Racial Equity Toolkit (RET) and the Everett Link Extension Project

Community Oversight Panel

7/12/23

SoundTransit

Agenda

I. History of the equity tools

II. RET Overview

- *Purpose*
- *Tool overview*
- *RET implementation*
- *Lessons Learned & Resources*

III. RET application – Everett Link Extension

IV. Q&A

Equity Tools History and Timeline

2018-19

- 15% of agency goes through UIR
- Development of ST 5 year strategic plan
- Creation of Equity Steering Committee
- Creation of equity subcommittees
- Equity & Inclusion Policy

2020

- RET & EET first draft completed
- Round 1-stakeholder engagement
- Pilot selection
- Pilots launch

- **PILOTS**
- Next Gen ORCA
- EVLE
- Northgate
- TDLE (EET)
- KDM Station (EET)
- Daily Paid Parking Program (EET)

2021

- Pilots "wrapped-up" in July
- Tools revised based on lessons learned
- Developed 2022 implementation plan
- Round 2-stakeholder engagement re: tool revision and implementation plan
- Tool final design

2022

- Publish tools
- Lunch & Learns and department presentations
- Implementation on projects, programs, policies, etc.

RET Purpose & Overview

Anti-racist Vision Statement

Sound Transit proactively works toward becoming an anti-racist agency where equity and racial justice are central to all that we do; resulting in a transit system that is free of racism and where the full inclusion of Black, Indigenous and other people of color is achieved so that everyone can thrive.

Anti-racism Guiding Principles

Disrupt Racism

Through the analysis of institutional power, proactively confront racism at Sound Transit and in our communities by addressing past and current harm and dismantling systems that perpetuate racial bias, power and privilege.

Partner with Black, Indigenous and other People of Color Communities

Build trust and grow our organizational understanding of race and social justice through the deliberate and consistent engagement of historically excluded communities both internally and externally.

Intersectionality

Value the lived experience, skills, knowledge and multi-dimensionality of our diverse communities and address systemic inequality by recognizing that various aspects of a person's identity converge resulting in societal advantages and disadvantages.

Leadership Transformation

Recruit, cultivate, retain and promote leaders at all levels who demonstrate a commitment to equity and anti-racism in both principle and practice.

Sustained Commitment

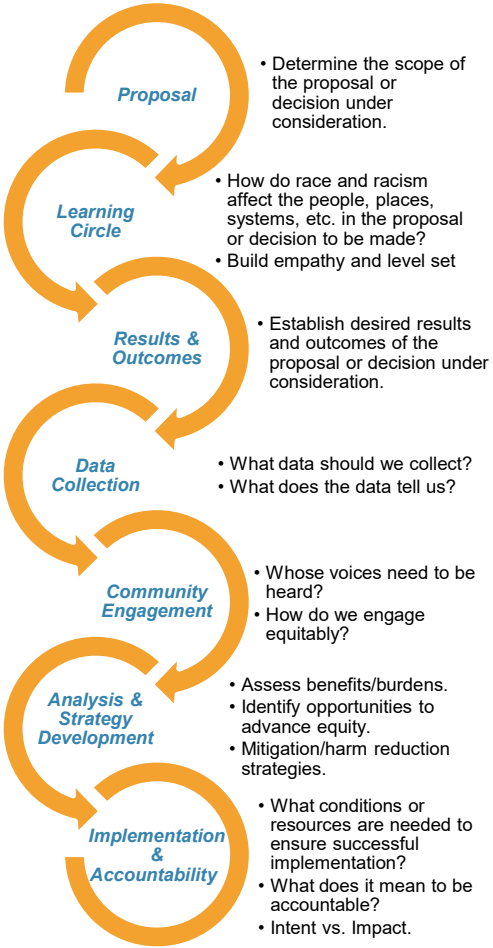
Commit to long-term investment of time, money, people and other resources needed to fully realize an equitable and anti-racist future.

What is a Racial Equity Tool?

A RET is designed to integrate an explicit consideration of racial equity in decision-making related to projects, policies, programs and practices. The tool includes a set of guiding questions that will prompt teams to:

- Identify clear racial equity goals, objectives and outcomes.
- Examine historic and root causes of racial disparities.
- Collect and interpret data from a variety of sources.
- Amplify community voice.
- Critically examine whom a decision will benefit or burden.
- Develop and implement strategies to mitigate or eliminate potential harm posed by Sound Transit projects, policies, programs or processes.
- Develop mechanisms to measure and evaluate impact.

RET Outline


Proposal
• Determine the scope of the proposal or decision under consideration.
Learning Circle
• How do race and racism affect the people, places, systems, etc. in the proposal or decision to be made?
• Build empathy and level set
Results & Outcomes
• Establish desired results and outcomes of the proposal or decision under consideration.
Data Collection
• What data should we collect?
• What does the data tell us?
Community Engagement
• Whose voices need to be heard?
• How do we engage equitably?
Analysis & Strategy Development
• Assess benefits/burdens.
• Identify opportunities to advance equity.
• Mitigation/harm reduction strategies.
Implementation & Accountability
• What conditions or resources are needed to ensure successful implementation?
• What does it mean to be accountable?
• Intent vs. Impact.

Equitable Engagement Tool

What is equitable community engagement?

Equitable community engagement is the act of **ensuring the full inclusion of all voices** in the community, **particularly those who have been, and continue to be, denied access to powe**r. The practices that define equitable engagement are meant to result in high levels of participation from those who are most likely to be adversely impacted by agency initiatives and who are historically excluded and underrepresented in these conversations.

The EET provides. . .

- An organizational framework for Equitable Engagement
- An outline of equitable engagement best practices
- Shared meaning of key concepts and terminology
- A guide to ensure diversity, equity and inclusion are proactively considered and integrated throughout the engagement planning and implementation process

Past, Current, and Future RET Efforts

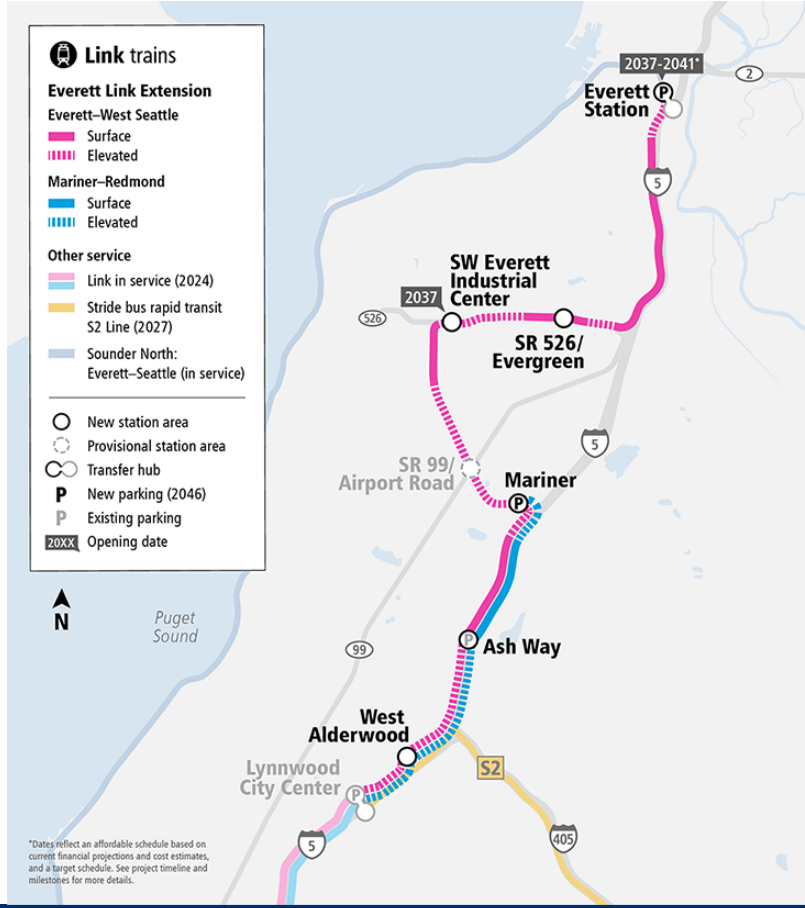
Department	Topic(s)
PEPD	EVLE, TDLE, parking program
SBS	Policy process
PSO	Phase Gate readiness requirements
PX	Communities of Focus
HR	Performance management
Ops	Monthly business review process
Finance	Fare change, fare policy

RET application – Everett Link Extension

Everett Link Extension

ST3 Representative Project

- ***Length*:** 16 miles
- ***Stations:*** seven for planning
- ***Opening service:*** 2037 – 2041
- ***New parking*** at Everett Station and Mariner opens 2046
- ***Operations & Maintenance Facility North:*** opening 2034



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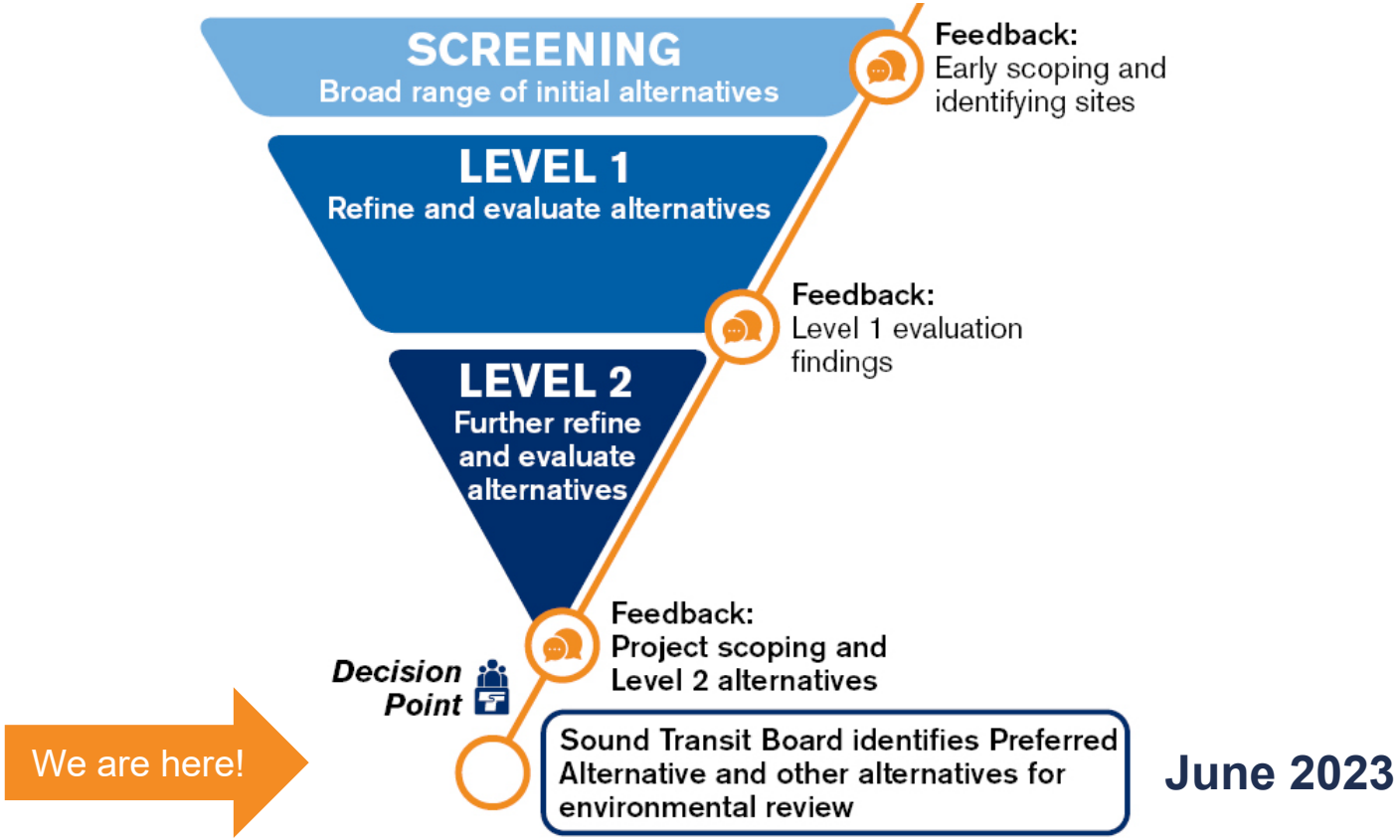
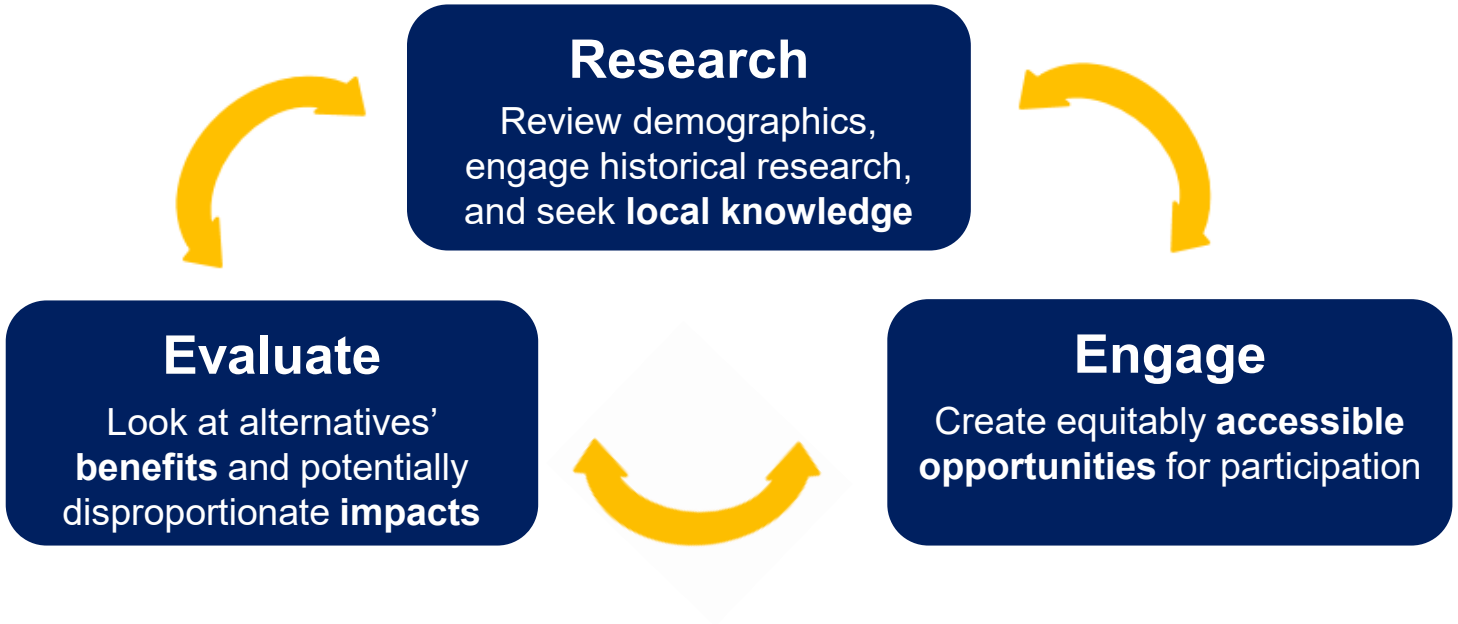
Phase 1: Alternatives Development Process



Phase 1 RET Goals

Elevate explicit consideration of racial equity in the Board's identification of alternatives for study in the draft Environmental Impact Statement.



Research

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

Sample of indicators for each station area:

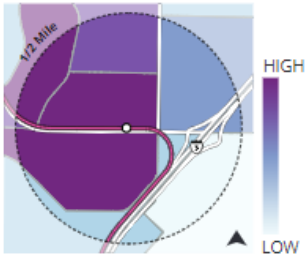
POPULATION DENSITY

Population

This station touches the most densely populated parts of Snohomish County north 128th St SW and northeast of Airport Rd.

Population Estimate (½ Mile):	7,610 people
Population Density:	15.1 people/acre
Jobs Estimate (½ Mile):	3,405 jobs
Zero Vehicle Households:	207 households

PEOPLE OF COLOR

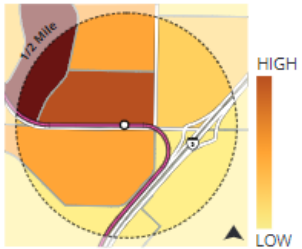


Equity

The area around the station is fairly diverse in terms of race and ethnicity.

People of Color:	3,367 (44%)
Low Income Individuals:	884 (13%)
Limited English Proficiency:	937 people (12%)

RENTER HOUSEHOLDS



Housing

Predominantly renter households in the area surrounding the station, with the largest number of subsidized housing units in any station area. 30% of households within a half mile of the station are cost burdened, on par with Snohomish County overall.

Rental Housing Units:	1,949 units (62%)
Owner-Occupied Units:	1,204 units (38%)
Affordable Housing Units:	805 assisted units
Cost-Burdened Renters:	991 households (31%)

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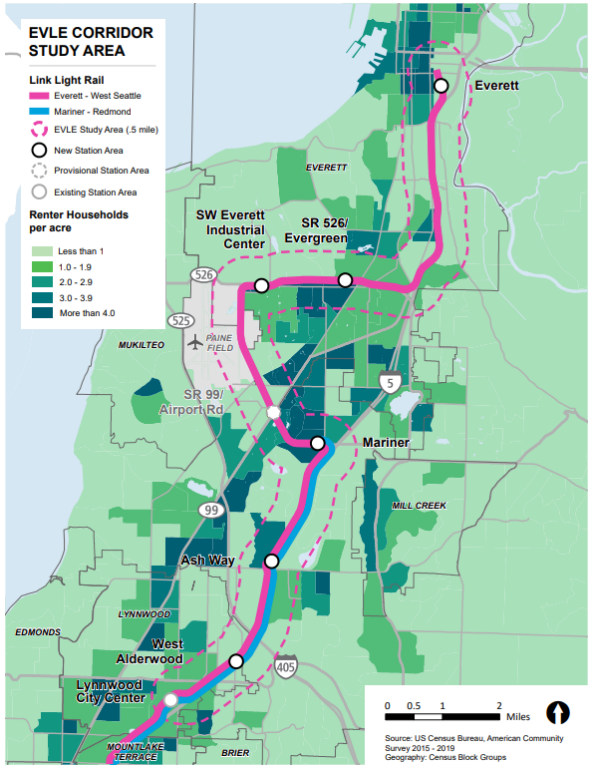
Research: understanding who lives here

Snapshot of demographics

In all station areas, one or more apply:

- Majority people of color
- Majority renters
- A quarter with low incomes
- A quarter speaking a language other than English at home

Project engagement efforts focus on understanding the individuality of people and neighborhoods, beyond these numbers.



Renter household density

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Engagement planning

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

Focus on reaching people who face higher barriers to participation via usual channels:

- Community conversations
- Community Advisory Group
- Focused tabling events
- Relationship building with CBOs

Alternatives evaluation

Goal: evaluate alternatives with equity criteria that help ensure benefits and avoid disproportionate impacts for underserved communities.

Burdens measured by acquisitions and their potential to affect places that are culturally specific or important to people with low incomes

Benefits measured by ability for current residents to access stations

Category	Criteria	Measure	Methods
Healthy Built, Natural and Social Environments *Preserve and promote a healthy environment and economy by minimizing adverse impacts on the natural, built, and social environments through sustainable and equitable practices.*	Built Environment and Social Resources	Identify social resources, parks and recreation areas, historic and archaeological resources, hazardous waste sites, and noise and vibration sensitive receptors	Known resources within 150 feet of alignment centerlines and station facilities or within any anticipated full property acquisitions in excess of that distance based on Level 2 design: historic resources listed in or eligible for the National Register of Historic Places or local registers; known archaeological resources; parks, trails, and recreational resources; sites with known contamination; and Category 1 noise/vibration receptors within 350 feet.
		Identify social resources, parks and recreation areas, historic and archaeological resources, hazardous waste sites, and noise and vibration sensitive receptors	Number of potentially impacted and/or acquired properties and estimated residential units affected based on Level 2 design of alignments and station facilities and construction staging considerations.
	Burdens to Historically Underserved Populations	Burden of acquisitions and displacements on historically underserved populations	Number of full and partial property acquisitions and estimated residential units affected in census block groups with high minority and low-income populations (high defined in comparison to demographic characteristics within 1/2 mile of the representative alignment).
		Potential for acquisitions to affect affordable housing or community facilities that are culturally specific and/or important to low-income individuals	Assessment of potential full or partial acquisitions of affordable housing and community facilities that are culturally specific and/or important to low-income individuals
	Natural Environment Resources	Identify geologic hazard areas, floodplains, wetlands, streams and fish and wildlife habitat conservation areas	Number and area of known environmental resources within 150 feet of alignment centerlines and station facilities or within any anticipated full property acquisitions based on Level 2 design: wetlands, streams/culverts, and other waters of the US, floodplains, ESA-listed species/critical habitat, and fisheries or other natural habitat areas.
	Traffic Effects	Potential effects of project design on traffic operations	Qualitative assessment of potential effects of project design including station access and alignment design on traffic operations on the surrounding network as a result of the project based on roadway connections, geometry and configuration as well as traffic volumes.
Equitable Mobility *Expand mobility for the corridor and region's residents, including explicit consideration for transit-dependent, low-income and minority populations*	Opportunities for Historically Underserved Populations	Proximity of station locations to minority populations	Existing minority populations within the 10-minute walkshed of station alternatives: American Indian/Alaska Native, Asian, Black or African American, Hispanic or Latino and/or Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, including those identifying as two or more races based on existing residential land uses.
		Proximity of station locations to low-income populations	Existing low-income individuals (200% federal poverty level) within the 10-minute walkshed of station alternatives based on existing residential uses.
		Proximity of station locations to employers of minority workers and jobs with lower wages	Existing jobs that employ workers and jobs with low wages ($1,250 monthly) within the 10-minute walkshed of station alternatives.
		Population with limited English proficiency near stations	Existing populations of people with limited English proficiency within the 10-minute walkshed of station alternatives based on existing residential uses.
		Population with a disability near stations	Existing populations of people with a disability within the defined walkshed alternatives.
		Proximity of station locations to zero-car households	Existing households without access to private vehicle within the 10-minute walkshed of station alternatives based on existing residential uses.
		Proximity of station locations to existing subsidized affordable housing units	Number of assisted affordable housing units (HUD funded LIHTC, 202, and 811 units) in the 10-minute walkshed of station alternatives.

Qualitative Quantitative

Alternatives evaluation - example

SR 526/Evergreen

Evaluation Findings

	A	B	C	D	E
Community Assets					
Transit Integration					
Transportation Plan Consistency					
2040 Population + Jobs					
Technical Challenges					
Comparative Cost Estimates					
Equity: Race, Income, English Proficiency					
Equity: Age, Ability, Means of Access					
Equitable Access to Jobs					
Proximity to Affordable Housing					
Land Use Plan Consistency					
TOD Development Potential					
Quality of Pedestrian Connections					
Quality of Bike Connections					
Built Environment + Social Resources					
Acquisitions and Displacements					
Burdens to Underserved Communities					
Non-Project Traffic Effects					
Natural Environment					

27 DRAFT subject-to-change

Lower Performing — Higher Performing

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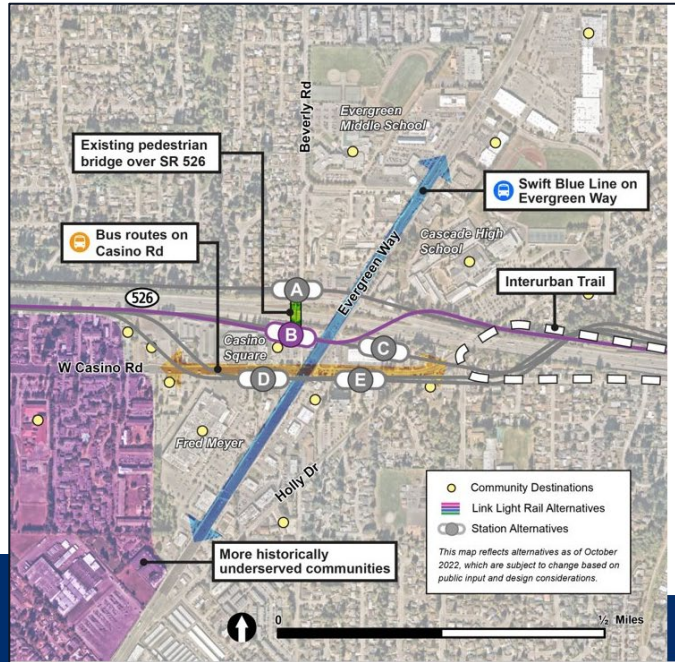
Phase 1 Outcomes

Highlighted equity differences between alternatives to decision makers at every decision point.

Community Advisory Group, Elected Leadership Group, Board presentations all include comparison charts and points that call out ***equity trade offs.***

Example: Presentation of findings to ELG



EGN B

Advantages

- More historically underserved communities and affordable housing
- Easy pick-up and drop-off

Disadvantages

- Potential to displace community destinations, including Casino Square
- More potential displacements than EGN-A, but fewer than EGN-C, EGN-D, and EGN-E.

Phase 1 Outcomes

Engagement elevated equity issues important to communities and bolstered community access to decision making.

Example:

Relationship building with community-based organization in SR 526/Evergreen Way station area positively affected their influence on identification of alternatives to study in DEIS.

Public comment resulted in Board motion amendment, so that there is further community engagement and analysis to arrive at a ‘Preferred Alternative.’

Racial Equity Tool in Phase 2

Draft goals:

Alternatives evaluation: *Elevate equity* for the Board's identification of a preferred alternative and other alternatives to study in Final EIS, through *community-driven priorities defined for each station area* that are evaluated in parallel to the Draft EIS.

Engagement: Continue engaging historically underserved communities proactively and meaningfully *such that concerns are known and integrated early.*

Thank you.

Thank you.

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