomes for this project, including project-wide outcomes and those specific to the Delridge corridor. Setting outcomes is the first step in the RET process, and project RET outcomes have been refined based on continuous community feedback throughout the alternatives development and environmental review phases.

Chapter 3 describes the alternatives studied in the Draft EIS at a high level to provide additional project context.

Chapter 4 covers the RET evaluation for the Delridge corridor, including information about the neighborhood, RET outcomes, a description of the Final EIS alternatives in this segment, and a summary of the evaluation of each alternative relative to RET outcomes.

- Section 4.3 includes descriptions of new and modified alternatives in the Delridge area following the July 2022 Sound Transit Board action.
- Section 4.4 includes updates to the evaluation summary for new and modified alternatives.
- Section 4.5 includes updates about the outreach conducted and input we received during the station planning engagement period.
- Section 4.6 summarizes updates made in the previous sections.

Chapter 5 includes a corridor-wide evaluation of the project alternatives relative to the RET project-wide outcomes.

Chapter 6 outlines next steps in the RET process for the project.

- See section 6.2 for updates on engagement with the community during the next project phase.

1 INTRODUCTION

The West Seattle Link Extension (WSLE) will provide fast, reliable light rail connections to dense residential and job centers throughout the region. It is part of the Sound Transit system expansion approved by voters in November 2016. While this project offers an array of potential benefits, in the past communities of color have endured a disproportionate share of impacts from major infrastructure investments, including transportation projects. These projects have historically moved forward without centering Black, Indigenous, People of Color voices who continue to bear the burden of systemic racism, COVID-19, and racialized violence. To that end, Sound Transit and the City of Seattle are partnering to apply the Racial Equity Toolkit (RET) to the WSLE project, building upon past community-led planning processes, raising up community voices, and improving coordination within and among agencies to center racial equity and focus on community values.

1.1 Racial Equity Toolkit

The RET process (Figure 1) is a cornerstone of the City's Race and Social Justice Initiative. The vision of the Seattle Office for Civil Rights, which houses the Race and Social Justice Initiative Strategic Team is: "A City of Liberated People where Communities Historically Impacted by Racism, Oppression, and Colonization

Hold Power and Thrive." To do this requires ending individual racism, institutional racism and structural racism by shifting real decision making power and equitable resources to those most harmed by a lingering legacy and reality of racism in our community. The RET lays out a process and a set of questions to guide the development, implementation and evaluation of

Figure 1. Racial Equity Toolkit process steps (Source: City of Seattle)



policies, initiatives, programs, and budget issues to address impacts on racial equity.

The RET offers a framework and process for centering the people most harmed by racialization and vulnerable to systemic racism in project development and project outcomes – informing data analysis, technical evaluation, and the focus and extent of community-centered engagement. The RET also provides a framework for monitoring and evaluation going forward, with an emphasis on reporting back to the communities and stakeholders we are accountable to.

A key focus for the RET is community-centered engagement to understand community needs, respond to historical and present impacts made by large infrastructure projects, and consider potential burdens and benefits of the project as expressed by the community. Direct community input is a vital component of the RET process because it centers the conversation on those places, businesses, and community resources of great importance to communities of color. The RET process requires rigorous data collection that is both qualitative and quantitative.

1.2 Purpose of Report

A key component of the RET process is creating a report to transparently share findings with all stakeholders in the project. This report offers an opportunity to make the Environmental Justice analysis more accessible and provides an opportunity to incorporate additional historical background and context, such as the root causes of racial inequity. This report elevates opportunities, issues and other considerations that affect communities of color and low-income populations for the public and decision-makers. It provides an overview of the WSLE project and the RET information gathered during the environmental review phase, and documents how that information is being used

to inform the project development process. This information will also inform the Sound Transit Board when it selects the project to be built. Figure 2 describes the planning phase of the WSLE project and when and how the RET process and documentation helps inform decision-making.

Figure 2. How the RET informs decision-making during the planning phase of the WSLE project



1.3 Project Description

The WSLE Project is a Link light rail extension that would operate from SODO to West Seattle's Alaska Junction neighborhood.

The WSLE Project began with alternatives development from 2017 to 2019. Alternatives development started with the representative project from the voter-approved system plan, ST3.

From there, Sound Transit developed alternatives for study and review, including route and station locations. Community members, stakeholders, elected officials and partner agency staff provided comments on alternatives, helping to screen for reasonable alternatives to carry forward. Based on input and analysis, in 2019, the Sound Transit Board of Directors identified a preferred alternative in addition to other alternatives to be studied during environmental review.

1.4 Environmental Review Process

During environmental review, as required by state and federal law, Sound Transit studies potential environmental impacts of the alternatives and publishes an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

An EIS is an environmental review document that outlines the possible routes and station locations under consideration – collectively called “alternatives.” It helps Sound Transit, our partner agencies, the public and other decision-makers understand the potential impacts and benefits of each alternative by describing how the alternatives might affect the natural and built environments and transportation systems during both construction and future operation.

The EIS also includes an environmental justice analysis that evaluates whether the WSLE Project would result in disproportionately high and adverse effects on communities of color and low-income populations, based on potential project impacts, benefits, and proposed mitigation. The analysis also describes Sound Transit’s engagement with these populations to encourage their active participation in the planning process.

The RET builds on Sound Transit’s environmental justice assessment for this project, 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 project.

Sound Transit published the Draft EIS for the WSBLE project on January 28, 2022. Community members had an opportunity to review the Draft EIS and comment on the analysis during a 90-day public comment period. In July 2022, the Sound Transit Board confirmed and modified the preferred alternative for WSLE. The preferred alternative, along with the other Draft EIS alternatives, were included in the Final EIS, which was published in September 2024. After publication of the Final EIS, the Sound Transit Board will select the project to be built.

Figure 3. WSBLE project phases and schedule



1.5 Community Engagement

A variety of community members and stakeholders are engaged in the WSLE Project. The RET directs engagement efforts to focus on reaching and hearing from Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) community members specifically. The focus on reaching those historically most impacted by public policy and infrastructure is to learn from history and engage early in understanding opportunities and solving problems. Given the COVID-19 pandemic and the disproportionate impact it has had on BIPOC communities, this has created an even bigger challenge. Therefore, this report was released as a draft during its development so that we could truth-check our work with BIPOC communities and gather more information for upcoming decisions. The report has been updated based on feedback gathered during the Draft EIS and other public comment periods.

Capacity Building

Prior to the publication of the Draft EIS and public comment period, Sound Transit sought new and expanded upon existing relationships with community groups, organizations and community members to build awareness of upcoming project milestones, get feedback on our engagement approaches and broaden our reach into communities.

In addition, Sound Transit has expanded its partnership with the City of Seattle's Department of Neighborhoods [Community Liaison program](#), a trusted advocate model. The Community Liaisons are community leaders from a variety of communities and backgrounds, including immigrant and refugee communities, communities of color, seniors, and youth. This effort aligns with our commitment to build capacity in BIPOC communities around this project and transportation knowledge generally. This partnership was particularly important during the COVID-19

pandemic when many traditional forms of communication were severely limited. During that time, Community Liaisons successfully pivoted and adapted many of their engagement practices to virtual and hybrid formats.

After a six-week project foundations training series, and before publication of the Draft EIS, the Community Liaisons built individual work plans that included community direct engagement and collaboration with community-based organizations and ethnic media to support readying BIPOC communities for the release of the Draft EIS. The partnership continued during the Draft EIS comment period to support communities' ability to access project resources and submit comments on the Draft EIS.

Prior to and during the Draft EIS publication and comment period, Community Liaisons utilized their existing community connections to provide strategic guidance and engagement support through multiple activities that included:

- Conducting in-person door-to-door outreach to businesses and peer-to-peer outreach to colleagues, community leaders, and through social events.
- Engaging community members at community events, fairs, festivals and other tabling opportunities.
- Providing virtual ethnic media and community presentations, including Somali Bridge and Korean AM TV where presentations received 55,000 and 30,000 views respectively.
- Enhancing in-language accessibility, commenting, and opportunities to share information and gather feedback during virtual public meetings and in-person events.
- Conducting in-language focus groups to inform station area planning, transit-oriented development, and station programming.

Refer to Section 4.5 for additional details.

Materials Translation and Interpretation

Leading up to and during the Draft EIS comment period, Sound Transit provided peer-reviewed translated materials and presentations online and at in-person events. Project materials, including the Online Open House website, project folios, the Draft EIS Readers Guide, the Executive Summary of the Draft EIS, and other printed project update materials were translated into Traditional Chinese, Simplified Chinese, Vietnamese, and Spanish. In response to guidance from community organizations and Community Liaisons, Sound Transit translated select additional materials in Somali, Korean, and Khmer.

Sound Transit also provided language interpretation at numerous events in the Chinatown-International District, the Delridge Corridor and at select engagement activities corridor-wide.

In West Seattle, a higher percentage of communities of color lie within the bike and transit distance of the Delridge and Avalon stations but are outside of those stations' immediate walksheds. Other station areas along the project's representative alignment are generally located within areas having populations of color at or below the city average and relatively higher average household incomes.

1.6 Racial Equity Toolkit Collaborative

The Racial Equity Toolkit Collaborative is an interagency team comprising staff from Sound Transit's WSLE and BLE projects and City staff from the Office of Planning and Community Development (OPCD), Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT), Seattle Department of Neighborhoods (DON), and the Seattle Office for Civil Rights (SOCR).

To focus and inform work toward the RET outcomes, early efforts included compiling and analyzing data on race within the corridor. Initial work described the racial and ethnic makeup of communities within a half-mile of stations along the representative alignment, using five-year American Community Survey estimates (2011-2016). Chinatown-International District (C-ID) is the only station area identified as having a concentration of communities of color in the WSBLE project corridor greater than the citywide average.

2 RET OUTCOMES

The RET process and report is structured around RET outcomes and elevates opportunities, issues and other considerations that affect communities of color and low-income populations for the public and decision-makers, informing the environmental process and project outcomes. These RET outcomes are iterative in nature and capture a snapshot in time. They may evolve based on community feedback as the project progresses. The RET Collaborative acknowledges that while the WSLE project is not responsible for past historical harms, it will contribute to cumulative effects from all infrastructure projects in the communities in the project corridor, past and future. The RET collaborative commits to close collaboration with impacted communities in an effort to repair harm.

Based on continuous community feedback throughout the alternatives development and environmental review phase, racial equity outcomes were updated as follows:

- Advance environmental and economic justice to improve economic and health outcomes for communities of color.
- Enhance mobility and access for communities of color and low-income populations.
- Create opportunities for equitable development that include expanding housing and community assets for communities of color.
- Avoid disproportionate impacts on communities of color and low-income populations.
- Create a sense of belonging for communities of color at all stations, making spaces where everyone sees themselves as belonging, feeling safe, and welcome.
- Meaningfully involve communities of color and low-income populations in the project.

Specific to the Delridge corridor, the RET team further focused on the following outcomes:

Delridge corridor RET Outcomes

- An excellent transfer experience including bus and rail integration and options for RET community-desired amenities provided at the station
- Equitable transit-oriented development serving the community

3 EIS ALTERNATIVES

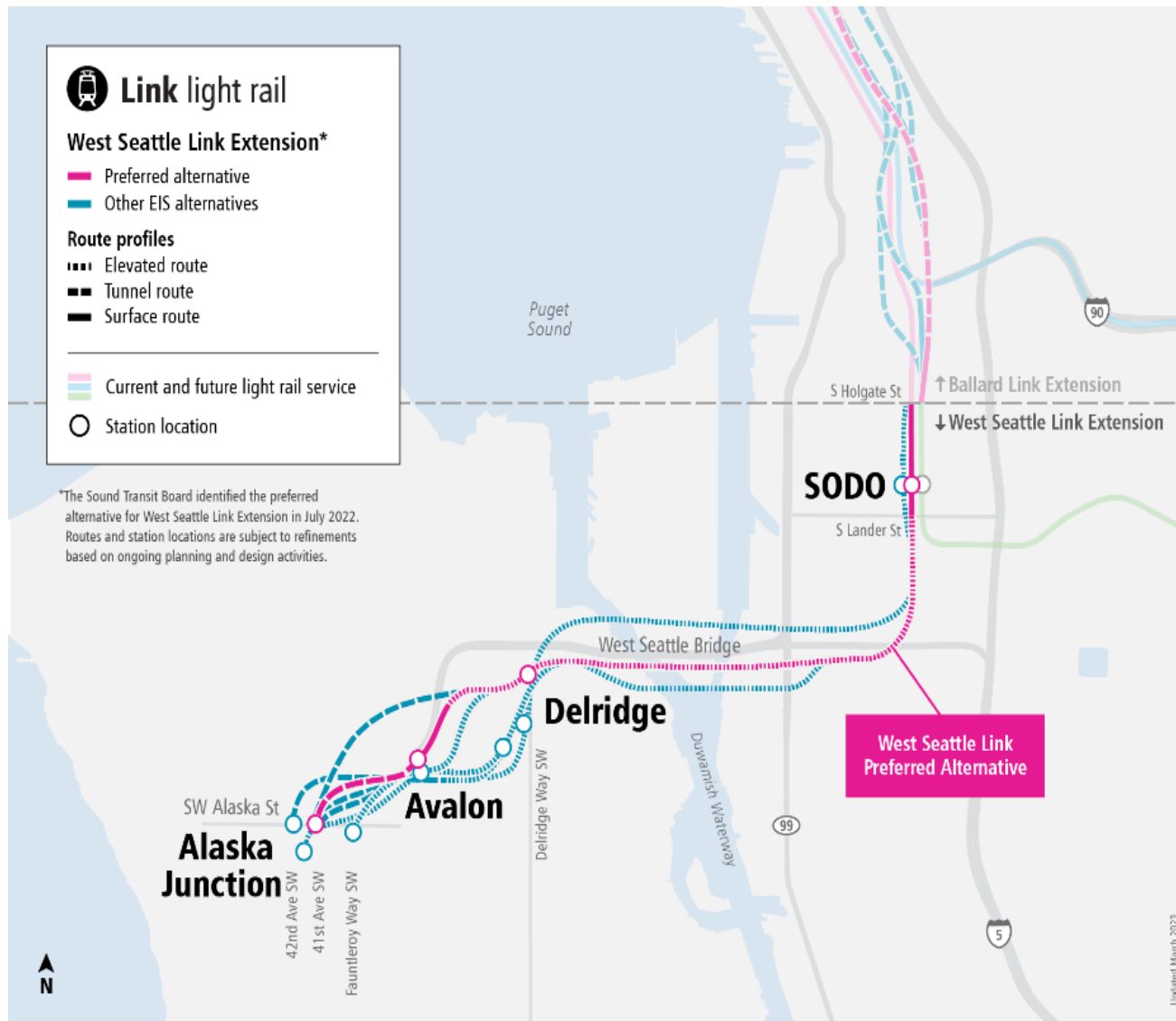
The West Seattle Link Extension would start service in 2032, initially providing service between an Alaska Junction Station and a new station in SODO. In 2039, the Ballard Link Extension would start service between Ballard Station and SODO Station, with service continuing south to the Tacoma Dome Station using the existing Link light rail 1 Line. The Ballard Link Extension project would also permanently connect the West Seattle Link Extension to the existing Link light rail line, allowing it to continue north to Lynnwood. It would eventually extend to Everett.

Two types of alternatives were evaluated in the EIS in addition to a no build alternative: preferred alternatives and other EIS alternatives. The term preferred alternative indicates a “preference” among alternatives to be considered but is not a final decision or obligation. The Board can choose the preferred alternative or another alternative as the project to be built. The WSLE alternatives studied in the Final EIS are shown in Figure 4.

The WSLE would begin south of South Holgate Street and include a new SODO Station that would allow for transfers with the existing SODO Station on the existing light rail line. The WSLE would travel south from the SODO Station across South Lander Street either at-grade or on an elevated guideway and continue south towards South Spokane Street on an elevated guideway. In the vicinity of South Spokane Street, it would turn west on a new elevated structure either north or south of the existing West Seattle Bridge, where it would cross the Duwamish Waterway (also known as the Duwamish River) on a high-level fixed bridge structure. On the west side of the Duwamish Waterway, the guideway would remain mostly elevated to the west side of the Delridge valley. In the West Seattle Junction area, the guideway could be elevated or in a tunnel. Three stations would be

constructed in West Seattle: Delridge, Avalon, and Alaska Junction.

Figure 4. WSLE EIS alternatives



4 DELRIDGE STATION EVALUATION

4.1 Neighborhood Context and Overview

The Delridge station would be in the North Delridge area, specifically in the eastern section of the Youngstown neighborhood. The station area is defined by a blended 10-minute walkshed from each of the Draft EIS Alternatives. This geography is characterized by a mix of land uses of highly differentiated scales on successive blocks, ranging from the massive industrial footprint of Nucor Steel and large-floorplate commercial and office around SW Andover Street to small-lot, one-story single-family homes between SW Dakota and SW Genesee Streets.

Much of the land within the station area is currently zoned single family (41%), with substantial areas zoned low-rise (25%), industrial (13%), and parks/open space (13%).

The Delridge neighborhood possesses rich community and cultural assets clustered around SW Genesee Street, including the Youngstown Cultural Arts Center and Delridge Community Center. These places function as community hubs, integrating the neighborhood's arts and nature-based identity. Notable ecological and topographic features help to define the edges of the neighborhood. To the west, Longfellow Creek separates the eastern two blocks of the Youngstown neighborhood from the rest, with only two full-service bridges spanning it. To the east, Pigeon Point rises sharply between Delridge Way SW and 23rd Avenue SW, with one hill climb on SW Genesee Street and few ADA-compliant sidewalks negotiating the steep grade.

In the last ten years, one multifamily apartment building has been constructed (the 195-unit Youngstown Flats) in the station area, in a block with commercial zoning. Median asking rents have

increased by 57% over the past 10 years compared to a citywide average of 34%, though this figure is skewed by the effect of the new Youngstown Flats development on otherwise limited supply of rental residential stock in the neighborhood. Most new development in the station area has been in the form of for-sale residential townhomes, with average sale values nearing \$600,000 as of August 2018. This represents a 120% increase in median home value within the preceding 5 years.

In 2018, the City of Seattle published the North Delridge Action Plan that highlighted health and equity concerns in the neighborhood. The study area for the plan included five blocks on either side of Delridge Way SW from the West Seattle Bridge to SW Elmgrove Street. The Plan outlined six priority areas based on a Healthy Living Assessment (HLA). The HLA observed data including census, food access, transportation, goods and services, recreation, economic opportunities, and access to affordable housing to identify existing assets and services as well as gaps in the health-supportive infrastructure:

- None of the Delridge planning area is within a half mile of a grocery store that accepts Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), called Basic Food in Washington, which provides monthly benefits to low-income people to buy food.
- Fewer people ride a bicycle, walk or take transit than the City as a whole (20% compared to 32%). About half (52%) of the road network has sidewalks on both sides.
- Eight of the eleven neighborhood services considered to be supportive of a complete neighborhood (e.g., childcare, library and schools) are present, but only five of the thirteen shop types (e.g., banks, pharmacy, food stores) are available.
- Delridge has many parks and recreation resources and 24% of the Delridge Health Reporting Area (HRA) are

children 17 and younger, but only 42% of the area is within ¼ mile of a playground.

- Unemployment was higher than Seattle as a whole (9.4% versus 6.3%).
- Fewer Delridge residents have at least a bachelor's degree than citywide (37% versus 55% citywide).

Analytical work performed by the RET Collaborative during the alternatives development phase indicated the Delridge Station as a potential area of focus with respect to racial equity outcomes. While the immediate vicinity of the station area has a relatively low non-white share of the population (28%), the station would serve as a major transfer for high-capacity bus service on the Delridge Way corridor. This service, which includes the new RapidRide H line, will connect large communities of color residing several miles away in South Delridge and White Center into the Link light rail system. The station would also be the closest high-capacity transit station to South Seattle College, where students of color account for 43% of the enrollment as of the 2019-2020 academic year.¹

4.2 RET Outcomes

The socioeconomic and cultural context of the Delridge corridor reveals why it is a prime area of focus for the Racial Equity Toolkit work on the WSLE project. Since the initiation of project development in 2018, City and Sound Transit staff reviewed past community plans and surveys, had direct conversations with community stakeholders, and reached out to community members in a variety of ways to learn about the potential benefits

and burdens of the project from the perspective of communities most harmed by racialization in the Delridge corridor. The early research and community feedback yielded two high-level racial equity outcomes to achieve in delivering the WSLE project in the neighborhood. This section introduces each outcome, along with how it connects to the history and future of the communities in the Delridge corridor.

An excellent transfer experience including bus and rail integration and options for RET community-desired amenities provided at the station. The intimate geography of Longfellow Creek and Puget Ridge inspired the naming of the neighborhoods known collectively as Delridge, as well as the name of the street spine that acts as the thin ribbon of connectivity between these neighborhoods and the city beyond. This same geography has also served to limit the density of development and services along the corridor, a condition that affects access to opportunity for the diverse communities residing in it. For this reason, the City of Seattle and King County Metro identified the Delridge Corridor as one of the first candidates for expansion of the RapidRide bus rapid transit network. Similarly, the WSLE project includes a station near Delridge Way to integrate with bus service on the corridor and provide a connection to the regional transit system. The first pillar of racial equity for the WSLE project in Delridge is to ensure excellent bus and rail integration. This can be measured quantitatively – in terms of decreased travel times and speed of transfers – as well as qualitatively, including what kinds of services, opportunities, and features contribute to a dignified experience of using transit. The [Station Planning Progress Report](#), along with this report, offer evaluations and ideas for enhancing the transfer experience at Delridge.

¹ South Seattle College Data Dashboard, accessed 1/14/2022
[https://www.seattlecolleges.edu/administration/institutional-](https://www.seattlecolleges.edu/administration/institutional-effectiveness/strategic-plan-scorecard/data-dashboard)

[effectiveness/strategic-plan-scorecard/data-dashboard](https://www.seattlecolleges.edu/administration/institutional-effectiveness/strategic-plan-scorecard/data-dashboard)

As design continues to advance, the Sound Transit team has worked collaboratively with the City of Seattle and King County Metro to incorporate additional improvements to the transfer experience at the Delridge Station for the preferred alternative. Updated designs as of late 2023 can be found on our [project website](#)² including meeting materials from station and access planning open houses from October 2023 and March 2024.

Equitable transit-oriented development serving the community.

The Delridge Station area has a long history as a commercial and cultural node of activity, owing to its proximity to transportation links off the West Seattle Peninsula, and adjacency to the major industrial facility now known as Nucor Steel. The first transit line to West Seattle, a streetcar, ran on tracks close to the proposed new alignments. This connectivity, and the success of the steel plant, transformed the once rich tide flats on Elliott Bay into the bustling neighborhood of Youngstown, much of which developed under the control of the steel company. As predecessors to Nucor divested their property holdings, the fabric and connection between residents, businesses, and property owners were altered, even though the neighborhood retained its smaller-scale, residential feel. It is thus understandable that the prospect of a new light rail station and new development is viewed as a potentially substantial change to the history and trajectory of the neighborhood. The second pillar of racial equity for Delridge is to ensure that the WSLE project creates opportunities for equitable, community-directed development that serves the broader Delridge community, particularly communities of color, low-income and other vulnerable populations. This can manifest in affordable housing – including opportunities for affordable home ownership – as well as commercial uses and services for nearby residents and neighbors connecting to the station by bus. Food access and places of gathering are particularly desired and

valued. These opportunities are defined and evaluated in this report, as well as the [Station Planning Progress Report](#).

Updated designs for the preferred alternative as of late 2023 can be found on the [project website](#) including meeting materials from station and access planning open houses from October 2023 and March 2024.

Displacement in Project Areas

While Sound Transit cannot ensure that the demographic profile of the neighborhood remains intact, property acquired by Sound Transit to support construction of the new station would be developed in a manner consistent with Sound Transit's Equitable Transit-Oriented Development (eTOD) Policy and shaped by inclusive and ongoing community engagement. The eTOD Policy directs Sound Transit to consider transit-oriented development potential early in project development and authorizes the agency to pursue opportunities for integrated TOD with station design and delivery, along with working with communities on strategies to minimize displacement. It prioritizes affordable housing as a use on property that Sound Transit acquires in full for the project, and supports the inclusion of retail, offices, and community spaces that contribute to creating vibrant neighborhoods connected by transit.

² <https://westseattlelink.participate.online/>

What is a displacement?

In the context of the WSLE EIS evaluation, “displacement” refers to the need for Sound Transit to acquire or otherwise assume use of private property in order to construct the project, which may permanently change the ownership of the site. This can also be referred to as a **direct displacement**.

Indirect displacement refers to displacement that can occur as a result of gentrification or other factors related to the development of new infrastructure, such as a new transit station or line. Examples of indirect displacement include economic and cultural displacement.

- **Economic displacement** occurs when a household is compelled to relocate due to the economic pressures of increased housing costs or other costs of living.
- **Cultural displacement** occurs when people choose to move because their neighbors and culturally related businesses and institutions have left the area. For communities of color, immigrants, and refugees, social cohesion can often play a bigger role in location decisions than for other populations, and social networks within racial and ethnic communities may take on a greater importance than for other populations. Measuring cultural displacement is difficult since no systematic survey of households exists that asks why they have chosen to relocate. However, some indicators of cultural displacement can be measured at the neighborhood scale.

4.3 Delridge Segment EIS Alternatives

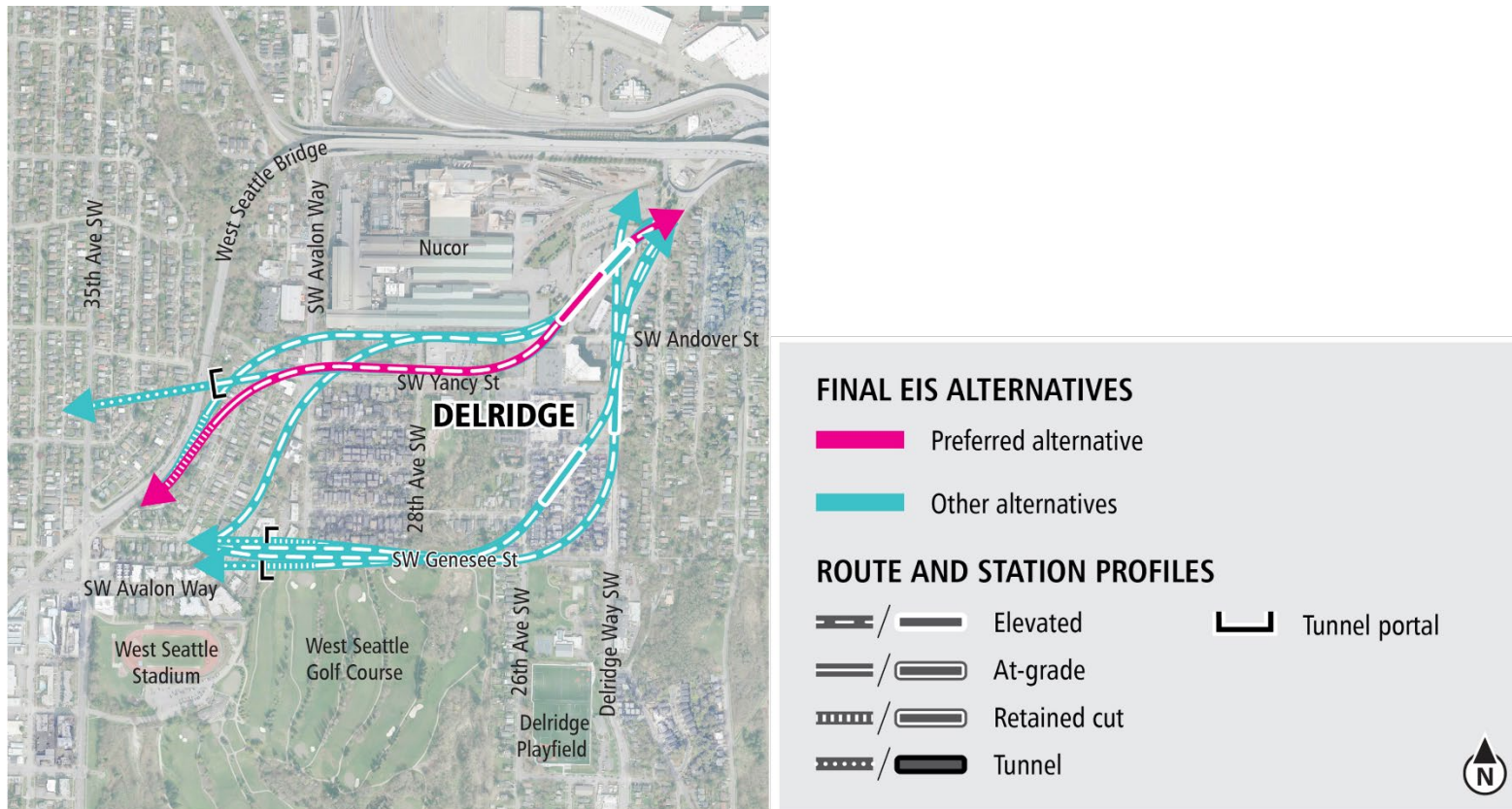
Overview

The EIS evaluated a broad range of alternatives for the WSLE. The alternatives were developed based on community feedback received during the Alternatives Development phase, including recommendations from the WSBLE Stakeholder Advisory Group and Elected Leadership Group. Additional feedback received through Neighborhood Forums and workshops with agency partners helped shape the alternatives. This process led to the Sound Transit Board identifying Preferred Alternatives and Other Alternatives to be studied in the Draft EIS. Following publication of the Draft EIS in 2022 and subsequent public comment period, the Sound Transit Board confirmed and modified a preferred alternative in July 2022. Their action was based on Draft EIS analysis, results from the Phase 2 RET report, and feedback from Tribes, community members, and agency partners.

The project team began work on the Final EIS in August 2022, and completed it in September 2024. The following sections describe the alternatives studied in the EIS that would affect the Delridge neighborhood, which is the focus for RET evaluation for the WSLE project.

The alternatives include multiple station and alignment options located within the North Delridge neighborhood (Figure 5). The Delridge Segment of the project includes the area between SW Charlestown Street and 31st Avenue SW and one station, the Delridge Station. The station locations can generally be characterized as being in three different locations with differing guideway and station heights depending on each alternative’s connection to the Avalon Station and West Seattle Junction.

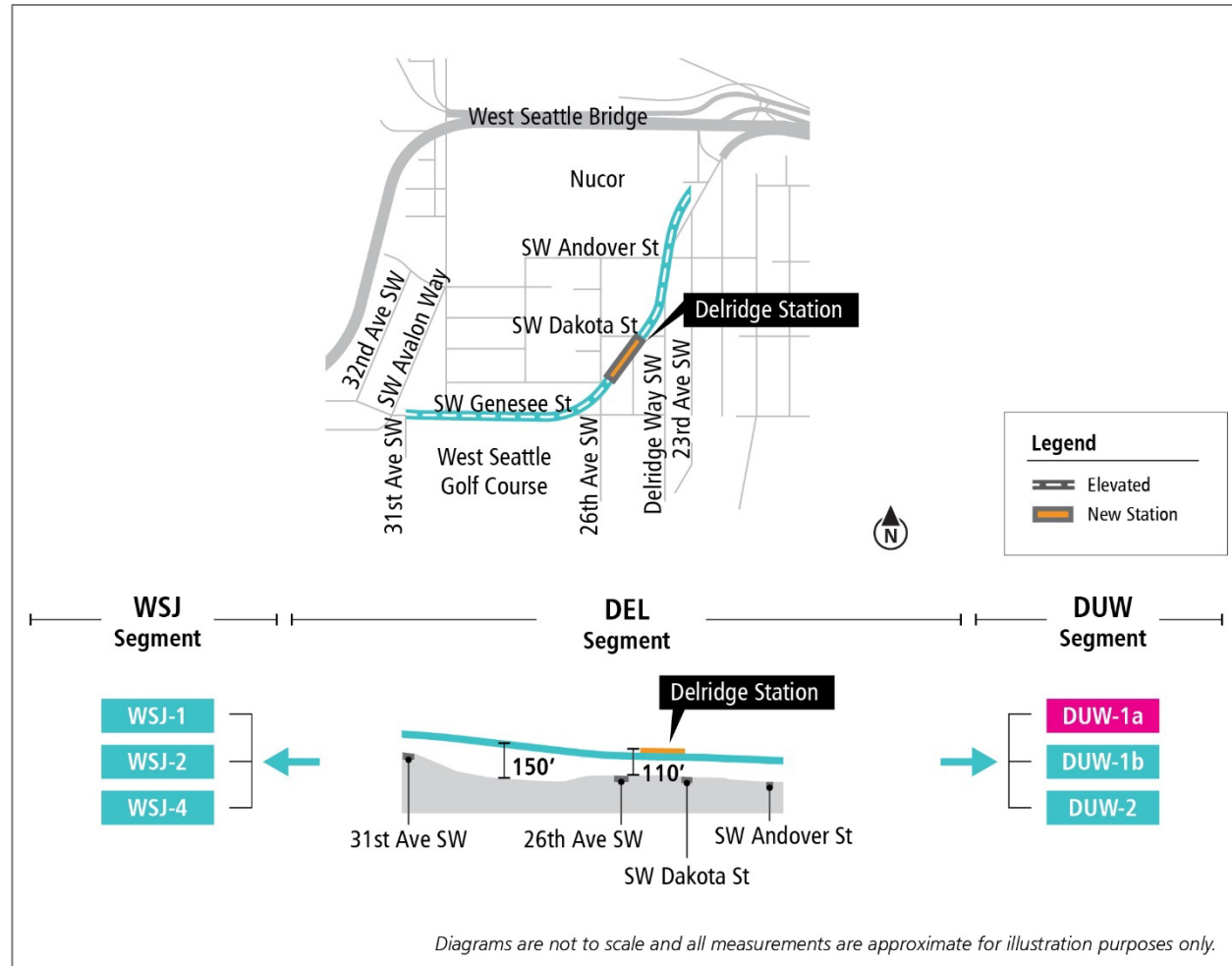
Figure 5. Final EIS alternatives in the Delridge segment



Dakota Street Station Alternative (DEL-1a)

In the Dakota Street Station Alternative (DEL-1a), the station would be elevated between Delridge Way SW and 26th Avenue SW, south of SW Dakota Street, and oriented southwest-northeast. The top of the station structure would be approximately 110 feet high. The plan and profile for this alternative are shown in Figure 6.

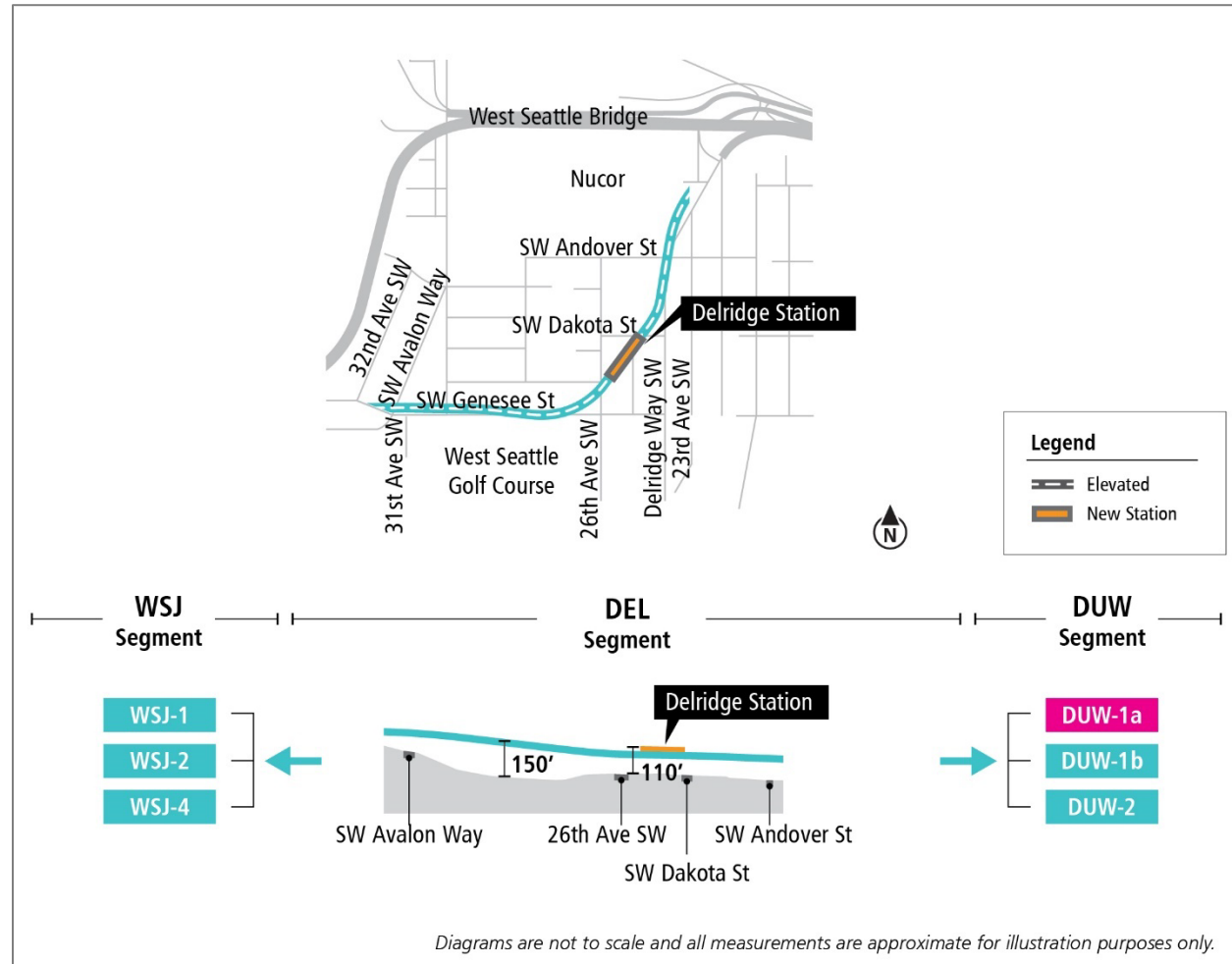
Figure 6. Plan and Profile for Dakota Street Station Alternative (DEL-1a)



Dakota Street Station North Alignment Option (DEL-1b)

In the Dakota Street Station North Alignment Option (DEL-1b), the station would be similar in height and location to the Dakota Street Station Alternative (DEL-1a) but the elevated guideway south of the station differs from DEL-1a. The plan and profile for this alignment option are shown in Figure 7.

Figure 7. Plan and Profile for Dakota Street Station North Alignment Option (DEL-1b)

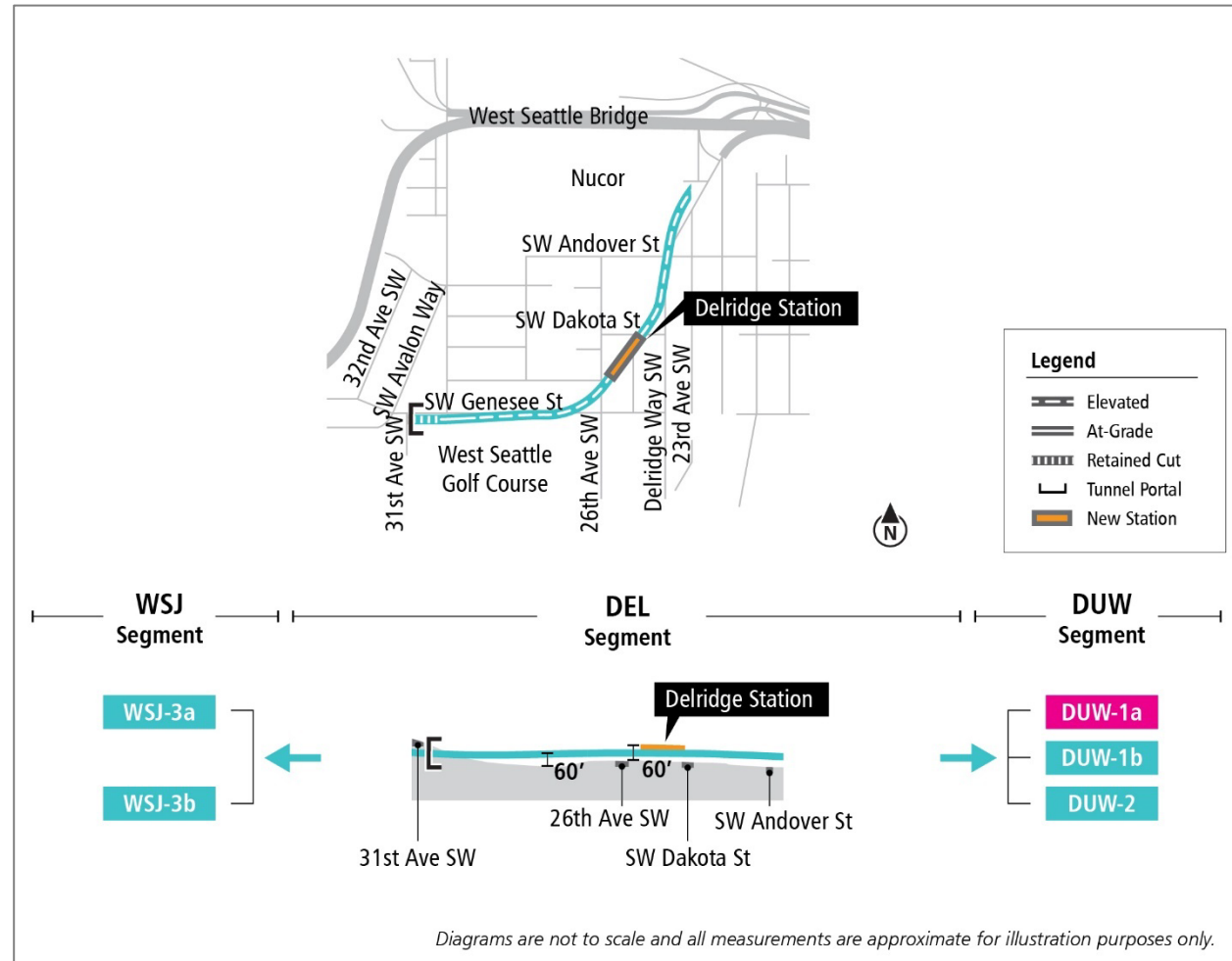


Dakota Street Station Lower Height Alternative (DEL-2a)

In the Dakota Street Station Lower Height Alternative (DEL-2a), the station would be in the same location as the Dakota Street Station Alternative (DEL-1a), but the station would be at a lower elevation to connect to tunnel alternatives in the West Seattle Junction Segment. The top of the station structure would be approximately 60 feet high.

To accommodate the station, 25th Avenue SW would be permanently closed between SW Dakota Street and SW Genesee Street. The plan and profile for this alternative are shown in Figure 8.

Figure 8. Plan and Profile for Dakota Street Station Lower Height Alternative (DEL-2a)

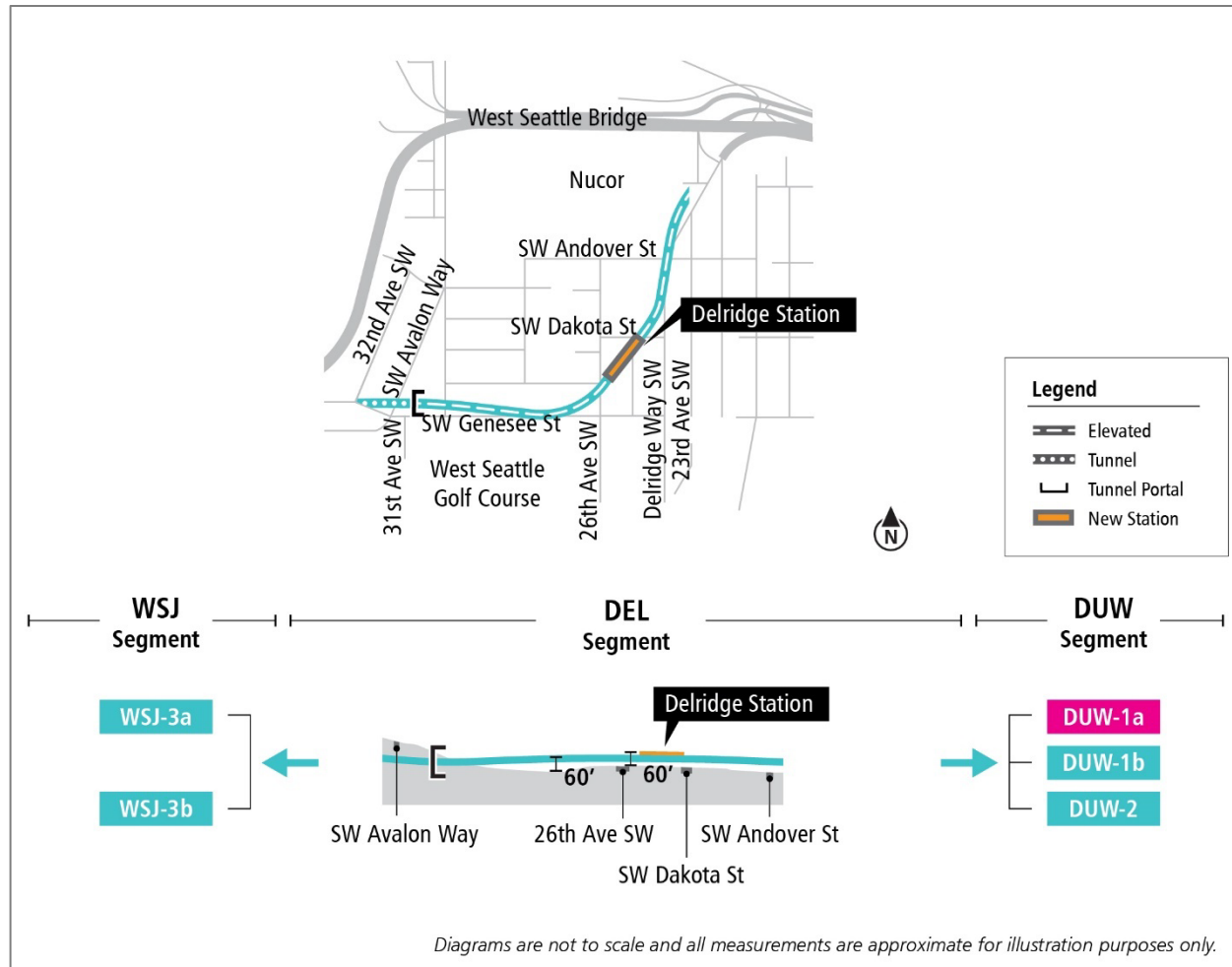


Dakota Street Station Lower Height North Alignment Option (DEL-2b)

In the Dakota Street Station Lower Height North Alignment Option (DEL-2b), the station location and height would be similar to the Dakota Street Station Lower Height Alternative (DEL-2a). The plan and profile for this alternative are shown in Figure 9.

To accommodate the station, 25th Avenue SW would be permanently closed between SW Dakota Street and SW Genesee Street. Access to SW Genesee Street from 30th Avenue SW would be permanently closed with a turnaround at the south end of the road.

Figure 9. Plan and Profile for Dakota Street Station Lower Height North Alignment Option (DEL 2b)

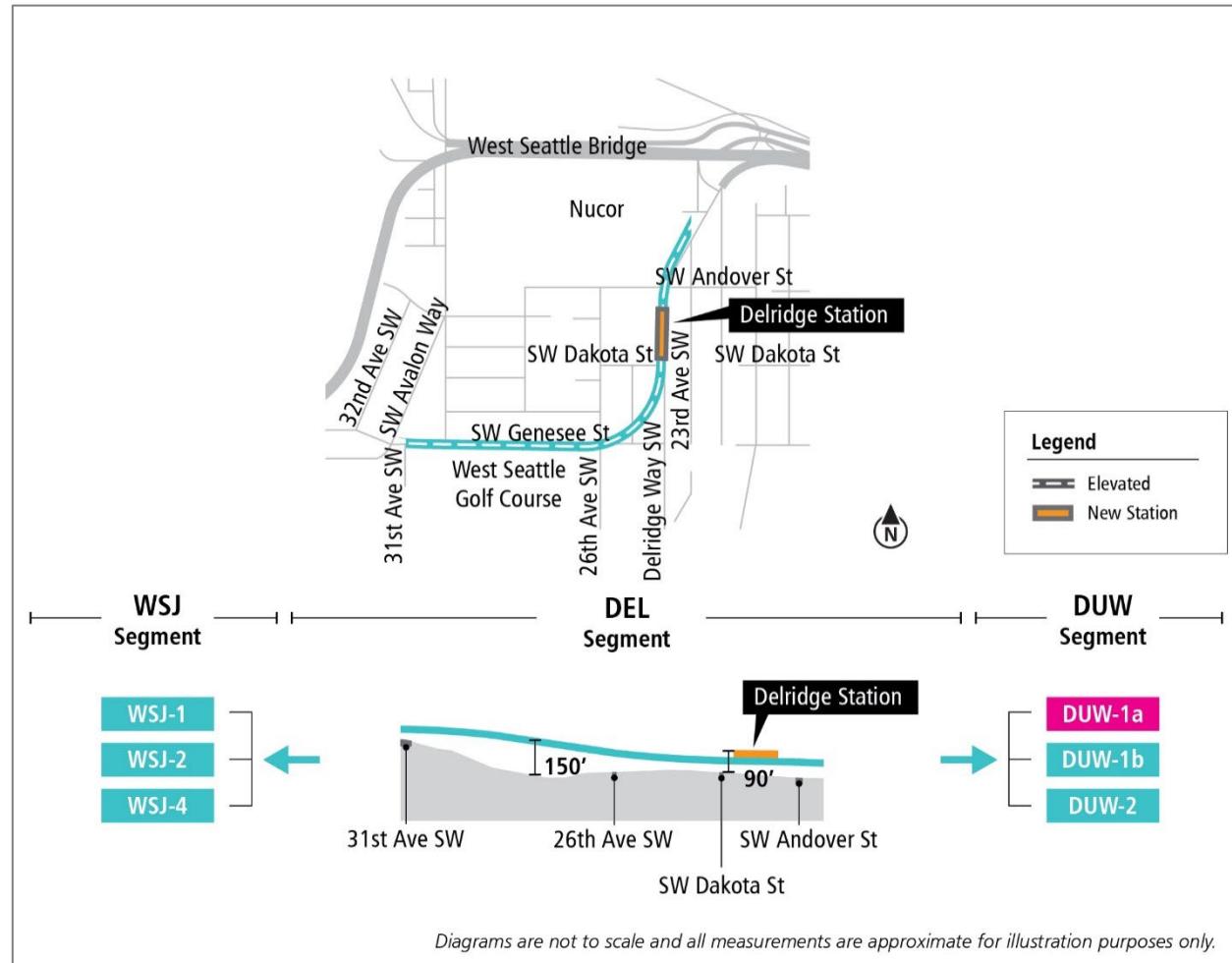


Delridge Way Station Alternative (DEL-3)

In the Delridge Way Station Alternative (DEL-3), the station would be in the middle of Delridge Way SW, north of SW Dakota Street, and the top of the station structure would be approximately 90 feet high. Station access would be from adjacent streets, including both sides of Delridge Way SW.

The plan and profile for this alternative are shown in Figure 10.

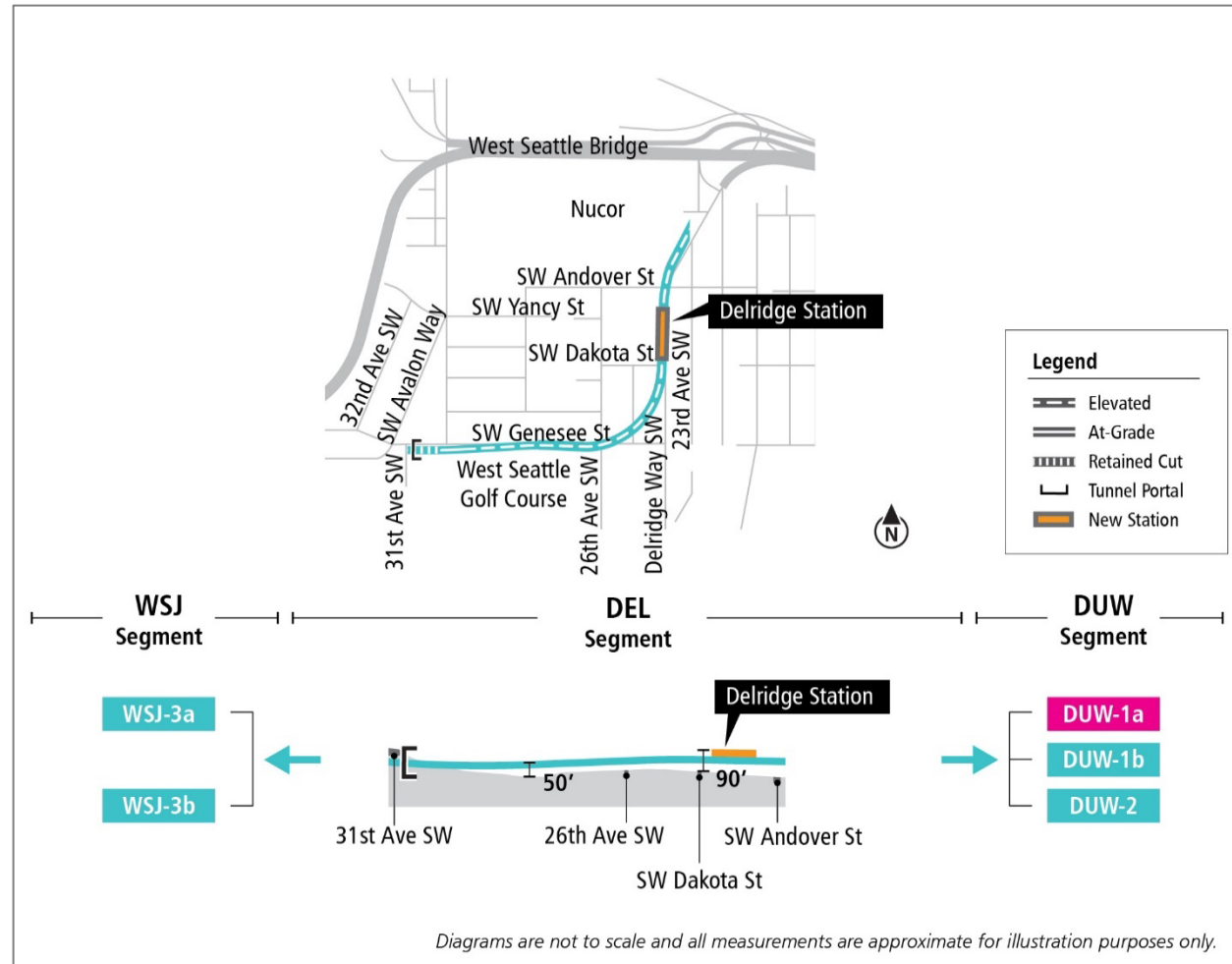
Figure 10. Plan and Profile for Delridge Way Station Alternative (DEL-3)



Delridge Way Station Lower Height Alternative (DEL-4)

In the Delridge Way Station Lower Height Alternative (DEL-4), the station location, height, and access would be similar to Alternative DEL-3, but would connect to tunnel alternatives in the West Seattle Junction Segment. The plan and profile for this alternative are shown in Figure 11.

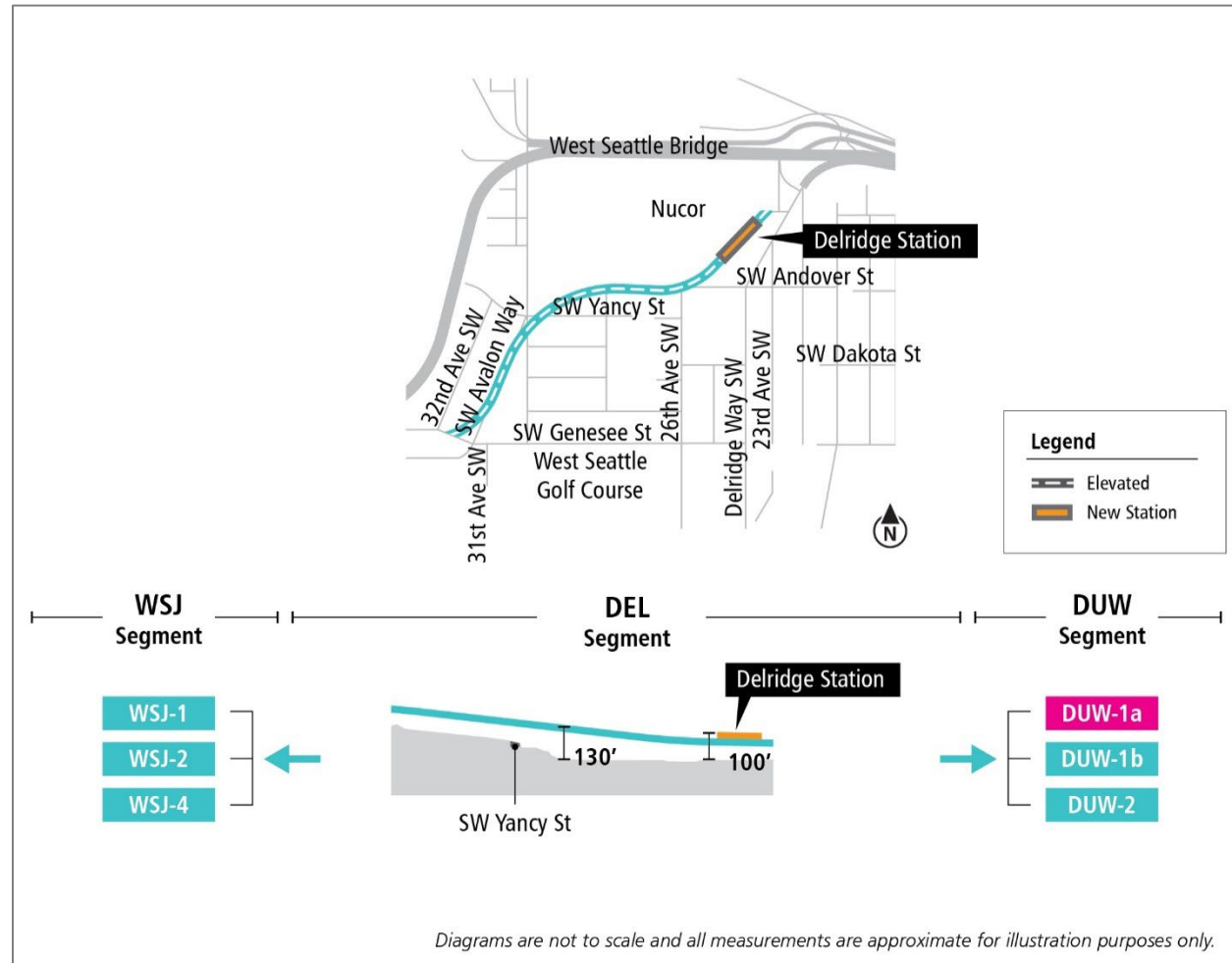
Figure 11. Plan and Profile for Delridge Way Station Lower Height Alternative (DEL-4)



Andover Street Station Alternative (DEL-5)

In the Andover Street Station Alternative (DEL-5), the station would be elevated, north of SW Andover Street and west of Delridge Way SW, in a northeast-southwest orientation. The top of the station structure would be approximately 100 feet high. The plan and profile for this alternative are shown in Figure 12.

Figure 12. Plan and Profile for Andover Street Station Alternative (DEL-5)

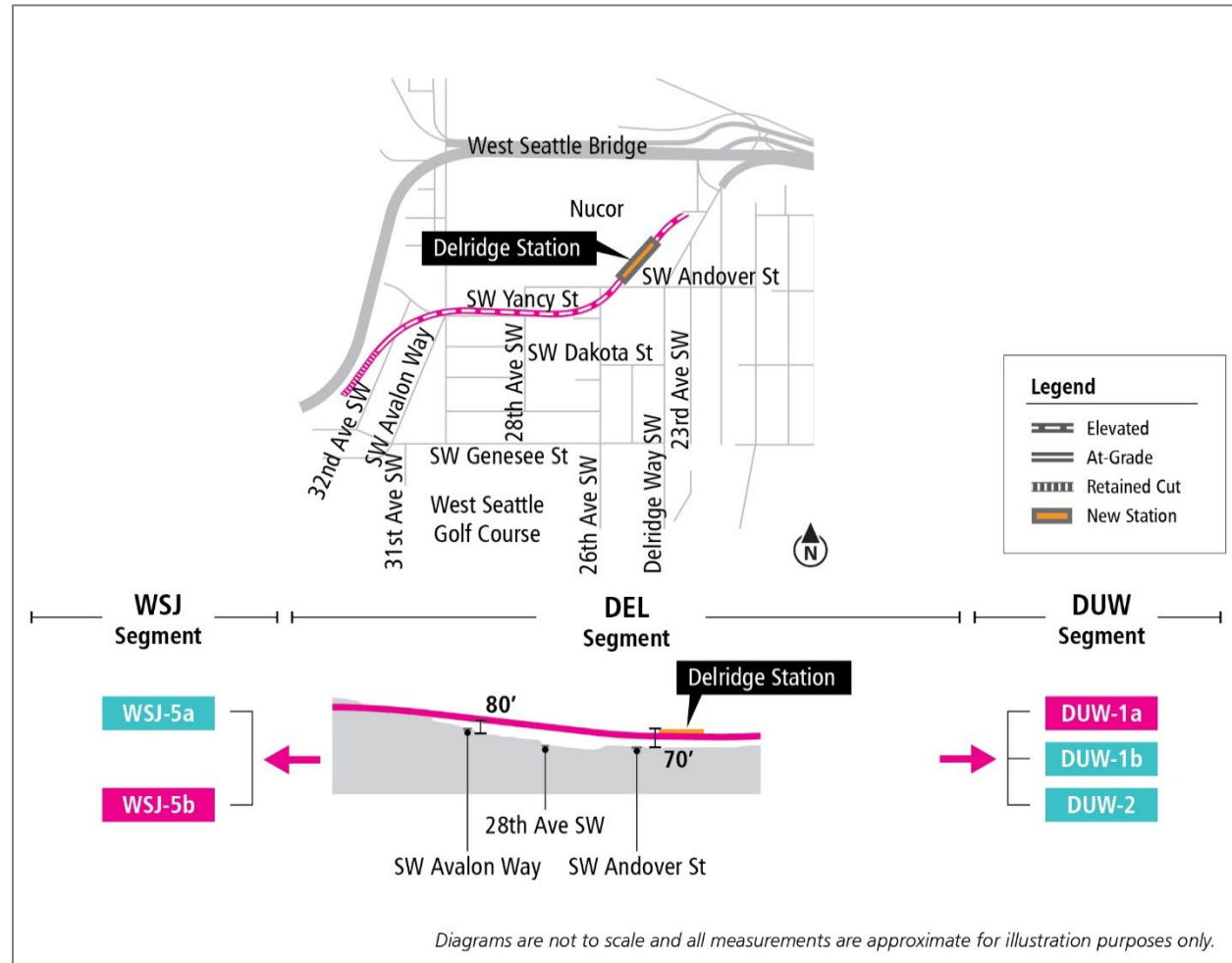


Andover Street Station Lower Height South Alignment Option (DEL-6b)

Option DEL-6b is a refinement of Alternative DEL-6a developed in response to public and agency comments and Sound Transit Board direction to study refinement options to enhance station access, prioritize an integrated and well-designed transfer experience from buses to light rail, and address concerns over potential displacements of organizations serving low-income populations and communities of color. In this alignment option, the station location would be similar to the Andover Street Station Lower Height Alternative (DEL-6a) but the top of the station structure would be lower, at approximately 70 feet high. The plan and profile for this alignment option are shown in Figure 14.

This design option includes roadway improvements at the intersection of Delridge Way SW and 23rd Avenue SW.

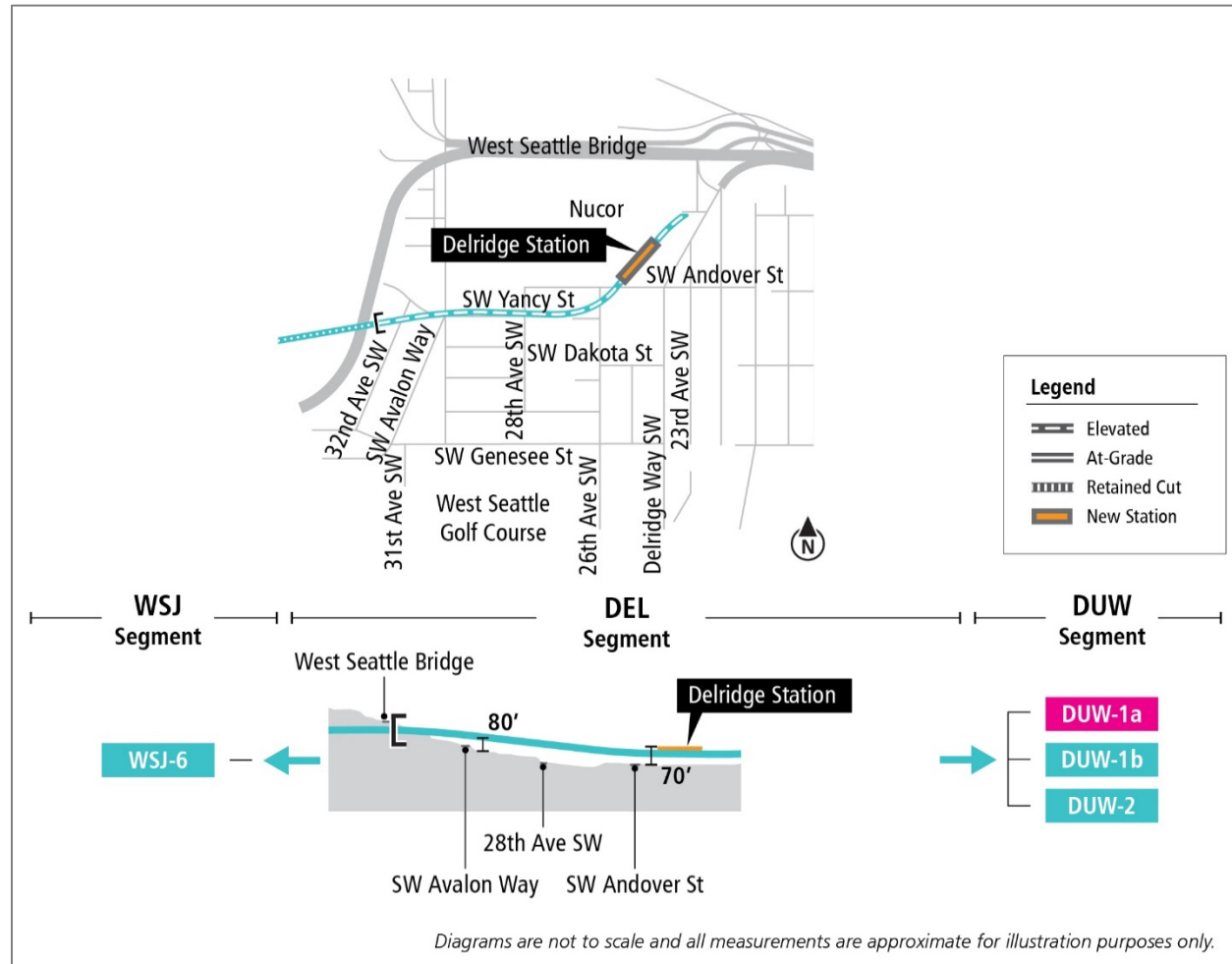
Figure 14. Plan and Profile for Andover Street Station Lower Height South Alignment Option (DEL-6b)



Andover Street Station Lower Height No Avalon Station Tunnel Connection (DEL-7)

Alternative DEL-7 is included at the direction of the Sound Transit Board to study elimination of the Avalon Station as a potential cost-savings measure. This refinement would be similar to Option DEL-6b up to and including Delridge Station and reflects a more direct alignment between the Delridge Station and the West Seattle Junction Station with the elimination of an Avalon Station in the West Seattle Junction Segment. The top of the station structure would be approximately 70 feet high. The plan and profile for this alternative are shown in Figure 15.

Figure 15. Plan and Profile for Andover Street Station Lower Height No Avalon Station Tunnel Connection (DEL-7)



4.4 Evaluation Summary

Desired outcomes for the Delridge Station area were developed during the first step of the RET process and refined through ongoing community engagement. These outcomes are **an excellent transfer experience including bus and rail integration and options for RET community-desired amenities provided at the station and equitable transit-oriented development serving the community**. This section summarizes the RET evaluation as it relates to these outcomes, focusing on two areas of impacts and benefits: bus-rail integration and potential for equitable transit-oriented development. The following text defines these focus areas, and summarizes high-level findings, with additional detailed provided in the following sections.

Bus-rail integration: Evaluates how connections between bus and light rail affect different users. This relates directly to the outcome of an excellent transfer experience including bus and rail integration and options for RET community-desired amenities provided at the station.

- Assuming the primary bus pathway to remain on Delridge Way SW, the Delridge Way Station Alternatives (DEL-3 and DEL-4) provide the most direct transfer environment between buses and light rail. The Dakota Street Station (DEL-1a, DEL-1b, DEL-2a and DEL-2b), and the Andover Station Alternatives (DEL-5, DEL-6a, DEL-6b and DEL-7) would require buses to deviate off of Delridge Way SW, which could add time to trips. The Andover Street Station Alternatives are further north and would require a longer bus ride to access the station. Among the Dakota Street Station Alternatives, DEL-1a and DEL-1b, a trip from the station entrance to the platform could take approximately 1-1.5 minutes longer when compared to the lower height stations, DEL-2a and DEL-2b.

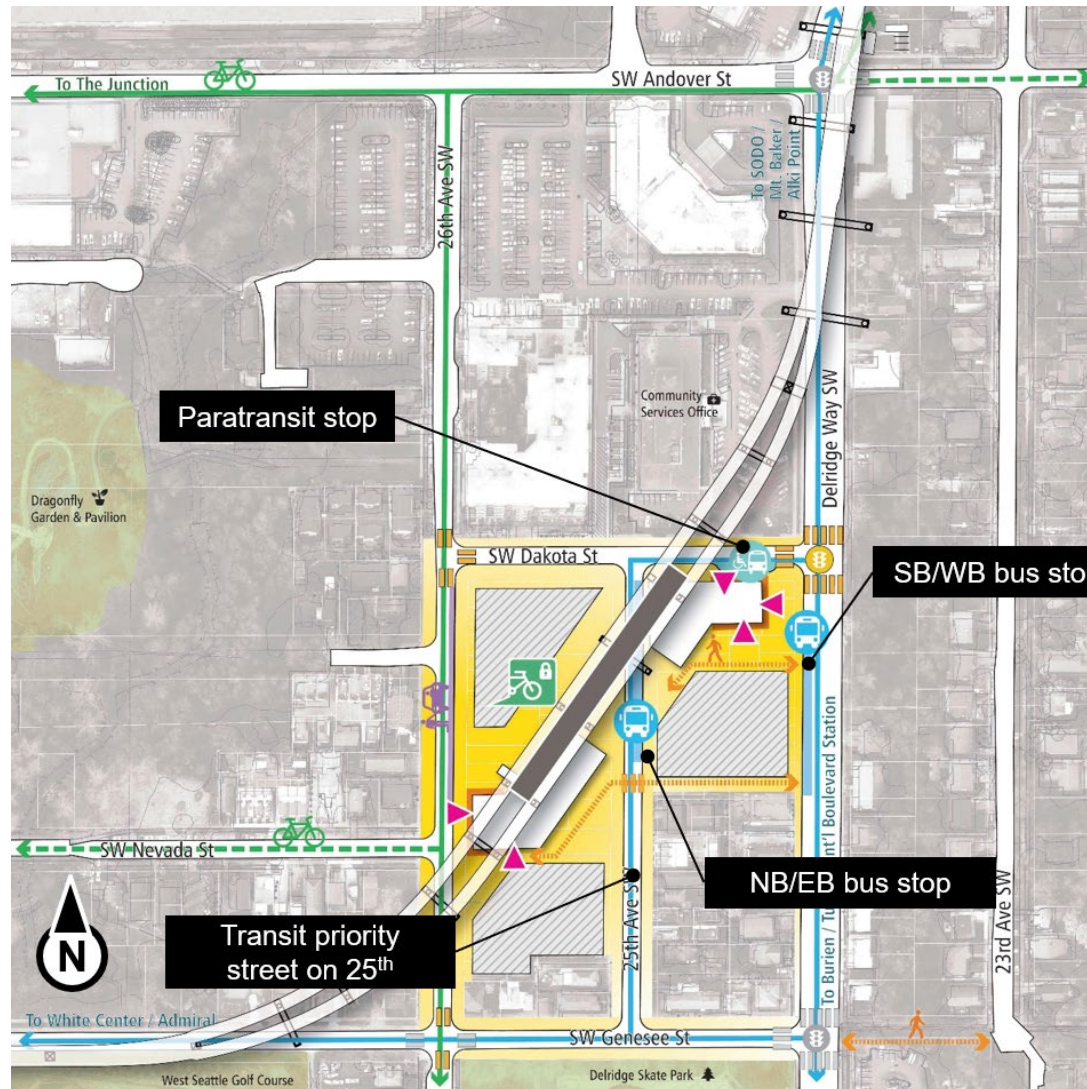
- In addition to route efficiency and travel time, urban design and station area land use shape passengers' experience of the transfer between bus and rail. The Delridge Way Station Alternatives would largely rely on streetscape enhancements along Delridge Way SW, along with small transit plazas adjacent to station entrances. The Dakota Street Station Alternatives offer the most potential for new services in adjacent transit-oriented development, as well as opportunity for well-designed plazas and street environments around the station. The Andover Street Station Alternatives would offer some potential for new public spaces as well as services in transit-oriented development, but these might not be as conveniently placed.

Potential for equitable transit-oriented development: The construction of light rail stations and guideway in urban environments often involves the displacement of businesses and residents but also opens the potential for new development that can become a community asset. This area of evaluation speaks to the outcome of equitable transit-oriented development serving the community.

- The Dakota Street Station and Andover Station Alternatives provide more predictable redevelopment scenarios given the potential property acquisition requirements for the project and therefore the most potential for equitable TOD when compared to the Delridge Way Station Alternatives.

The sections below describe the evaluation and findings in greater detail.

Figure 16. Transit integration diagram for Dakota Street Station alternatives

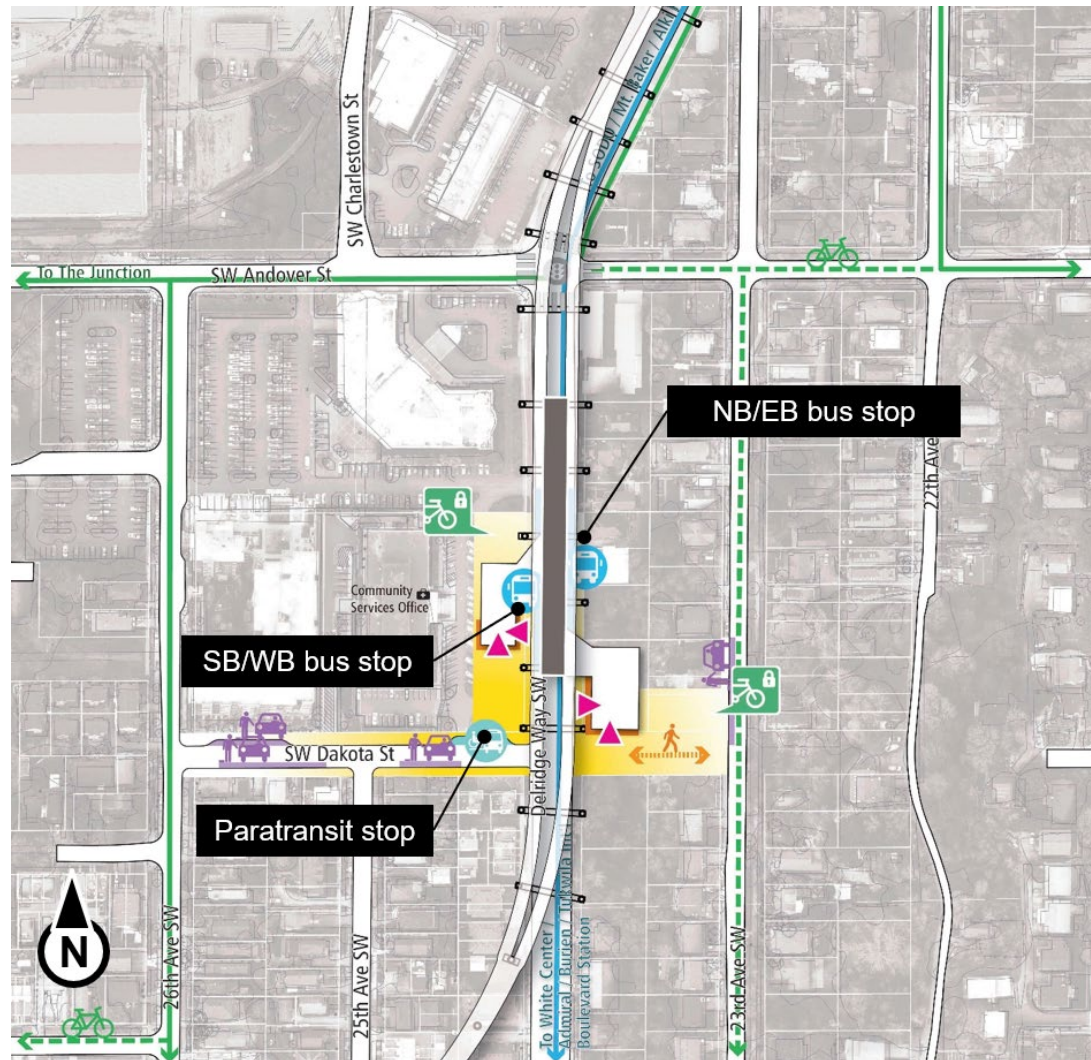


Bus-Rail Integration

The Delridge station will be a key transfer point for current and future high-capacity bus routes serving South Seattle College and the Delridge Way SW corridor, including the future RapidRide H line. Siting and configuring the station for easy bus transfer zones and optimum circulation of buses will be important determinants of a high-quality transit integration experience at the station. Because this is already a busy transit corridor, disruptions to transit service during construction are also considered here.

With respect to transit integration, assuming the bus corridor to be on Delridge Way SW, the **Dakota Street Station Alternatives**, DEL-1a, DEL-1b, DEL-2a and DEL-2b, would require buses to deviate off of Delridge Way SW which could add time to trips, both for passengers transferring to light rail and those who would continue on the bus route. Figure 16 shows the transit integration concept for the Dakota Street Station Alternatives. While buses would have to detour off of Delridge Way SW, bus stops would be located near station entrances facilitating convenient access to the station entrances. Bus stops could be well-served by potential equitable transit-oriented development that could include ground-floor retail uses and services such as grocery, daycare, and social services, and could connect to a network of public spaces serving the community.

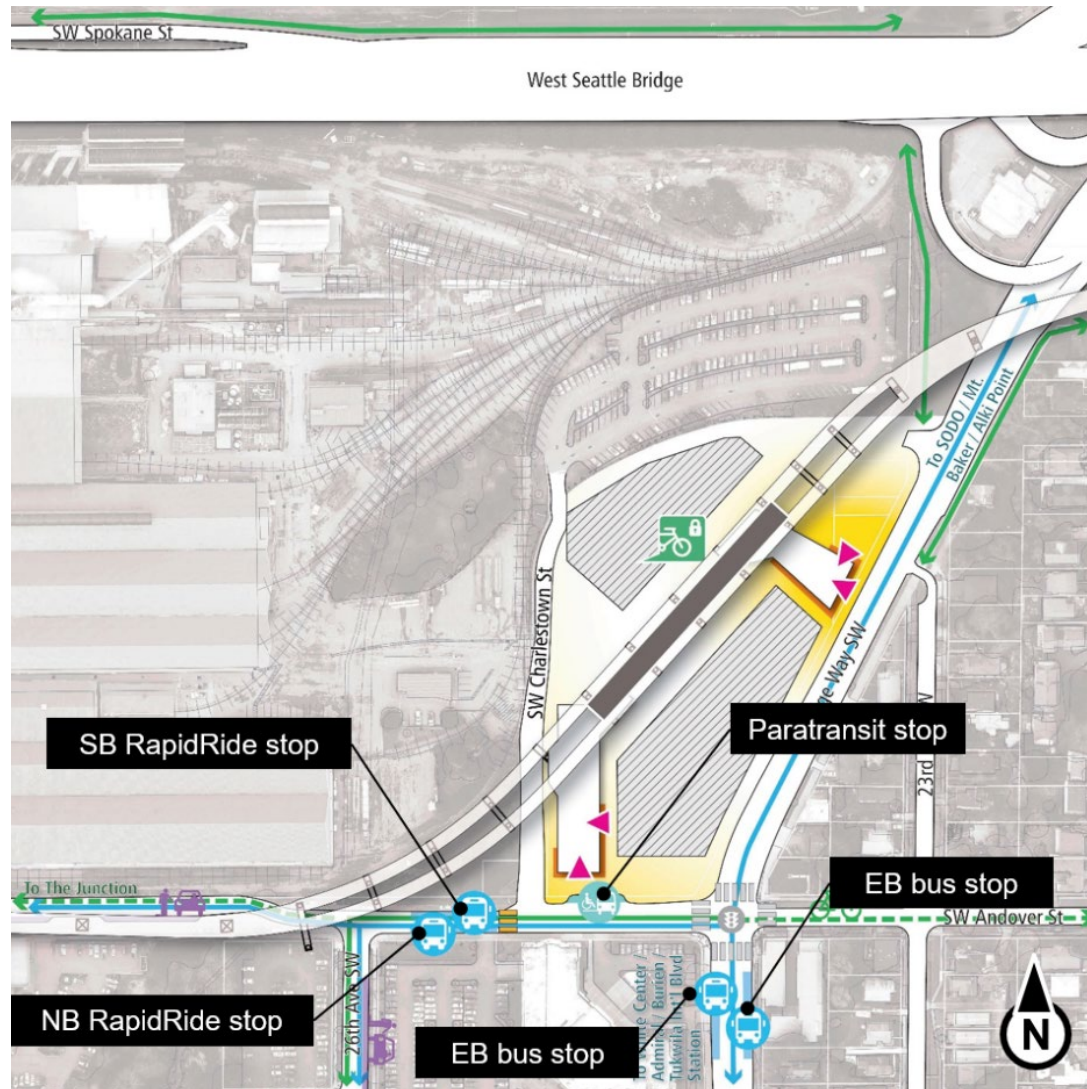
Figure 17. Transit integration diagram for Delridge Way Station alternatives



The **Delridge Way Station Alternatives**, DEL-3 and DEL-4, with a station elevated above Delridge Way SW would allow access from bus zones on both sides of Delridge Way SW, minimizing the walking distance between stops and station entrances. While there would be opportunity to improve streetscaping, unless the arterial designation of Delridge Way is rethought, the elevated guideway could result in a less hospitable street environment for all modes. Additionally, the property acquisition for this alternative would not yield development opportunities consistent with Sound Transit's eTOD policy, potentially resulting in fewer passenger-oriented services unless redevelopment by others occurs. Figure 17 shows the transit integration diagram for the Delridge Way Station alternatives.

The **Andover Street Station Alternatives**, DEL-5, DEL-6a, DEL-6b, and DEL-7 would require buses to deviate off of Delridge Way SW (northbound-only for DEL-6b and DEL-7) which could add time to trips, both for passengers transferring to light rail and those who would continue on the bus route. For DEL-5 and DEL-6a (Figure 18), bus stops are proposed just west of the station entrance, necessitating a crossing of an existing access point to Nucor Steel, as well as busy Andover Street. For DEL-6b and DEL-7 (Figure 19), northbound buses would deviate off of Delridge at Andover to provide direct station access via a new transit-only road. Southbound buses would remain on Delridge and provide access to the station via a station plaza. A new

Figure 18. Transit integration diagram for Andover Street alternatives DEL-5 and DEL-6a

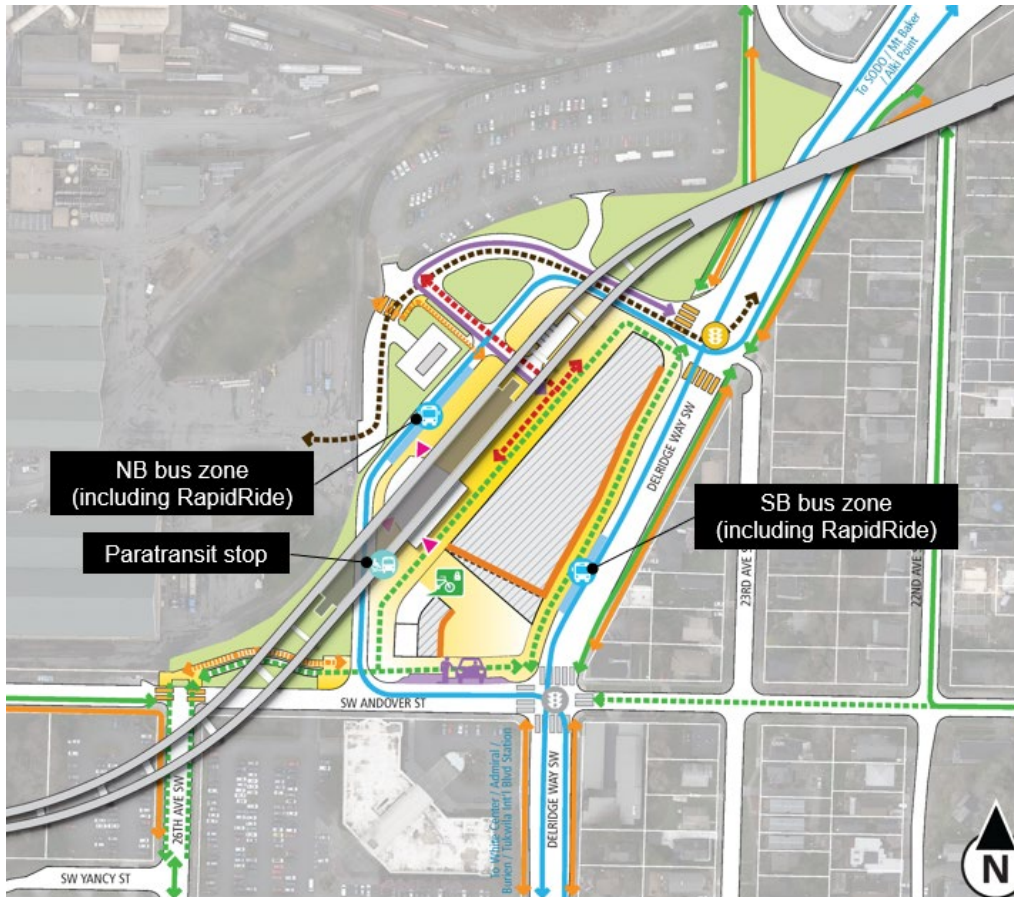


road connecting to Delridge near 23rd Avenue W would provide a pathway for Nucor freight vehicles to access the site along with vehicle access to a potential future equitable transit-oriented development.

Travel time savings

In addition to discussing aspects of transit integration and disruption to transit passengers during construction, it is important to note the future time travel savings accrued to transit passengers traveling from areas south and southwest of the Delridge Station to downtown and beyond. With the addition of the West Seattle Link Extension, passengers traveling from Westwood Village to Westlake, for example, will save about 15 minutes one-way by taking a bus from Westwood Village to Delridge Station and then transferring to Link to continue their trip. Though the future trip will involve a new transfer, there has and will continue to be efforts to optimize and streamline transfers, and the trip will be more reliable because light rail will not be subject to delays related to traffic congestion.

Figure 19. Transit integration diagram for Andover Street alternatives DEL-6b and DEL-7



Construction effects on transit

It is also important to note that the alternatives have different effects on transit passengers during construction.

- The Dakota Street Station alternatives would have the least effect on buses traveling between communities to the south and downtown Seattle.
- The Delridge Way Station alternatives would require long-term closures of multiple lanes on Delridge Way SW. This could delay current and future high-capacity bus routes serving South Seattle College and the Delridge Way SW corridor, including the future RapidRide H line. Without priority transit lanes during these lane closures, the Delridge Way alternatives would have the greatest construction effects on routes traveling to downtown Seattle.
- The Andover Street Station alternative (DEL-5) would require a long-term closure of SW Avalon Way which would impact current high-capacity bus routes serving communities to the south, including RapidRide C line. The Andover Street Station Lower Height alternative (DEL-6a) would reroute buses off of Avalon Way during some nights and weekends. Alternatives 6b and 7 would avoid closures of Avalon Way during construction.

Potential for equitable Transit-Oriented Development

As previously discussed, displacement of residents and businesses is likely when light rail guideway and stations are being developed in already developed urban environments. When construction is complete, however, the land used for construction staging and other project needs may become available for equitable development opportunities.

While North Delridge was not identified as a low-income community with a higher percentage of communities of color based on census data, public feedback indicates that this area may include a larger percentage of communities of color and lower income individuals than the census block group and tracts, which cover a larger area, indicate. Displacements in this neighborhood may still affect these communities and are therefore discussed here. As the projects progress and community outreach continues, we will learn more about the people that might be affected, specifically in the North Delridge neighborhood.

Table 1 displays the number of residential and business displacements as well as equitable development potential for each alternative. Modified zoning was modeled to evaluate the development potential of sites at typical transit-oriented community densities. To provide a comparative analysis between development opportunity and displacements, the analysis was limited to an area in proximity to the station and does not include displacements associated with each alternative outside of the

station area. Figure 20 shows the extents of the area used for the comparative analysis.

Figure 20. Area of analysis for displacements and equitable development potential in Delridge Station area

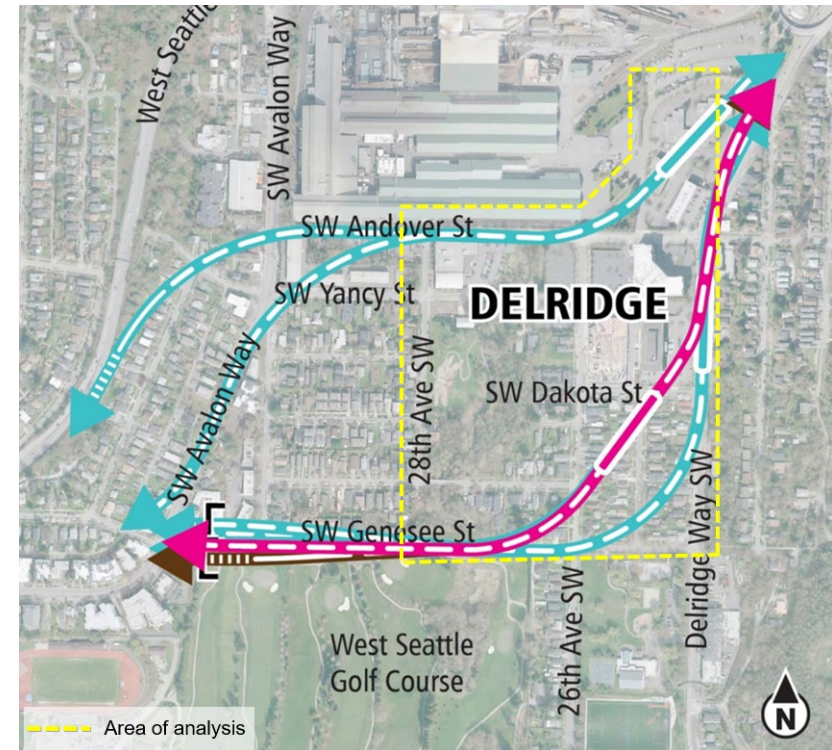


Table 1. Displacements and equitable transit-oriented development potential for each alternative in the Delridge station area

Alternative	Displacements		Equitable Development Potential	
	Residential displacements ³ (units)	Business displacements ⁴	Potential new residential units	Potential new commercial space (gross square feet) ⁵
Dakota Street Station Alternative (DEL-1a)	89	16	400	34,000
Dakota Street Station Lower Height Alternative (DEL-2a)	90	16	400	34,000
Dakota Street Station North Alignment Option (DEL-1b)	87	16	400	34,000
Dakota Street Station Lower Height North Alignment Option (DEL-2b)	95	16	400	34,000
Delridge Way Station Alternative (DEL-3)	68	16	0	0
Delridge Way Station Lower Height Alternative (DEL-4)	68	16	0	0
Andover Street Station Alternative (DEL-5)	0	19	166	49,000
Andover Street Station Lower Height Alternative (DEL-6a)	0	20	145	25,000
Andover Street Station Lower Height South Alignment Option (DEL-6b)	0	20	145	25,000
Andover Street Station Lower Height No Avalon Station Tunnel Connection (DEL-7)	0	20	145	25,000

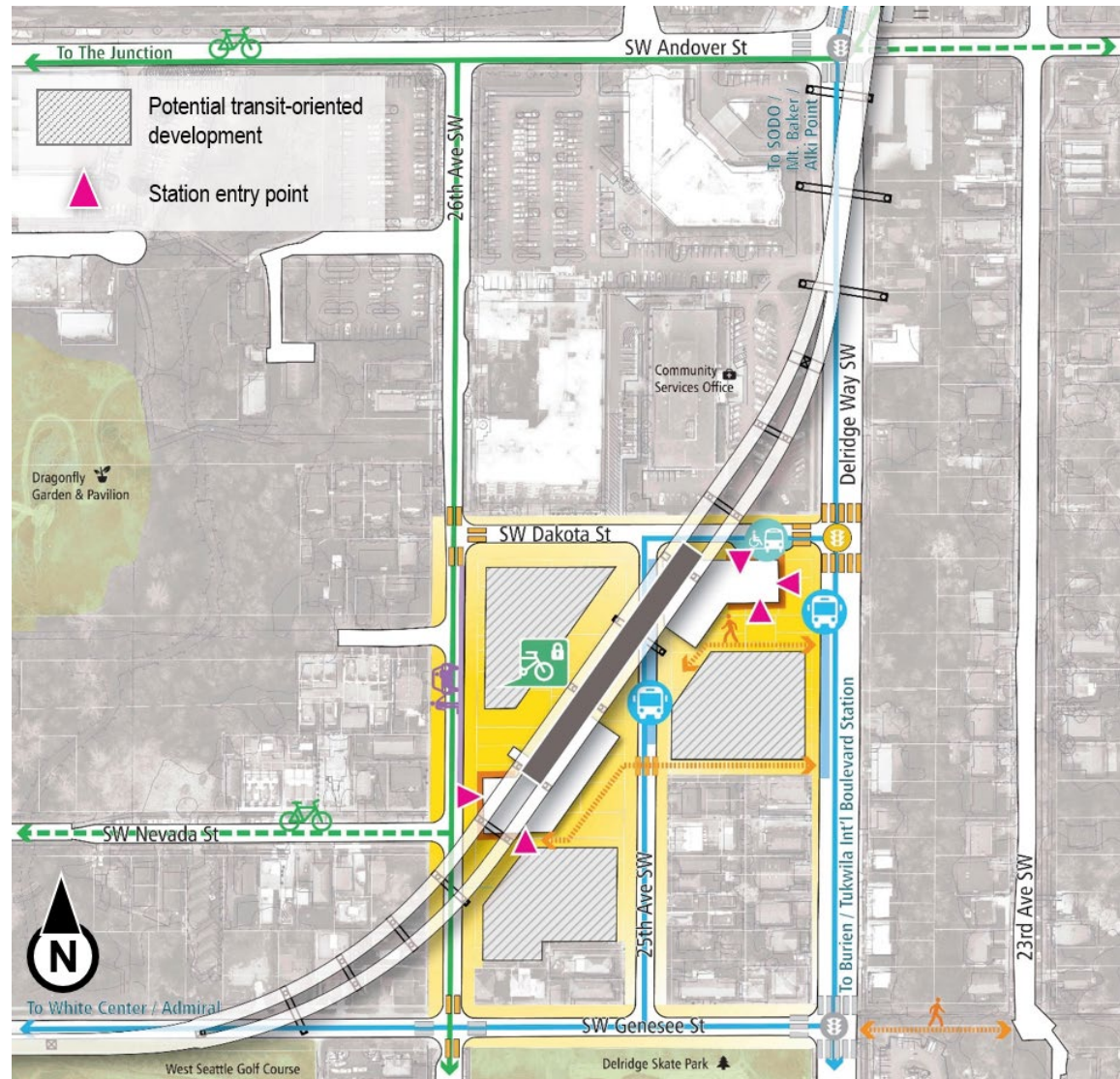
³ Figures reflect permanent residential displacements. There are no temporary residential displacements associated with any Delridge (DEL) alternatives.

⁴ Figures reflect permanent business displacements. There are no temporary business displacements associated with any Delridge (DEL) alternatives.

⁵ Commercial space could include retail, office, and other non-residential uses.

The **Dakota Street Station Alternatives** (DEL-1a, DEL-1b, DEL-2a and DEL-2b) have the most potential to catalyze equitable development in the station area. Given the configuration of this alternative, substantial property acquired for station construction and construction staging would remain after station construction that could be redeveloped at a higher intensity. Such redevelopment, assuming an adjustment to zoning and done in accordance with Sound Transit's equitable transit-oriented development (eTOD) policy, could result in the creation of approximately 400 affordable housing units near the station. In addition, the potential urban design of the station area could contribute to an integrated public realm that could encourage further development of neighborhood amenities (e.g., grocery store) and enhance access to opportunity. These alternatives would have between 87 and 95 residential displacements and 16 business displacements in the analysis area. Included in these displacements would be the Department of Youth and Family Services, Indian Child Welfare Office and Department of Social & Health Services. Figure 21 displays the approximate location and configuration of the station and associated potential equitable development opportunities for the Dakota Street Station alternatives.

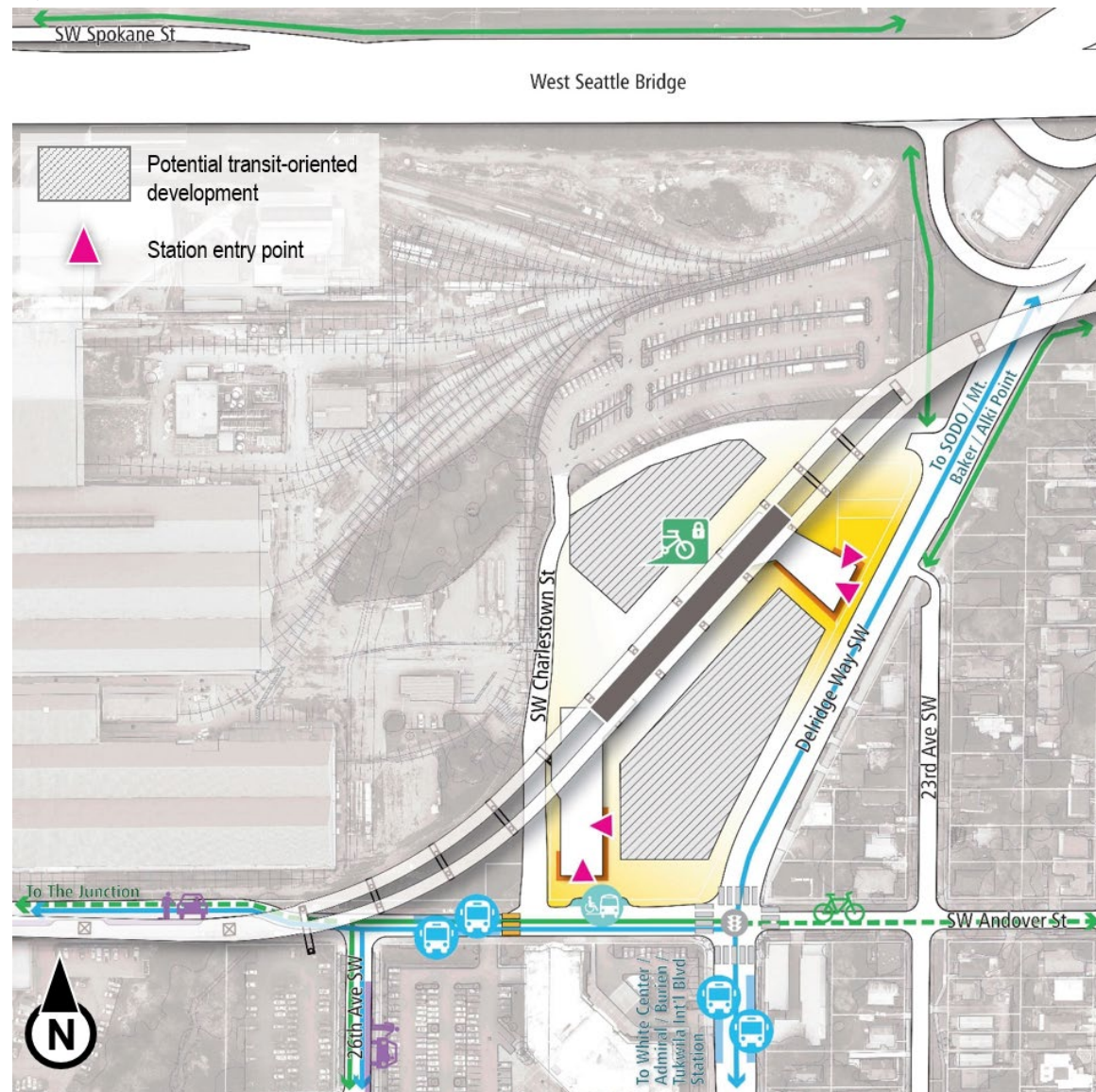
Figure 21. Potential equitable transit-oriented development areas for Dakota Street Station alternatives (DEL-1a, DEL-1b, DEL-2a, DEL-2b)



The **Delridge Way Station Alternatives**, DEL-3 and DEL-4 have potential property effects from the guideway geometry that reduce development capacity and opportunities for future affordable housing associated with potential property acquisition for constructing the project. These options would likely result in more piecemeal redevelopment scenarios undertaken by the private market and occur over a longer timeline. As a result, there would potentially be less likelihood of a robust public benefit outcome that includes affordable housing and community-identified amenities. These alternatives would have 68 residential displacements and 16 business displacements in the analysis area. Included in these displacements would be the Department of Youth and Family Services, Indian Child Welfare Office and Department of Social & Health Services. The Delridge Way Station alternatives do not have any associated areas of potential equitable transit-oriented development.

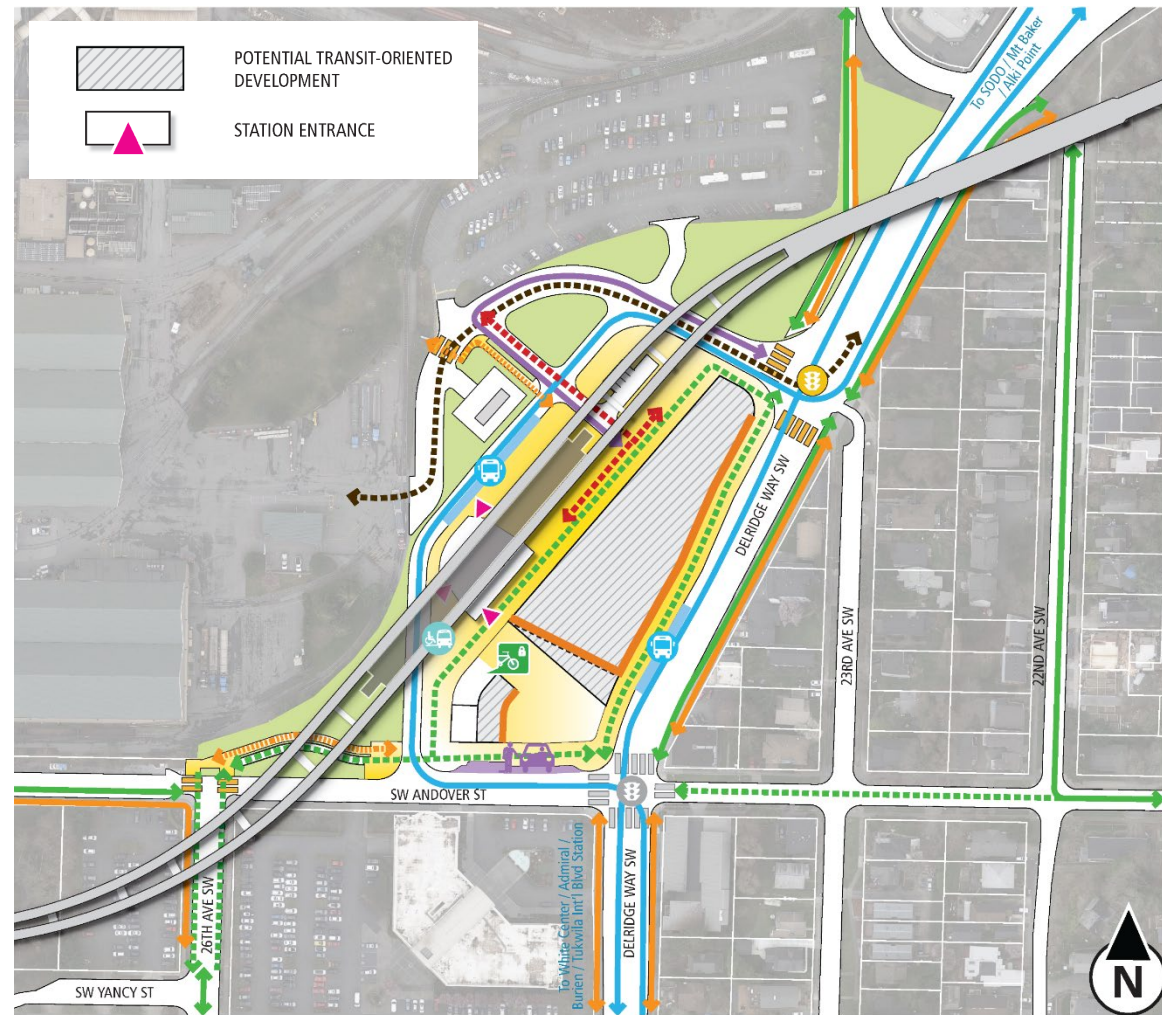
The **Andover Station Alternatives**, DEL-5, DEL-6a, DEL-6b, and DEL-7, have potential to catalyze considerable equitable development, but would need to overcome site complexities and other challenges. Given the configuration of the alternative, substantial property acquired for station construction could be redeveloped, though this is offset by several factors. Current zoning would limit uses on the site to

Figure 22. Potential equitable transit-oriented development areas for Andover Street Station alternatives (DEL-5, DEL-6a)



commercial and industrial, and the industrial Nucor Steel property to the west and West Seattle Bridge on-ramps to the north limit the development potential of adjacent properties. The configuration of the site, including grades, would likely also require a shared structure between the station and new development, which could increase development complexity and costs. If these challenges could be overcome, up to about 800,000 gross square feet of development could be realized on the site, including potential housing east of the station if sites were deemed suitable. These alternatives would have no residential displacements and between 19 and 20 business displacements in the analysis area. Alternative DEL-6a would displace a social service provider that serves people experiencing mental illness and homelessness located outside the area of analysis. Alternative DEL-6b avoids this displacement and Alternative DEL-7 would minimize this impact. Figure 22 displays the approximate location and configuration of the station and associated potential equitable development opportunities for Andover Station alternatives DEL-5 and DEL-6a. Figure 23 displays the approximate location and configuration of the station and associated potential equitable development opportunities for Andover Station alternatives DEL-6b and DEL-7.

Figure 23. Potential equitable transit-oriented development areas for Andover Street Station alternatives (DEL-6b, DEL-7)



4.5 Delridge Community Engagement and Input

Community Engagement Approach

Sound Transit's community engagement approach for the Delridge Station has sought to both engage those in proximity to the station that may be affected during construction as well as the communities of color and low-income communities that may access the light rail system at the Delridge Station by bicycle or bus. Project materials for outreach efforts were translated into Chinese (Simplified and Traditional), as well as Vietnamese and Spanish. In some cases, materials were also translated into Somali, Korean and Khmer. Sound Transit's community engagement approach around the Delridge Station has included:

- Holding smaller meetings and briefings focused on individual communities, social service providers or community-based organizations.
- Hosting in-language focus groups.
- Attending community and neighborhood meetings.
- Proactively providing interpreters at public meetings and community gatherings.
- Translating key materials into languages spoken in the station area, including simplified Chinese, traditional Chinese, Spanish, and Vietnamese with additional materials translated into Korean, Khmer, and Somali.
- Conducting door-to-door business outreach and peer-to-peer outreach, providing notifications to increase project and process awareness, build relationships, gather feedback, and answer questions.

- Meeting communities where they gather, like fairs and festivals, community centers, and community events or meetings.
- Partnering with the City of Seattle's DON Community liaisons to build capacity and awareness in communities about the project and engage communities in the Draft EIS comment period and station planning engagement period.
- Partnering to host a business roundtable, providing an update about the project, question and answer, and information for providing comment.

Community Input

Community perspectives and feedback are critical in understanding how the proposed alternatives would benefit and/or burden communities of color along the Delridge corridor and informs approaches for how to advance opportunity and minimize harm. The following includes themes from conversations with the community during outreach and community engagement activities, particularly engagement with social service providers and community-based organizations in the area. This section has been updated from previous drafts and includes feedback from the community during the Draft EIS comment period as well as station planning engagement in late 2023 (see the [WSLE Station and Access Planning Engagement Summary](#)⁶ for additional details).

- Low-income families from neighborhoods south of Delridge, many of whom are immigrants, refugees and people of color, rely heavily on public transportation to access services, jobs and schools. More frequent and improved bus service to a Delridge light rail station could benefit low-income populations and communities of color who live further south.

⁶ [https://www.soundtransit.org/sites/default/files/documents/wsle-station-](https://www.soundtransit.org/sites/default/files/documents/wsle-station-and-access-planning-engagement-report-20240304.pdf)

[and-access-planning-engagement-report-20240304.pdf](https://www.soundtransit.org/sites/default/files/documents/wsle-station-and-access-planning-engagement-report-20240304.pdf)

- When the West Seattle extension comes online, many shared advice for how to better serve communities of color and low-income communities, noting that factors such as cost, payment method and presence of security and fare enforcement could be barriers. Additionally, community members shared that education will be essential for many immigrant and refugee families that are new to the area and do not understand how local public transportation operates. Providing language-neutral wayfinding and signage, and announcements in languages other than English would improve accessibility for people who speak limited or no English.
- Community members shared concerns about residential and business displacement and that increasingly residential development in the area is not affordable. Some expressed concerns that this may only continue to increase with light rail coming to the neighborhood.
- Community members shared concerns about displacements for organizations serving low-income and communities of color including, Transitional Resources and the Indian Child Welfare Office, a part of the Washington State Department of Children, Youth, and Families.
- Many shared interest in redevelopment occurring in the station area that includes affordable housing and community-centered amenities, such as a grocery store, food and drink options, and grab-and-go shopping near the station. These uses at the station would serve the local community and passengers, as well as support safety at the station with increased activity throughout the day.
- Many shared interest in providing restrooms at light rail stations. Some cited challenges to using restrooms at businesses that non-BIPOC and people with higher incomes don't experience.

- Some community members shared concerns that no parking would be provided for transit riders at the station.
- Some shared interest in community gathering spaces near the stations, including interest in open space, areas that celebrate the culture of the local community, community centers, parks or playgrounds, and performance space.
- Community members were interested in improved access to the station for people walking, transferring from buses, or getting a ride. This included interest in wider sidewalks, slowing traffic on nearby roadways, raised crosswalks, and street crossings with traffic signals.
- Some comments expressed interest in preserving and where possible improving Longfellow Creek and the West Duwamish Greenbelt.
- In light of experiences related to the West Seattle High Bridge closure and construction for the RapidRide H line, community members have shared feedback about the importance of reliable, regional transportation connections and interest in minimizing disruptions to local businesses, especially maintaining business operations during construction.

4.6 Delridge Summary

Based on the EIS results and available data and community feedback, questions that were posed during alternatives development and environmental review have informed the development of the preferred alternative for the Delridge segment and station:

- What role could the light rail investment and new station play in supporting the future vision for the community and providing lasting benefit, particularly for communities of color and low-income communities?

- How do communities of color and low-income communities currently interact with the nearby amenities and what are the barriers they face in accessing services?
- Are there disproportionate impacts to communities of color and low-income communities associated with potential property acquisitions for the station and alignment options? Are there ways to minimize or avoid these impacts?
- What does an excellent transfer experience feel like? Is it the transfer that takes the least time or fewest barriers? Does it offer convenient amenities or other services that make it a welcoming or more inviting transfer experience?

The community's feedback on these questions has provided crucial guidance to the project team in developing refinements to the Delridge station and segment alternatives that are reflected in the Board-identified Preferred Alternative (DEL-6b) in the Delridge segment.

As the project moves forward, the project team will work to incorporate feedback received to date and will continue engaging communities of color and low-income communities, building on the foundation created during the alternatives development and environmental review phases to continue to understand how to maximize the potential benefit and minimize burdens of the WSLE project.

5 CORRIDOR WIDE EVALUATION

5.1 Evaluation Summary

- *The key drivers of differentiation between the EIS alternatives with respect to racial and social equity include access, opportunities for equitable development, residential unit displacements and business and commerce effects.*

Transit integration and access

Achieving efficient and direct transfers between modes of transit is a critical dimension of creating equitable access to the regional transit system throughout the corridor. The transit integration experience is especially important at the terminus station in Alaska Junction, which will have a larger travel shed with multiple long-haul bus routes intercepting light rail service. Transit integration will also be important at the Delridge Station, where many people traveling from further south will access Link via bus transfers (discussed in Section 4.4). Siting and configuring these stations to minimize the need to cross busy streets and maximize the intuitiveness of access through visual cues will enhance the rider experience, particularly for riders with limited English proficiency. Similarly, designing streets and allocating the right-of-way to support great walking and biking environments, combined with connections to investments in the broader non-motorized network, will enable more choices of access to the station, particularly for youth.

Opportunities for Equitable Development

Realizing equitable transit-oriented development on surplus property acquired by Sound Transit (or through joint development

of transit facilities) in station areas is one strategy for enhancing racial equity corridor-wide. Most stations are located in areas with high access to opportunity, but with low percentages of residents of color. Developing affordable housing along with supportive services such as daycare, education, training, and public services could provide opportunities for lower-income people, including people of color, to live in some of the region's highest opportunity neighborhoods.

Access to Opportunity

While available demographic data indicates that the Chinatown-International District (C-ID) Station area is the only station area in the WSLE and BLE projects with communities of color and low income populations notably higher than the City average, there are people of color and low-income individuals throughout the corridor. These individuals, as well as those identified in the C-ID and to the south accessing the system through the Delridge Station, would benefit from increased access to opportunity to points along the West Seattle Link Extension as well as other locations along the entire system. Opportunities for improved access include connections to University of Washington and UW Medical Center; Capitol Hill urban center and Seattle Central College and Seattle University; Northgate urban center and North Seattle College; and community facilities, jobs, and institutions in Bellevue, Redmond, Lynnwood, Everett, and Tacoma. In addition to these major institutions and destinations, many station areas along the WSLE contain an array of assets including cultural/community centers, schools and businesses that provide service sector jobs. In addition to communities served by the project corridor, people of color and low-income individuals in other areas of the region currently served by Link light rail (e.g., Rainier Valley, Tukwila, the University District, Northgate and Lynnwood) and areas to be served by light rail extensions under

construction (East Link, Federal Way) would benefit from increased access to points along the West Seattle and Ballard Link Extensions.

5.2 Corridor Wide Engagement and Input

Community Engagement Approach

Early on as part of community engagement across the project corridor during the alternatives development phase, Sound Transit conducted 27 interviews with community organizations and social service providers in 2018 and 2019. The feedback from these interviews taken together with ongoing community feedback and lessons learned informed community engagement strategies and approaches during the EIS process and will continue to be important as planning continues.

Other goals of these interviews and ongoing relationship building with social service providers and community organizations serving communities of color and low-income populations includes:

- Sharing early information about the project, where we are in the planning process and how to engage.
- Building awareness and understanding of community concerns, interests and ideas.
- Establishing relationships and fostering trust between the project team and community stakeholders.
- Supporting development of project outcomes that are racially and socially equitable.

Building on this prior engagement, Sound Transit reached out to social service providers, community-based organizations and groups serving communities of color and low-income populations

prior to the publication of the Draft EIS and public comment period, to encourage broad awareness and participation in comment period and seek out ideas for how best to engage with these populations, particularly given the COVID-19 pandemic that was ongoing at the time.

Based on feedback, the comment period for the WSBLE Draft EIS was extended beyond 45 days from January 28 to April 28, 2022. Sound Transit developed an adaptable engagement plan during the 90-day public comment period that centered engaging communities of color and low-income populations throughout the project corridor.

Community Input

The following summarizes the comments and themes Sound Transit heard from social service providers, other organizations and community members during the environmental review phase, including Draft EIS comments.

Access to opportunity / using light rail and transit

Comments on how communities access the current system and how they might use the new extensions included:

- People experiencing homelessness and low-income populations often depend on transit and more public transportation is always a good thing, with additional light rail allowing for people to access different parts of the city and the services they need.
- People receiving social services have a range of abilities. Locating light rail stations close to social service providers and housing is critical, and ADA access should be maintained or enhanced.
- Many have shared that there are challenges for communities of color, low-income communities and

particularly those that experience homelessness to using the system, including discomfort with fare enforcement, language barriers and cost.

- Many shared the importance of making sure stations feel safe for all users, with ideas about activating stations and keeping pedestrian routes and stations well-lit. The emphasis on a feeling of safety for all users has amplified.

consider how to incorporate voices from people with low incomes, people of color and non-English speakers.

- Some have shared concern over how to meaningfully engage communities of color and how much capacity these communities have to engage given all the other challenges they are facing.

Affordability and community cohesion

- There is concern that new light rail extensions in neighborhoods will spur development and push low-income families out of their homes as well as farther away from transit. As such, we heard about the importance of incorporating affordable housing into the project, so low-income populations and communities of color don't get left out.
- Some expressed concerns related to small and BIPOC-owned business effects/displacement and potential gentrification.
- Some expressed concerns about elevated alignments and impacts including residential and business displacement, noise and traffic impacts.
- Some feedback noted that elevated alignments are built in lower-income and diverse neighborhoods while tunnels are built in more affluent neighborhoods.

Ensure meaningful, timely and effective engagement

- Many expressed an interest in how project decisions are made and how to ensure all voices are heard, particularly those from traditionally underrepresented communities.
- Some expressed concerns that project decisions around the city are not equitable and agencies need to better

6 WHAT'S NEXT: FUTURE PHASES OF THE PROJECT

Sound Transit is committed to inclusively and meaningfully engaging communities along the project corridors in the project development process. We recognize this project would bring both benefits and impacts to many who live and work in the area. In future project phases, Sound Transit will expand upon the engagement and lessons learned through the alternatives development and EIS phases and look for opportunities to answer questions or address issues that were posed by the community during these initial phases.

design, street layout, and configuration of public spaces around the alignment and stations, and further define mitigation strategies and partnerships.

6.1 Final Environmental Review Phase

The WSLE Final EIS, published in September 2024, includes responses to comments received on the West Seattle and Ballard Link Extensions Draft EIS that are specific to the West Seattle Link Extension or that would apply to both projects. The next step after Final EIS publication is for the Sound Transit Board to select the project to be built, including route and station locations, anticipated in October 2024. The project will then move into final design, followed by construction, testing and pre-operations before opening to the public, which is anticipated in 2032.

6.2 Opportunities for Future Engagement

The Sound Transit Board will consider public, Tribe, and agency feedback, information in the Final EIS, and the RET Report as they decide on the project to be built. Sound Transit will then seek a Record of Decision in coordination with our Federal partner, the Federal Transit Administration. After this, the project will move into Final Design, during which Sound Transit and the City of Seattle will re-engage with communities to advance station