



APPENDIX G

East Tacoma Listening Session Summary

Tacoma Dome Link Extension East Tacoma Listening Session Summary

May 2, 2019
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Overview

On May 2, 2019, Sound Transit hosted a listening session in East Tacoma at the Eastside Community Center during the EIS scoping period for the Tacoma Dome Link Extension (TDLE) project. The purpose of the listening session was to learn more about community members' vision for the neighborhood that will be served by the new East Tacoma Station; the challenges they experience in utilizing transit in their neighborhood; their primary destinations; to share and solicit feedback on the Level 2 alternatives and build a foundation for future engagement. Sound Transit hosted a public open house in Tacoma, at the Greater Tacoma Convention Center, during scoping, but the listening session in East Tacoma was designed to augment this feedback because the East Tacoma community has been historically underserved by transit.

The East Tacoma listening session provided an opportunity for the 12 participants to learn about the Level 2 alternatives, discuss station area opportunities and challenges, share how the expansion of light rail can support ongoing community visioning and address community concerns about light rail's impact on the neighborhood. Feedback collected at the workshop will be included in the official EIS scoping comment period and integrated into the Scoping Summary Report, which will inform the Elected Leadership Group's recommendation to the Sound Transit Board regarding a preferred alternative(s) and other alternatives to study in an environmental impact statement.

Process

The workshop began with a resource fair where Sound Transit shared information about the Tacoma Dome Link Extension Project. Attendees could browse a series of quickscreens, which displayed information about the project evolution and process, Level 2 station alternatives in East Tacoma and Tacoma Dome, and station visualizations to provide viewers with a look and feel for how a station might look in their community. Additionally, a representative from Pierce Transit attended to provide information on Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) as well as a local radio station host. Participants could also connect with Sound Transit project staff to ask clarifying questions.

Project staff then provided a short overview presentation, reiterating the content displayed on the quickscreens, and providing more context for the project and the reason for hosting a meeting in East Tacoma. After the presentation, the project team anticipated splitting into four language groups to discuss the East Tacoma station area: Cambodian, English, Spanish and Vietnamese. Language interpreters were present to aid in communication between participants and project staff.

Due to the smaller group size, participants gathered into one, mixed-language discussion group where the facilitator asked them to describe what they loved about East Tacoma; their priorities for the community; how light rail could be an asset for their neighborhood; and the best way to continue to engage and communicate with the community members over the lifetime of the

project. In addition to assisting participants in communicating their ideas, the language interpreters were also members of the East Tacoma neighborhood, so they had the opportunity to share their thoughts about light rail as well.

The facilitators and note-taker used a flip chart to record the group's conversations. Visuals were available on the tables, including large neighborhood maps of the proposed East Tacoma and Tacoma Dome station options. Following the group discussion, the meeting format returned to a resource fair structure. Several attendees used this opportunity to engage with Sound Transit project staff about arranging future community meetings and/or integrating project representatives into scheduled community events to reach more members of the East Tacoma neighborhood.

Notifications

Two local partner organizations, the Salishan Association and East Tacoma Collaborative, assisted Sound Transit in advertising the listening session by distributing a poster door-to-door.

Outcomes

What we heard:

Feedback represented in this summary was gathered through the group discussion; participants also had the option to submit comment forms, which were captured as official scoping comments in the TDLE Scoping Summary Report. Below is a transcription of key takeaways from notes taken during the group discussion organized by the four focus areas of the listening session as well as community advice for engaging the East Tacoma neighborhood in future outreach efforts:

What participants love about their community

- The diversity of residents.
- The Eastside Community Center—it was a long process to secure funding for the much-needed space.
- Open space and access to recreation, like Swan Creek.
- Affordability.
- Convenience to destinations in Tacoma and the larger surrounding area (e.g. Emerald Queen Casino).

How light rail can improve the community

- Increased access to regional jobs, particularly in assisting the working class gain opportunities.
- Easier commute to educational assets, like the University of Washington Seattle Campus.
- Fewer cars and less pollution.
- Less traffic congestion.
- Improved safety due to fewer cars.
- Light rail will be convenient for youth and seniors.

Which station options are preferred or less favorable and priorities for station access

- Preferred stations:
 - ET 5 is more accessible from the Eastside.
 - ET 3A has better access to the community and facilities at the Tacoma Dome.
- Least preferred stations:
 - Anticipate ET 1 would have high traffic impacts.
- Priorities for station access:
 - Because there's no parking included in the East Tacoma station, expect that riders will go to Tacoma Dome where the parking is already full. This is exacerbated when there are events at the Tacoma Dome.
 - Concern about traffic congestion associated with light rail riders being dropped off at the East Tacoma station.
 - Future light rail expansion is needed to Portland Avenue or McKinley Avenue to fully integrate the Eastside into the regional system.
 - Increased bus connections from the west side of I-5 to East Tacoma are a high priority.
 - More Pierce Transit bus lines/routes at an increased frequency—riders wait too long between scheduled arrivals today.
 - Pierce Transit routes 54, 41 and 1 are challenging because they don't run frequently enough and/or there is too much distance between stops so riders can't efficiently reach destinations.
 - Suggest rapid ride bus option to collect more people.
 - A stop near the new Emerald Queen Casino is needed.
 - The current bus system makes it difficult to access existing Sound Transit service (Sunder, ST Express Bus)
 - Affordable fares will be crucial for community ridership.
 - Concerns about existing pedestrian access—currently, it's not safe to walk to the west side of I-5 from East Tacoma.

Priorities for the East Tacoma station

- Easier transit access to the station.
- Improved pedestrian and bike access, including parking.
- Strong desire for parking at the station.
- Opportunities to get food, coffee and other amenities nearby.
- Need accessible restrooms at the station.
- Security and safety will be a top priority.
- Incorporate public art that represents community diversity.

Best ways to advertise opportunities for community feedback and engage the East Tacoma neighborhood moving forward

- Create more awareness for events by advertising in the following locations:
 - South Sound media;
 - DSHS offices;
 - Local churches;
 - Area nursing homes;
 - Community radio stations;
 - Local bus stops—capitalize on long wait times!
- Important to advertise in multiple languages because English Language Learner (ELL) community members may not listen closely/ pay close attention to advertisements in English.
- Develop short videos/stories for community members to share on social media.