

**Sound Transit
West Seattle and Ballard Link Extensions
Determination of Significance
And Request for Comments on Scope of EIS**



Description of Proposal

Sound Transit is proposing to expand Link light rail transit service from downtown Seattle to West Seattle's Alaska Junction neighborhood and to Ballard's Market Street area. The project, known as the West Seattle and Ballard Link Extension (WSBLE), runs in a corridor approximately 11.8 miles long. The project is part of the ST3 Plan of regional transit system investments, funding for which was approved by the voters in 2016.

The purpose of the WSBLE project is to expand the Link light rail system from downtown Seattle to West Seattle and Ballard, to make appropriate community investments to improve mobility, and to increase capacity and connectivity for regional connections. Additional detail on the project Purpose and Need is in the Scoping Information Report. The Purpose and Need statement establishes the basis for developing and evaluating a range of reasonable alternatives for environmental review and assists with the identification of a Preferred Alternative.

Sound Transit will evaluate three light rail transit (LRT) build alternatives as well as a no-build alternative. Each LRT alternative includes fourteen stations that serve the following areas: Alaska Junction, Avalon, Delridge, SODO, the sports stadiums, International District/Chinatown, Midtown, Westlake, Denny, South Lake Union, Seattle Center, Smith Cove, Interbay, and Ballard. The build alternatives also include various design options.

No Build Alternative. The No Build alternative reflects the existing transportation system and environment without the proposed project. It also serves as a baseline for comparing impacts of the build alternatives.

LRT Alternatives. In West Seattle the alternatives include several elevated and tunnel station options in the Alaska Junction area in the vicinity of SW Alaska Street on either 41st Avenue SW, 42nd Avenue SW, or 44th Avenue SW. From the Alaska Junction, the alternatives travel east in either an elevated or tunnel configuration with elevated or tunnel station options at Avalon. The alternatives continue in an elevated configuration along SW Genesee Street with an elevated station in Delridge along or west of Delridge Way SW. The alternatives then cross the Duwamish River on a high-level fixed bridge parallel to the existing West Seattle Bridge on either the north or south side. The alternatives continue east in an elevated configuration before turning north along the E3 Busway to a new elevated or at-grade SODO station and an at-grade Stadium station and then connect to the existing downtown Seattle transit tunnel.

A new downtown tunnel would begin in the vicinity of the Stadium station; it would head north with alignments under 4th Avenue S or 5th Avenue S through the International District/Chinatown and then travel northwest under 5th Avenue or 6th Avenue through Midtown and Westlake. The alternatives would then continue in a tunnel configuration along Westlake Ave N to South Lake Union with a station near Denny Way before turning northwest with a station near Aurora Ave N between Harrison and Roy streets. The alternatives would continue in a tunnel towards Seattle Center with a station on either Republican or Mercer streets.

The alternatives then turn north and begin to transition to at-grade or elevated configurations to serve a Smith Cove station along Elliott Avenue W. From the Smith Cove station, the alternatives either continue in an elevated configuration along 15th Avenue W or transition to at-grade along the east side of the

BNSF tracks to an Interbay station near W Dravus Street. From the Interbay station, one alternative would continue in an elevated alignment along 15th Avenue W and cross Salmon Bay with a movable bridge. The other alternatives transition to the east of 15th Avenue W and crosses Salmon Bay on a high-level fixed bridge or in a tunnel. Station options in Ballard include elevated and tunnel stations near NW Market Street on 15th Avenue NW or 14th Avenue NW.

Proponent: Sound Transit (Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority)

Location of proposal: Seattle, King County, Washington

Lead agency: Sound Transit is the lead agency for State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) review and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) is the lead agency under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). A combined EIS is being prepared under SEPA and NEPA.

EIS Required. The lead agency has determined this proposal is likely to have a significant adverse impact on the environment. An environmental impact statement (EIS) is required under RCW 43.21C.030(2)(c) and will be prepared.

The lead agency has identified the following areas for discussion in the EIS: transportation, property acquisition and displacements, land use, economic activity and development potential, community facilities and neighborhoods, visual and aesthetic qualities, air quality (including greenhouse gas emissions), noise and vibration, water resources, ecosystems (including threatened and endangered species), energy use, geology and soils, hazardous materials, electromagnetic fields, public utilities and services, historic and cultural resources, parkland and open space, construction impacts, cumulative impacts, and indirect impacts.

The following areas will also be included for the purposes of meeting NEPA requirements in this combined SEPA/NEPA EIS: Section 4(f)/6(f) resources (public parks, recreation areas, wildlife and waterfowl refuges, and historic sites of national, State, or local significance), Section 106 resources (historic and cultural properties on or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places), and environmental justice (effects on low-income and minority populations).

The scoping process may result in a narrower scope of elements analyzed in the EIS.

Scoping. Agencies, tribes, and members of the public are invited to comment on the scope of the EIS. You may comment on the proposed range of alternatives, mitigation measures, probable significant adverse impacts, and licenses or other approvals that may be required. Three public scoping meetings and one agency and tribe scoping meeting are scheduled. Invitations to the agency and tribe scoping meeting have been sent to appropriate federal, tribal, state, and local governmental entities. The method and deadline for providing comments is as follows:

Comment Deadline: Comments must be submitted by 5:00 p.m., March 18, 2019

Comment Online: WSBLink.participate.online

Mail: West Seattle and Ballard Link Extensions (c/o Lauren Swift)
Sound Transit
401 S Jackson St., Seattle, WA 98104

Email: WSBscopingcomments@soundtransit.org

At a public meeting:

1. February 27, 2019, 6:00 – 8:30
Alki Masonic Center
4736 40th Ave SW
Seattle, WA 98116

2. February 28, 2019, 6:00 – 8:30
Ballard High School
1418 NW 65th St
Seattle, WA 98117

3. March 7, 2019, 5:00 – 7:30
Sound Transit, Union Station
401 S. Jackson Street
Seattle, WA 98104.

Voicemail: 833-972-2666

All public meeting locations are accessible to persons with disabilities who may also request materials be prepared and supplied in alternate formats by calling the project line, (206) 903-7229/TTY Relay 711 at least 48 hours in advance of the meeting. Persons who are deaf or hard of hearing may call (888) 713-4900/TTY Relay 711.

Responsible official: Perry Weinberg
Position/title: Deputy Executive Director, Office of Environmental Affairs and Sustainability
Phone: (206) 689-4931
Address: Sound Transit
Office of Environmental Affairs and Sustainability
Union Station, 401 South Jackson St., Seattle, WA 98104-2826

Additional Information: Additional information is contained in the Scoping Information Report, including alternatives under consideration, topics for discussion in the EIS, and the project Purpose and Need Statement, and is available at <http://www.soundtransit.org/WSBlink> or can be obtained by calling the project line at 206-903-7299. Alternate formats and languages of project material can be requested by calling the project line.

For information on the scoping process, contact Lauren Swift, Central Corridor Environmental Manager, at 206-398-5301.

Date: Feb. 14, 2019

Signature: _____



Perry Weinberg
SEPA Responsible Official