Everett Link Extension

Level 1 Outreach Summary

March 14 – April 3, 2022

SOUNDTRANSIT

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1 OVERVIEW

The Everett Link Extension will provide fast, reliable connections to residential and job centers by connecting Snohomish County residents to the regional light rail network. The project also includes adding an operations and maintenance facility to receive, store and service a larger train fleet to support the light rail extension as well as overall system operation. During Alternatives Development, the first phase of the project, multiple locations for the route, stations and Operations and Maintenance Facility North are studied in increasing levels of detail to inform the Sound Transit Board's identification of alternatives to evaluate in environmental review.

In spring 2022, Sound Transit hosted a Participate.Online online open house (P.O site) to share what we learned during the Level 1 analysis of potential route, station and OMF North locations and what we heard from previous community engagement on the project. The P.O site asked for public feedback on which options should continue to move forward through the Alternatives Development process to be studied in the Level 2 analysis. This community input helped inform Community Advisory Group (CAG) and Elected Leadership Group (ELG) recommendations for which route, station and OMF alternatives should continue to be studied.

This report summarizes the community engagement strategies Sound Transit used for the Everett Link Extension P.O site, which ran from March 14 to April 3, 2022. It also summarizes the public participation and key findings from public feedback received via the online survey and emails during the outreach period.

Table 1 Phase 1 Engagement Outreach Periods

P.O Site	Title	Dates	Purpose	Feedback Opportunity
#1	Project Introduction	Sept. 16 – Oct. 31, 2021	Introduce the project to the public and invite members of the public to submit a Community Advisory Group interest form.	N/A
#2	Early Scoping	Nov. 1 – Dec. 10, 2021	Share and seek feedback on the initial project purpose and need, and alternatives under consideration for station, route and OMF North alternatives; seek feedback on potential benefits and impacts of the project on the community.	Early scoping and identifying sites
#3	Level 1	March 14 – April 3, 2022	Provide updates on outreach activities, what we have heard during early scoping, and initial results of our analysis of the station, route and OMF North alternatives.	Level 1 evaluation findings
#4	Scoping and Level 2	Planned to begin in Dec. 2022	Provide updates on station, route and OMF North alternatives moving forward for Level 2 analysis, share findings from Level 2 analysis, start the environmental impact statement scoping period.	Project scoping and Level 2 alternatives

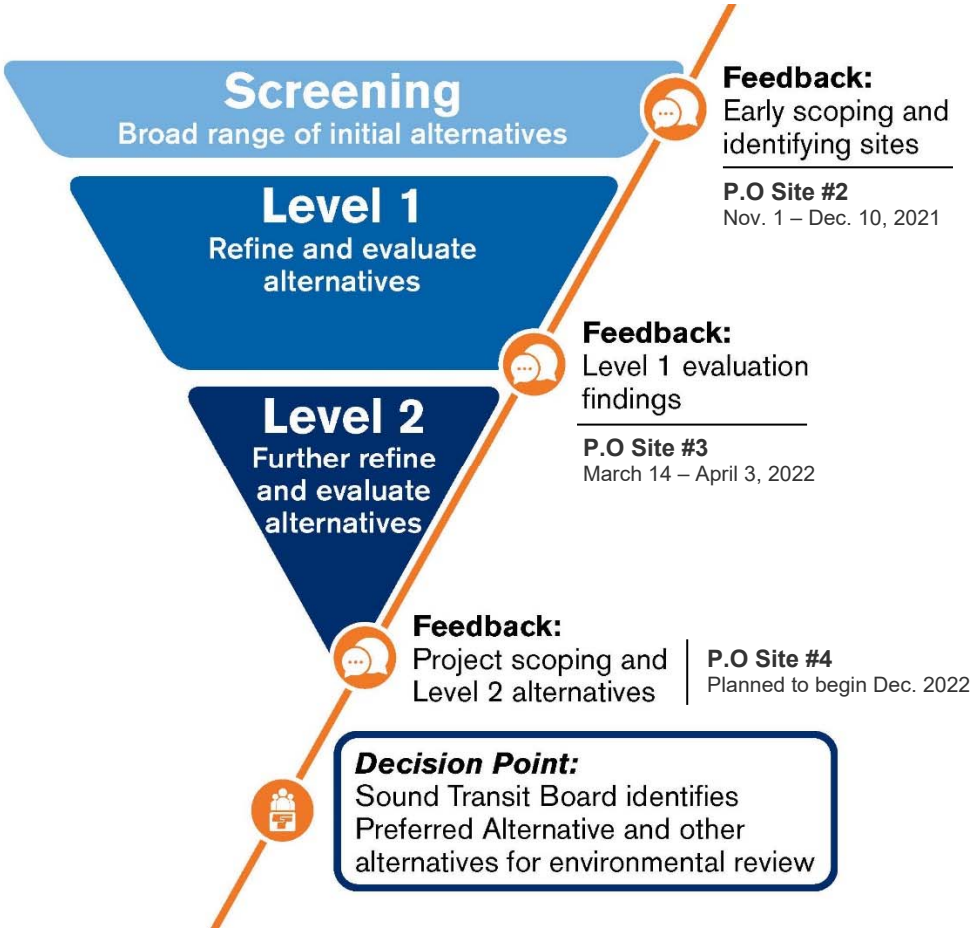

Figure 1: The alternatives development process and feedback opportunities

1.1 Goals

The project team identified the following goals and objectives for the Level 1 outreach campaign:

- Be transparent about feedback received during early scoping.
- Collect feedback on station, route and OMF North alternatives.
- Listen to community values.
- Be intentional, inclusive and interactive.
- Engage and build trust with community members along the corridor.

This outreach summary addresses how the project team approached these goals.

2 AUDIENCES

This was an opportunity to engage all community members with access to web platforms along the corridor and focus on engagement with historically excluded communities. In advance of the project introduction outreach period (fall 2021), the project team identified three groups of audiences to prioritize during outreach efforts (review **Appendix A**).

The three groups of audiences included:

- Group 1: historically excluded communities
- Group 2: the general public, residents and businesses in the project area, neighborhood associations and the CAG
- Group 3: elected officials, jurisdictional partners, and relevant interest groups.

Participation by the Numbers

- **6,345 people visited the online open houses**. The English site had the most visitors (4,928), followed by the Russian site (512), Korean site (461) and the Spanish site (444).
- **360 survey responses,** resulting in nearly 1,850 specific comments.
- **68 people signed up for the mailing list** via the online open house.

After identifying audiences, the project team planned engagement activities with the three audience groups in mind, which ties back to one of the project team's goals for the Level 1 outreach period: **engage and build trust with community members along the corridor.** The project team intended to meet this goal by using these groupings as a guide to direct outreach and notifications activities. All audiences in these groups are key project stakeholders, but the project team recognizes that some audiences, such as those in Group 3, can more easily access and participate in typical engagement activities. The intent is to increase access to those who otherwise may face higher barriers to participation.

2.1 Equity

Sound Transit recognizes major infrastructure projects have the power to transform communities in significant ways and may disproportionately affect historically excluded communities, including Black, Indigenous, and people of color; the LGBTQ+ community; people with a disability; immigrants and refugees; youth; and seniors. Acknowledging this legacy of harm, the project team made a commitment to adjusting typical outreach methods to be more accessible, inclusive and accommodating to these historically excluded communities, e.g., transcreating materials in multiple languages, prioritizing relationship-building, etc. (Transcreation is the process of adapting content or a message from one language to another, maintaining intent, tone, style and considering cultural context. This is different than translation, which focuses on replacing the words in one language with the words in a different language. Transcreated language may not be the exact same wording in two languages but is intended to resonate in the same way, tailoring the message to each language.) Sound Transit prioritizes equity and inclusivity by adjusting typical outreach methods and abiding to the following commitments:

- Be proactive.
- Be transparent.
- Encourage awareness.
- Be accountable.
- Ensure accessibility.
- Advance equity.

3 OUTREACH METHODS AND TOOLS

Sound Transit updated the community about the project through notifications starting on March 14.

Overall, the Level 1 outreach activities were successful, and the project team achieved their goals of **being transparent about feedback received during early scoping**; **collecting feedback on station, route and OMF North alternatives**; **listening to community values; being intentional, inclusive and interactive**; and **engaging and building trust with community members along the corridor**.

Outreach by the Numbers

- Emails sent to **146 community organization** and business, **38 community conversation participants**, **44 jurisdictional partner** and **47 IAG member** contacts.
- **3,694 Sound Transit project email list subscribers** received three GovDelivery email updates.
- **Five local online publications** advertised display advertisements.
- Nearly **750,000 total impressions** through retargeted digital display ads.
- Nearly **500 clicks via Facebook** posts.

3.1 Notifications

3.1.1 GovDelivery Email Updates

Three project email updates were sent during the campaign on March 15, 21 and 28 to announce the P.O site and survey and provide reminders of the closing date (review **Appendix B**).

- March 15 project email update:
  - 3,633 recipients
  - 36% open rate
  - 6% click-through rate
- March 21 email update:
  - 3,663 recipients
  - 33% open rate
  - 4% click-through rate
- March 28 email update:
  - 3,694 recipients
  - 35% open rate
  - 3% click-through rate

Project email updates during Level 1 outreach had a stronger open rate and click-through rate than during the project introduction and early scoping outreach periods. Previously, the highest open rate was 31% for the Dec. 6 early scoping outreach period email update. In comparison, all the Level 1 outreach period email updates had between a 33% and 36% open rate. Previously, the largest click-through rate was 5% for the Sept. 20 project introduction outreach summary email update and Nov. 2 early scoping outreach summary email update. In comparison, the March 15 Level 1 outreach period email update has a 6% click-through rate. The project team anticipates the subscriber count will continue to grow as the project advances. Email updates will be a consistent notification tool that Sound Transit uses throughout the life of the project to inform the community about key project updates and public involvement activities.

3.1.2 Email Recipients

As part of Level 1 outreach, the project team sent emails to community organizations and businesses, community conversation participants, the IAG and jurisdictional partners (review **Appendix C** for detailed list of recipients). In general, the emails from the project team expressed gratitude for the stakeholders' continued involvement in the project and made requests for the recipients' public input and to share the feedback opportunity with the recipients' network (review **Appendix D**):

- March 16 email:
  - Recipients: community organizations and businesses (146 contacts) and community conversation participants (38 contacts)
- March 16 email:
  - Recipients: jurisdictional partners (44 contacts)
- March 20 email:
  - Recipients: IAG (47 contacts)
- March 30 email:
  - Recipients: community conversation participants (38 contacts)

3.1.3 News release

Sound Transit distributed a news release on March 14 to inform the public about the launch of the public feedback period regarding the initial analysis of potential route, station, and OMF North locations (review **Appendix E**).

3.1.4 Digital display ads

Digital display advertisements (review **Appendix F**) were directly placed in the following publications March 14 to April 3:

- Russian Town Seattle
- The Korean Times
- The Herald
- La Raza del Noroeste
- Live in Everett*

Note: Digital display advertisements (review **Appendix F) were directly placed in Live in Everett from March 29 to April 3. The shorter period was the result of a clerical error. As a compromise for the error, the publication agreed to publish more ads on premium pages for the shorter ad period.*

The project team targeted ads in the digital display ad campaign to visitors within zip codes along the project corridor (98037, 98036, 98026, 98087, 98012, 98275, 98204, 98208, 98203, 98201, 98205) and to English, Spanish, Korean and Russian speakers. English ads linked to everettlink.participate.online (the P.O site), and in-language ads linked to the respective transcreated P.O sites.

Retargeted ad campaign performance:

- The ads had nearly 750,000 total impressions, which falls between the project introduction (600,000) and early scoping (800,000) outreach campaigns.
- Level 1 retargeted ads had just under 1,200 clicks, compared to prior campaigns with 1,000 clicks each.
- While some of the individual language impression numbers dipped compared to what we saw in the project introduction and early scoping outreach periods, we maintained very high click-through rates across the board with every language but English performing well above average. Spanish was our highest performing with an 0.27% rate, while English had our lowest rate at 0.09%.
- When looking at results broken down by geographical area, we saw the trends from previous outreach period campaigns continue. Zip code 98087 (south of Paine Field including Picnic Point-North Lynnwood, Martha Lake and Paine Field-Lake Stickney) performed strongest once again with over 252,000 impressions and over 350 clicks, while 98207 (the location of the Puget Sound Naval Complex and Naval Station in Everett) received just over 5,600 impressions and only 2 clicks.

Digital Ad Campaign Lingo

- **Digital Display Ads**
  Static display ads that appear online wherever someone in our target audience browses the internet. This could be places such as CNN.com, time.com, theseattletimes.com, etc. Ads are targeted by user and appear in the user's browsing language.
- **Impression**
  The number of times a user views an ad.
- **Click**
  The number of times a user clicks an ad.
- **Click-through rate**
  The number of times a user clicks an ad divided by the number of times a user views an ad. For example, if an ad received 2,000 impressions and was clicked 5 times, the click-through rate would be 0.25%. Typical click-through rates range from 0.15% to 0.20%.
- **Cost per click**
  A metric to measure ad's performance. $1 cost per click is the threshold for an ad that performed well.

Table 2 Retargeted ad campaign results, by language

Language	Impressions	Clicks	Click-Through Rate
English	432,899	400	0.09%
Spanish	97,798	262	0.27%
Korean	91,740	240	0.26%
Russian	138,241	282	0.20%
Total	**760,678**	**1,184**	**0.16% (average)**

3.1.5 Radio ads

Sound Transit shared information with the Spanish language community about the P.O site and public feedback period via short radio ads on a regional Spanish language radio station (review **Appendix G**). The project team ran ads on La Patrona 1680 AM, which runs Latino favorites targeted for families and young people. The 30 second ad ran 27 times between March 23 and 29. The ads directed listeners to the P.O site.

During community conversations with community-based organizations in the first half of 2021, we learned that radio and television would reach a larger Spanish language audience than digital ads. This radio ad campaign was developed in response to that recommendation but was limited in size due to budget constraints. Setting aside funding for a more robust radio ad campaign for future outreach campaigns could build more trust and readiness with the Spanish language community.

3.1.6 Social media

Sound Transit notified the community about the P.O site and public feedback period through Instagram, Facebook and Twitter (review **Appendix H**). Posts linked to the P.O site.

3.1.6.1 Facebook posts

One Facebook post was shared on March 15. The post received:

- 84 likes
- 26 comments
- 27 shares
- 525 clicks
- 9,038 reach
- 6.4% engagement rate
- 9187 impressions
- 763 engagements

3.1.6.2 Facebook ads

One Facebook ad ran between March 15 to 25 and was targeted to audiences within zip codes along the project corridor (98037, 98036, 98026, 98087, 98012, 98275, 98204, 98208, 98203, 98201, 98205). The ad performed well:

- 36,787 impressions
- 18,292 reach
- 1.35% click-through rate
- $1.01 cost per click
- 495 clicks

3.1.6.3 Twitter

Two Tweets were shared during the campaign:

- March 15 Tweet:
  - 28 likes
  - 10 retweets
  - 4 replies
  - 224 engagements (1.99% engagement rate)
  - 51 clicks

- March 25 Tweet:
  - 6 likes
  - 3 retweets
  - 2 replies
  - 4,778 impressions
  - 70 engagements (1.45% engagement rate)
  - 19 clicks

3.1.7 Earned media

The project received attention from two local media publications (review **Appendix I**).

My Edmonds News published an article on March 14 titled, "Sound Transit asks for public feedback on Everett link extension, north operations facility."

- The article was straight-forward and deviated minimally from the news release.
- The article directed readers towards the P.O site.
- The article had over 500 views and two readers commented.

The Urbanist published an article on March 19 titled "Transpo Notes: Technical analysis unveiled for Everett Link options."

- The article focused on technical analysis of alternatives and summarized the favored alternatives among comments the public shared.
- The article linked to the P.O site and the early scoping report.

3.2 Materials

3.2.1 Early Scoping Summary Report

The project team developed an Early Scoping Summary Report that provided an overview of the prior early scoping phase, the project's purpose and need and potential alternatives, including feedback themes heard during early scoping. This report was available as a linked PDF in English and can be accessed via the project website at soundtransit.org/everettlink.

3.2.2 Frequently Asked Questions

The project team created a Frequently Asked Questions document to proactively address common themes and questions. The information was organized in four categories: 1) process and schedule, 2) route, stations and OMF North, 3) community impacts, and 4) engagement. The FAQ document was shared as a linked PDF on the P.O site and was available in English, Spanish, Russian and Korean (review **Appendix J**).

3.2.3 Community Guide to Alternatives Development

A Community Guide to Alternatives Development one-page handout explaining the alternatives development process was available as a linked PDF on the P.O site and available in English, Spanish, Russian and Korean (review **Appendix K)**.

3.2.4 Factsheet

The project factsheet was available as a linked PDF on the P.O site and available in English, Spanish, Russian and Korean (review **Appendix L**).

3.2.5 Community Engagement Guide

In November 2021, the project team finalized the Community Engagement Guide, a 31-page visual guide for community members to engage with the Everett Link project. It explains Sound Transit's goals for the project, guiding principles for engaging with the public, how community members can get involved in the project, the decision-making process and plan for accountability. The Community Engagement Guide included a note that the project team would provide a translated version of the document by request. The project team originally planned to transcreate the Community Engagement Guide, but due to realignment impacting budget and timing, the project team was unable to do so (review **Appendix M**).

3.3 Public Involvement Opportunities

3.3.1 Participate.Online Online Open House

Sound Transit hosted a P.O. site (review **Appendix N**) for three weeks (March 14 – April 3) for stakeholders to learn more about the project, see feedback provided during early scoping, and share feedback on the Level 1 analysis of potential station, route and OMF North locations.

The P.O site provided information about the project's background and where the Level 1 analysis fits into the alternatives development process. A primary goal of the site was to share what Sound Transit has learned about the station, route and OMF North alternatives, including the advantages and disadvantages of each alternative, and what feedback Sound Transit received during the early scoping phase. P.O. site visitors then had an opportunity to share their thoughts on the Level 1 analysis for station and route alternatives of their choosing.

The P.O site was available in English (everettlink.participate.online) and transcreated to Korean, (everettlink-korean.participate.online), Russian (everettlink-russian.participate.online), and Spanish (everettlink-spanish.participate.online) and available in additional languages via Google Translate. The site was accessible with screen readers, including descriptions of all maps,

figures, and images available in the four languages. This ties back to one of the project team's goals for the Level 1 outreach period: **be intentional, inclusive and interactive.** The project team intended to meet this goal by designing a platform to facilitate engagement that is accessible to a variety of audiences.

Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the project team used the P.O site's survey component as a vital means for collecting public comment while not gathering in person.

A total of 6,345 users visited the Level 1 P.O sites. 4,928 users visited the English site, 461 users visited the Korean site, 444 users visited the Spanish site, and 512 users visited the Russian site (review site analytics, **Appendix O**). On average, visitors spent nearly two minutes and 30 seconds on the English site, while visitors spent much less time (ranging on average from 10 to 45 seconds) on the Spanish, Korean and Russian sites. This trend is consistent among bounce rates between the English site (26.53%) and the Spanish (91.18%), Korean (94.76%) and Russian (96.45%) sites. (The bounce rate is the rate at which people visit one page of the website and then leave without looking at any other pages. A "bounce" is one instance. The bounce rate is calculated as bounces\sessions.) The difference may be due to a larger percentage of visitors to the in-language sites being automated bots or spiders, as indicated by higher bounce rates.

Referrals through Facebook was the primary traffic source for visitors to the English site whereas the visitors to the in-language sites more often sought out them out directly by typing the website URL into their browser. More than half of the visitors to the English site were referred to it through Facebook and less than a quarter sought out the URL directly. About half of the visitors to the Korean and Russian sites sought out the URLs directly, and more than a quarter of the visitors to the Spanish site sought out the URL directly. Analysis of the traffic sources indicates that English language visitors were more likely to access the site more through referrals (Facebook) while Korean, Russian and Spanish language visitors were more likely to access the sites directly.

3.3.2 Survey

The P.O site included a survey component that prompted respondents to comment on the station area and potential OMF North locations of their choice. Once a station area was selected, site visitors could choose which station and route alternatives they thought should move forward into the Level 2 analysis and describe why (review **Figure 2**)
Respondents could explain their recommendations using an open-ended comment box. The survey also asked commenters to rank features in order from most to least important (options included reliable service, equitable mobility, supports growth at station areas and more) (review **Appendix P**).

Figure 2: Example of survey drop-down menu

4 WHAT WE HEARD

4.1 Comments received

In the three weeks of Level 1 outreach, Sound Transit received 360 responses to the survey on the P.O site, resulting in 1,849 specific comments. Nine comments were also received via email. No comments were provided via voicemail or mail. For a detailed report of all 1,849 comments received, organized by station area, refer to the verbatim comments report (review **Appendix R**).

The project team read and coded each survey response and prepared a P.O Site #3 "Level 1" Survey Response Summary, summarizing key themes identified from the feedback received (review **Appendix Q**). Survey responses are organized by high-level themes as well as by preferences and concerns specific to each station area. This ties back to the project team's goals to **listen to community values** and **collect feedback on station, route and OMF North alternatives**. The project team intended to meet this goal by soliciting public input, analyzing that feedback and compiling the results in a summary.

This section summarizes the consistent themes of comments people provided for specific station areas and does not represent every comment submitted.

4.2 Demographics

As a part of the survey, respondents were able to self-disclose their demographic information, including their gender, age, race, housing status, and geographic location.

Out of the total 334 survey responses, 260 responses (78%) included personal demographic information. Below, we share information on survey respondents' gender, age, race and income. (To view information on housing, personal motor vehicle access, home zip code, languages regularly spoken at home and disabilities impacting public transportation use, please review **Appendix P**.)

4.2.1 Gender

What is your gender identity?

- Female: 42%
- Male: 50%
- Non-binary: 3.5%
- Prefer not to answer: 5%

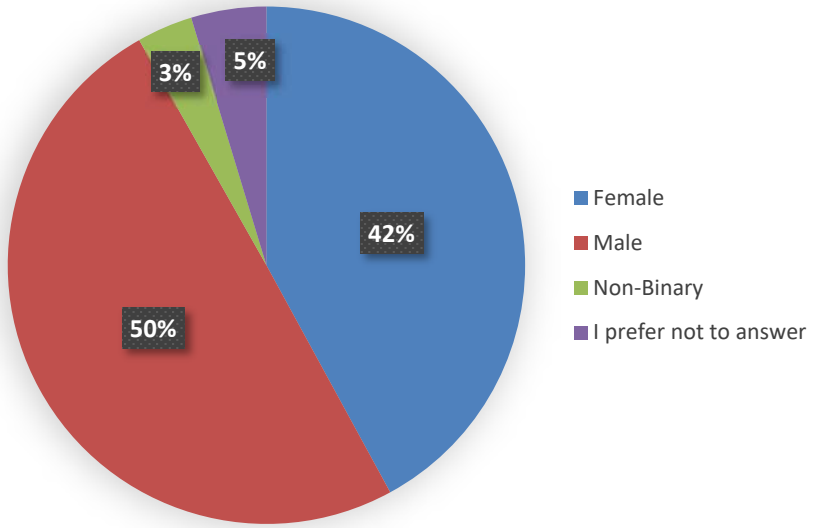

Figure 3: Gender identity of survey respondents

4.2.2 Age

What is your age?

- Under 18: 1%
- 19 – 24: 2%
- 25 – 34: 18%
- 35 – 49: 43%
- 50 – 64: 21%
- 65 or older: 15%

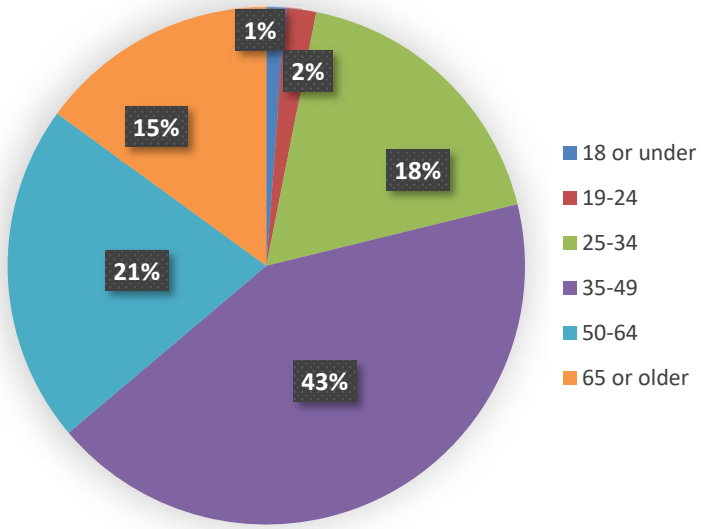

Figure 4: Age of survey respondents

4.2.3 Race and ethnicity

Do you identify yourself as? (all that apply)

- American Indian or Alaskan Native: 5%
- Asian or Asian American: 9%
- Black or African American: 5%
- Middle Eastern or North African: 2%
- Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander: 2%
- White or Caucasian: 79%
- Other: 7%

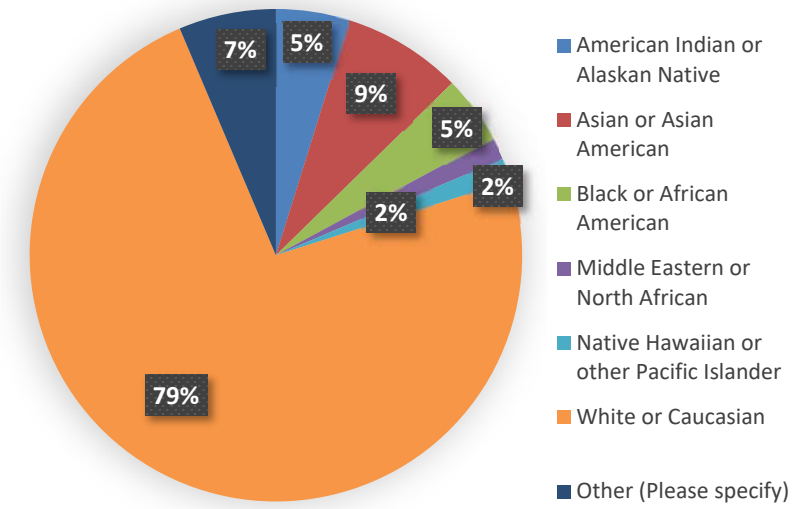

Figure 5: Race/ethnicity of survey respondents*

*The value of the percent count of **Figure 5** total is greater than 100% because respondents were able to select more than one option.

Do you identify yourself as Hispanic or Latino/a/x or of Spanish origins?

- Yes: 11%
- No: 89%

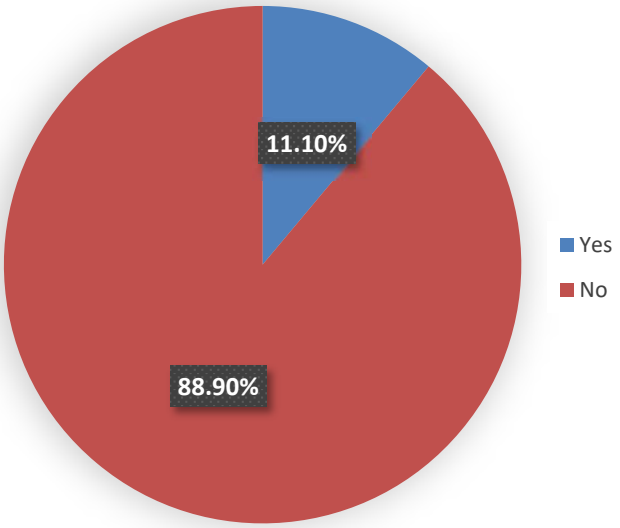

Figure 6: Hispanic or Latino/a/x identities or Spanish origins of survey respondents

4.2.4 Household annual earnings

What is your household's total annual earnings?

- Less than $10k: 1%
- $10k - $14,999: 1%
- $15k - $19,999: <1%
- $20k - $24,999: 1%
- $25k - $34,999: 2%
- $35k - $49,999: 4%
- $50k - $74,999: 10%
- $75k - $99,999: 12%
- $100k - $149,999: 27%
- $150k - $199,999: 13%
- $200k or more: 13%
- I prefer not to say: 16%

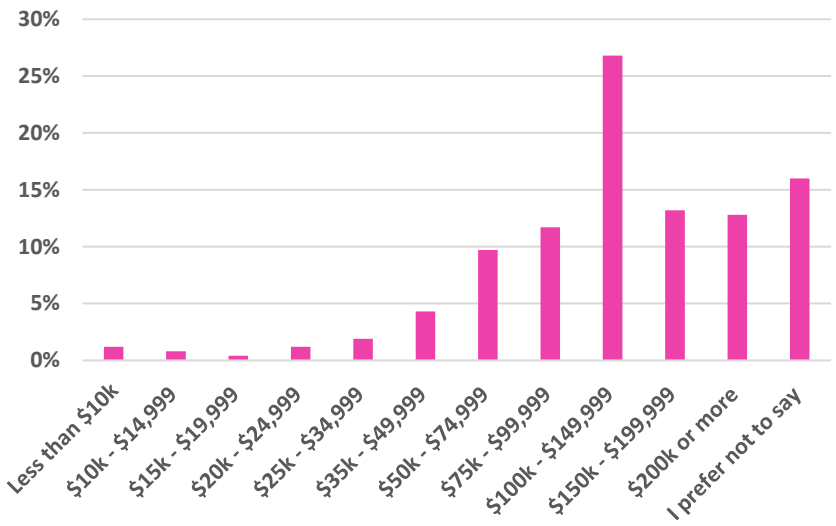

Figure 7: Household's total annual earnings of survey respondents

5 NEXT STEPS

5.1 Determining alternatives for study in Level 2

The public's feedback helped determine which alternatives had the most potential for further study. The project team consolidated data from the survey into charts showing more, mixed, and less support for each station, route and OMF North option.

This data was shared with the Community Advisory Group on March 24, about halfway through the survey period. This preliminary data informed the CAG's recommendations on which alternatives should advance for further study. The charts were updated after the survey was final and shared with the Elected Leadership Group on April 19. This public feedback was taken into consideration as the ELG chose which alternatives to advance to the Level 2 analysis.

5.2 Level 2 analysis

Level 2 analysis is being conducted over the summer of 2022. Sound Transit will have more information to share in late 2022. The public will have another opportunity to learn more and weigh in on the refined alternatives to help determine which alternative(s) to advance for further study in environmental review as well the selection of a preferred alternative.

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