



West Seattle and Ballard Link Extensions

Q4 2020 EXTERNAL ENGAGEMENT REPORT

October/November/December 2020



West Seattle and Ballard

Link Extensions

Activities snapshot



60 comments and questions



8 community briefings



25 fieldwork activities and 7 property owner meetings



1 online open house engaging 5,029 users



2,663 Facebook impressions



10,514 Twitter impressions



911 Instagram story impressions



2 email updates engaging 10,545 subscribers

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Sound Transit conducted outreach with community groups, property owners and other stakeholders on virtual platforms during the reporting period. We are continuing to find creative ways to engage with the communities in which we work that support the recommendations to socially distance to enhance public safety.



Emails and phone calls

During the reporting period, the project team received 60 comments and questions via emails and phone calls.

A few questions and comments

- Support for transit-oriented development in collaboration with property owners in the Chinatown-International District.
- Support for expanded bus systems and routes and replacing the West Seattle Bridge.
- Support for delaying the release of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and property owner notifications to alleviate property owner concerns while realignment takes place.
- Interest in a South Lake Union station that prioritizes access for pedestrians and bike users.
- Interest in a tunnel alternative to Ballard to minimize environmental and access concerns.
- Interest in alternatives being studied in the Draft EIS that promote ease of access for users.
- Interest in a submerged tunnel crossing of the Duwamish Waterway to alleviate traffic on the swing bridge.
- Interest in and questions about aerial transit from West Seattle to SODO.
- Questions about when property owner notifications will be distributed.
- Questions about expectations for replying to public inquiry emails.
- Questions about the closure of the West Seattle Bridge and whether or not light rail could potentially be incorporated in the West Seattle Bridge replacement design.
- Questions about potential property acquisition in West Seattle.
- Questions about potential effects to bird habitat on Pigeon Point.
- Questions about the definition of a preferred alternative.
- Questions about when the West Seattle and Ballard Link Extensions construction will start.
- Questions about Sound Transit coordination with the City of Seattle regarding the West Seattle High Bridge.
- Questions about options to connect the Duwamish crossing to Delridge station alternatives.
- Questions about Sound Transit's 2021 Financial Plan.
- Requests for general project updates with community groups and stakeholders across the corridor.



Community briefings

During the reporting period, the project team participated in 8 virtual briefings, engaging the following groups or individuals:

- Youngstown Neighborhood (10/20)
- Seattle Repertory Theatre and Seattle Children's Theatre (10/21)
- Uptown Alliance (11/2)
- Ballard Alliance (11/2)
- Pigeon Point Neighborhood Council (11/9)
- West Seattle Transportation Coalition (11/19)
- Seattle Subway (11/23)
- Avalon Neighborhood (12/7)

Common questions and comments

Corridor wide

- Support for continued engagement throughout the Draft EIS process.
- Support for delaying property owner notifications in the event that there are project delays.
- Questions about how equity will be incorporated into the light rail extension planning process, considering that communities of color and low-income populations are most affected during construction projects.
- Questions about property owner engagement process and how property acquisition offers are calculated.
- Questions about the timeline for when a preferred route will be selected.
- Questions about how the public will be able to comment on the Draft EIS.

Interbay/Ballard

Stations: Ballard, Interbay and Smith Cove

- No feedback received.

Downtown

Stations: Seattle Center, South Lake Union, Denny, Westlake and Midtown

- Support for continued communication about project timelines and key decision points in the Downtown corridor.
- Interest in opportunities for station area planning coordination near the Seattle Center.



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- Questions about the METRO CONNECTS plan for more bus service on Mercer Street in the future when light rail is running.
- Questions about partnerships around Transit-Oriented Development and station area planning, specifically the timeline and agency partners needed to convert surplus property.

Chinatown-International District/SODO

Stations: Chinatown-International District and SODO

- No feedback received.

West Seattle

Stations: Delridge, Avalon and Alaska Junction

- Interest in learning more about the potential benefits and effects of the Yancy/Andover Alternatives.
- Concerns about property effects on the northern tip of Pigeon Point during light rail construction.
- Questions about the possibility of placing a station where the West Seattle Golf course exists today.
- Questions about construction timelines for the West Seattle Link Extension.
- Questions about how the replacement of the West Seattle High Bridge could affect the scheduled timeline for release of the Draft EIS.
- Questions about the potential locations of the Delridge and Avalon stations.
- Questions about how the route and station locations will be determined in West Seattle.
- Questions about parking structures and park-and-ride options near station locations in West Seattle.



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Fieldwork activities and property owner meetings

During the reporting period, the project emailed or called residents and businesses about 25 fieldwork activities. The project team also attended 7 meetings with property owners during the reporting period.

Fieldwork activities

Activities

- Notified 42 stakeholders in Chinatown-International District, Downtown, Interbay, SODO and West Seattle about upcoming geotechnical borings, groundwater testing, civil and historical surveys, and vibration monitoring.

A few questions and comments

- Support for continued coordination with homeowners during disruptive fieldwork activities.
- Questions about the effects of vibrations on research animals.
- Request to delay indoor fieldwork activities because of increased COVID-19 risks.
- Request for information about potential noise and vibration effects from geotechnical borings.
- Request for geotechnical boring logs.



Geotechnical drilling rig in Chinatown-International District.

Property owner meetings

A few questions and comments

- Interest in joint development opportunities near Smith Cove and Interbay station locations.
- Interest in learning about the property owner engagement timeline and what to expect.
- Interest in learning more about the locations for underground stations and above ground entrances.
- Concerns about costs and funding gaps for the project, especially related to the Ballard Station alternatives.
- Questions about how a route is identified as a preferred alternative.
- Question about impacts to the project due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Questions about the property acquisition process.
- Questions about future light rail construction and the amount of space needed to build each station.
- Questions about how third-party funding is secured.
- Questions about the location and design of alternatives in Ballard and West Seattle.



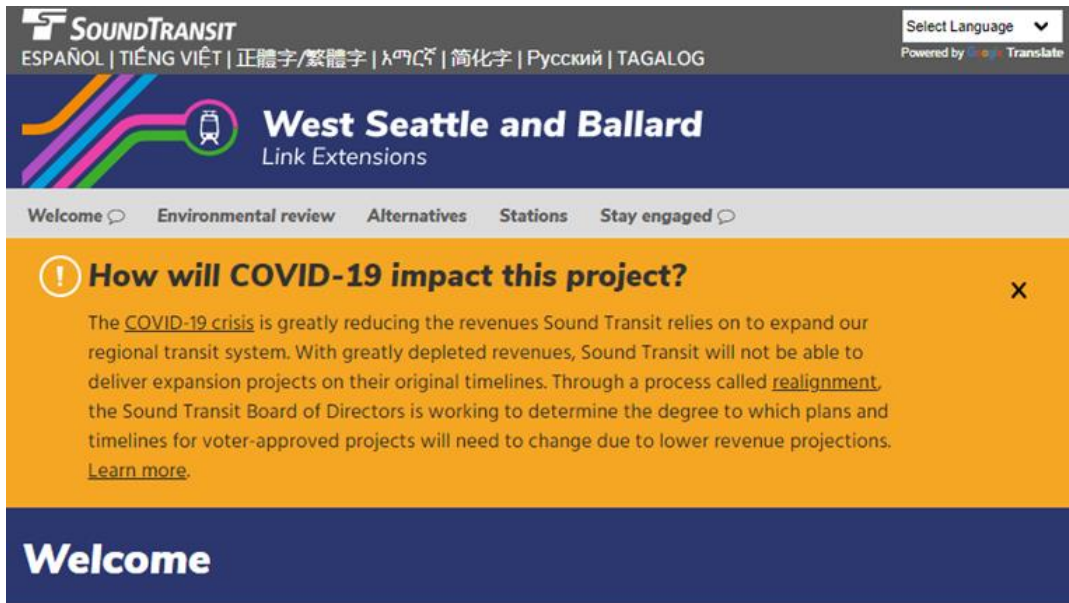
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- Questions about how realignment could affect the West Seattle and Ballard Link Extensions project timelines.
- Questions about the timeline for when a final route will be selected.



Online Open House



What's the latest?

- Sound Transit is currently studying multiple light rail routes and station locations (called alternatives) for the West Seattle and Ballard Link Extensions (WSBLE) project.
- You will have an important opportunity to provide your input during a public comment period in mid-2021 when we expect to publish the **Draft**

What are the West Seattle and Ballard Link Extensions?

The [West Seattle and Ballard Link Extensions](#) will provide fast, reliable light rail connections to

During the reporting period, the project team conducted an online open house to share information about the project in advance of the release of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) in mid-2021. The updated site features an overview of the environmental review process along with detailed maps, elevation profiles and descriptions of each alternative currently being studied. The site also includes new maps for each proposed station and cross-sections for all elevated stations, along with information about how people could walk, roll, bike, or take transit to potential station locations.

Online open house participation

The online open house is available in five languages: English, Spanish, Vietnamese, Traditional Chinese and Simplified Chinese. The following data (see table below) was collected from each of the translated sites during the reporting period. The definitions for these metrics are listed below for reference.

- Users: the number of unique IP addresses that visited the site
- Average session duration: the amount of time people spent on the site per session

	English	Spanish	Vietnamese	Traditional Chinese	Simplified Chinese
Users	4,848	50	44	41	46
Average session duration	3 minutes 23 seconds	9 minutes 7 seconds	5 minutes 30 seconds	4 minutes 34 seconds	4 minutes 31 seconds

Online open house visitors had the opportunity to share feedback about how they would prefer to engage in the future and could submit a request to receive a virtual briefing from the project team. During the reporting period, the project team received 9 comments and 3 briefing requests through the online open house. The site remains live and will continue to be updated as the project develops. Prior to the release of the Draft EIS, the site will be used as an information hub and to connect directly with stakeholders.

The site is located at: wsblink.participate.online.



Social media

During the reporting period, the project team posted a Facebook post, a Tweet, and an Instagram story to promote the online open house.

Social media analytics

Facebook

- 2,663 impressions
- 268 link clicks

Twitter

- 10,514 impressions
- 290 link clicks

Instagram

- 911 story impressions



The online open house was shared on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and other news outlets.

soundtransit.org/wsblink



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