



West Seattle and Ballard Link Extensions

Stakeholder Advisory Group Meeting #13 – March 21, 2019

Meeting Notes

Agenda Item #1 – Welcome and introductions

Diane Adams, Facilitator, welcomed Stakeholder Advisory Group (SAG) members to the group's 13th meeting, noting this meeting was optional. She confirmed the agenda, provided a high-level review of the previous meeting's summary and thanked SAG members for their participation in the process to-date. Diane stated that SAG members would not be asked to provide any recommendations during this meeting.

Agency directors, project leads and staff in attendance included:

- Cathal Ridge, Central Corridor Director, Sound Transit
- Diane Adams, Facilitator
- Leda Chahim, Government & Community Relations Manager, Sound Transit
- Ron Endlich, Project Director, Sound Transit
- Sandra Fann, High Capacity Transit Development Manager, Sound Transit
- Sloan Dawson, Station Planning Lead, Sound Transit
- Carrie Avila-Mooney, Government & Community Relations Manager, Sound Transit
- Jeanne Krikawa, Station Planning Lead, The Underhill Company
- KaDeena Yerkan, External Engagement Lead, EnviroIssues

SAG members in attendance were:

- Andres Arjona, Community Representative – Ballard
- Becky Asencio, Seattle Public Schools
- Brian King, Community Representative – West Seattle
- Deb Barker, Community Representative – West Seattle
- Erin Goodman, SODO Business Improvement Area
- Robert Cardona, Community Representative – Uptown
- Ron Severt, Space Needle
- Savitha Reddy Pathi, Wing Luke Museum of the Asian Pacific American Experience
- Scott Rusch, Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center
- Walter Reese, Nucor Steel
- Willard Brown, Delridge Neighborhood Development Association

NOTE – the following SAG members were not in attendance:

- Bryce Yadon, Futurewise
- Colleen Echohawk, Chief Seattle Club
- Dave Gering, Manufacturing Industrial Council
- Ginny Gilder, Force 10 Hoops/Seattle Storm
- Greg Nickels, Former Mayor of Seattle
- Hamilton Gardiner, West Seattle Chamber



- Jon Scholes, Downtown Seattle Association
- Kelsey Mesher, Transportation Choices Coalition
- Katie Garrow, Martin Luther King Labor Council
- Larry Yok, Community Representative – Chinatown-International District
- Maiko Winkler-Chin, Seattle Chinatown-International District Preservation & Development Authority
- Mark Nagle, Expedia
- Mike Stewart, Ballard Alliance
- Peter Schrappen, Northwest Marine Trade Association
- Steve Lewis, Alliance of People with disAbilities
- Warren Aakervik, Community Representative – Freight

Agenda Item #2 – Community engagement and collaboration

Leda Chahim provided an update on community engagement activities. The scoping period, which began on February 15, was extended to April 2 in response to community requests. She presented a summary of external engagement for January and February 2019, highlighting the various community briefings Sound Transit attended over the two months. Leda summarized the three open houses and two workshops held during the scoping period. The meetings were held in West Seattle, Ballard, Downtown, Delridge and Chinatown-International District. In total, over 700 people attended. Leda went over the schedule of upcoming meetings, highlighting the SAG recommendation meeting on April 17.

Agenda Item #3 – Level 3 planning, station planning discussions

Sloan Dawson, Sound Transit, gave a presentation on station planning. He noted that Sound Transit started the station planning process earlier on the West Seattle and Ballard Link Extensions project than on past projects. The current station planning effort will set the basis for the design efforts in the EIS and beyond. As part of that effort, Sound Transit hosted a series of station planning charrettes with stakeholders and agency partners over the course of summer 2018. In recent months, the station planning team has been focused on the Chinatown-International District, Delridge, SODO, Alaska Junction and Ballard stations. Sloan noted that the results of those station discussions and information from the charrettes would be available to inform the SAG's evening discussion. For additional details about station planning activities, see the [PowerPoint presentation](#).

Following Sloan's presentation, SAG members discussed the Level 3 alternatives, with a focus on station planning considerations, in small groups. Questions (Q) and comments (C) from SAG members, as well as answers (A) from Sound Transit staff, included the following:

West Seattle

Q: Are the existing bus stops in the Alaska Junction closer to one of the potential station locations?

A: Existing bus stops in Alaska Junction would be closest to the two conceptual entries to the 44th Ave SW tunnel station location, though they would be comparable distance from one of the conceptual entries to the 42nd Ave SW tunnel station location. There would likely be small changes in bus stop locations to improve access to the station once it is built, and it is possible that some bus rerouting might occur to better serve the station.

Q: What are the key considerations in choosing between an elevated and tunnel station in the Junction?

A: One is impacts to existing property and development potential, with elevated alternatives generally having higher potential property effects and more permanent impacts to development capacity than tunnel alternatives. Another is in station configuration and transit integration, with elevated alternatives in the Junction requiring taller guideways and stations in the Junction and being farther from existing and planned bus service on California. Tunnel alternatives are, however, of greater comparative expense than elevated alternatives.

Q: What impacts would an elevated station in the Junction have on the area?

A: The representative project would affect both sides of SW Alaska St and the street's configuration. The orange elevated alternative would affect several blocks of residential neighborhoods east of the Junction and north of SW Alaska St, with the station occupying much of the block between 41st and 40th Aves SW, and SW Alaska and Oregon Streets. It would be a potentially lower station (approximately 30'), however, whereas the representative station would need to be taller (approximately 50') to provide a mezzanine and vertical clearance to the roadway.

Q: Which station orientation is preferred in the Junction?

A: Over the year, we have heard there has been interest in a station oriented in a north-south direction. There has also been interest in positioning the station to allow for access points on both sides of SW Alaska St for pedestrian crossings and convenient transit connections.

Q: What are the proposed tunnel station depths in the Junction?

A: Based on current limited engineering, they are at about 60 to 70 feet.

Q: Would businesses be impacted by a Junction station on 42nd Avenue SW?

A: Though we're still very early in design, the assumption is that the 42nd Ave SW tunnel station would be within the right-of-way. The station would require cut-and-cover construction, which would potentially affect adjacent properties, along with the permanent footprint associated with station entries.

Q: How would Metro bus routes access the Delridge station area (included as part of the blue, West Seattle Tunnel option)?

A: Initial discussions with Metro have yielded the possibility of deviating northbound buses from Delridge on SW Genesee St and then either onto 25th or 26th Ave SW in order to allow active bus zones on the same block as the station entry. Another strategy could be to keep buses on Delridge and construct a pedestrian overpass for traffic-separated access.

Q: What changes would be required on 26th Avenue SW? (included as part of the blue, West Seattle Tunnel option)

A: The street would likely be reconfigured in order to accommodate potential increased traffic, safety enhancements for people walking or biking to the station, or potential dedicated transit use, or some combination thereof.

Q: What is the minimum turning radius for an elevated alignment?

A: Five hundred to 600 feet is typical. This reduces the need for trains to decelerate. The curve going into the Westlake Station has a radius of about 250 feet.



Q: What are the design life of tunnels and elevated alignments?

A: The design life is 100-years. The main consideration is building to a seismic-tolerant standard.

Q: Would the station structure in Delridge for the orange alternative be directly over Delridge Way SW?

A: Yes, that's the assumed location for the orange elevated alternative at this point in the design process.

Q: What is the existing topography in the Alaska Junction?

A: Generally, it's an uphill grade from Fautleroy Way to 42nd Avenue SW, with California Ave SW defining the ridge line of the West Seattle Peninsula from the north to the south. West of California, the grade slopes gently down to 44th, and thereafter steepens as one travels toward the water's edge

Q: Is there a greenway planned on SW Alaska Street?

A: Greenways are planned on 38th and 42nd Aves SW, per the City of Seattle Bike Master Plan. Facilities are not currently planned on SW Alaska Street, though it is the only east-west through street comfortably graded for cycling.

Q: Is 35th Avenue SW currently the main transit corridor in the Avalon station area?

A: Yes.

C: There are improvements planned for Fautleroy Way SW. A station on that street would conflict with those improvements.

C: There are several potential pinch points for people walking near the proposed Avalon station locations.

Q: Would all these stations include pick up and drop off areas?

A: Yes, though exact location of pick up and drop off areas will need to be further studied and designed in future phases, in partnership with the City of Seattle.

Q: Where is the lumber yard near the Avalon station?

A: Alki Lumber occupies several parcels is located south of Avalon and Fautleroy Way, and west of 35th Ave SW.

Q: Which of these stations would include a mezzanine area?

A: Sound Transit generally builds mezzanines when an elevated station is located in the right-of-way or exceeds a certain height, determined principally by factors such as alignment geometry and profile. At this level of design, it is likely that the all alternatives would feature mezzanines except the orange elevated alternative in the Junction, the elevated alternatives at Avalon, and the blue elevated alternative in Delridge. All tunnel stations generally feature a mezzanine.

Q: What input has Sound Transit heard regarding the northern and southern crossings of the Duwamish River?

A: There are some potential challenges to industrial and maritime businesses and the Port of Seattle's operations with a northern crossing. A southern crossing is longer and may have some additional critical slope area challenges.



C: There have been several neighborhood groups that have formed and been active in advocating for their interests in West Seattle.

Downtown

Q: Is there a strong constituency of stakeholders downtown? If yes, what are their thoughts on the station areas?

A: There are general constituencies, but there are fewer residences around the station areas. We have not heard anything to report on now, though we expect to as scoping concludes.

C: There is a significant grade change between 5th and 6th avenues. The Midtown station should be located in the area that is easiest to access for the most people.

Q: What is the potential to mix and match in the downtown area?

A: There is some potential, though likely not all combinations will work well.

Q: Where does the streetcar stop on Westlake near Denny Way?

A: Streetcar stops for both directions of travel are currently located on Westlake just south of Denny Way. This would integrate best with the blue Denny station alternative, but is very close to the other two station alternatives.

Q: Would there be any impacts to the streetcar during construction?

A: There would potentially be impacts. The Denny station would be cut-and-cover construction. We are still looking at options that would allow the streetcar to continue operating during construction.

Q: Would all the Denny station alternatives have potential impacts on the streetcar?

A: All of them except the Terry Avenue N. station site.

Q: Are there any discussions about putting buses back on Mercer Street?

A: We understand that most recent Metro service planning work has been focused east-west service on Harrison Street.

C: Any station in the Queen Anne area should have substantial transit-oriented development built alongside it.

Q: When is transit-oriented development (TOD) required?

A: Sound Transit exists to build, operate and maintain the transit system, though it is Board policy to consider land use and TOD in project design and development decisions. Additionally, per the Agency's governing statute and the Board's Equitable TOD Policy, Sound Transit is empowered to use any surplus property to advance TOD outcomes, specifically affordable housing.

Q: Where is the monorail in relation to the proposed downtown stations?

A: It runs along 5th Avenue between Pine Street and the Seattle Center. The Westlake monorail station would be nearest to the blue Westlake (5th Ave) station alternative, and the Seattle Center monorail station would be within a 5-minute walk to the blue and representative Seattle Center station



alternatives on Republican Street, as well as the blue South Lake Union (Harrison Street) station alternative.

Q: Are there options for the Denny station that would allow for station entrances on either side of Denny Way?

A: Yes. These kinds of design questions will be explored in more detail in the EIS.

Q: What has the community input been related to the Seattle Center station?

A: Sound Transit has been engaging with community groups in the area, as well as Seattle Center. The general consensus seems to be that a station should serve both the residential community and the events center as equally as possible, with a general perception that a station location at Republican Street would accomplish this balance

Q: What are the challenges associated with mix-and-match options in the South Lake Union and Seattle Center areas?

A: The main consideration is how tight the curves can be for tunnel construction and train operation, though conflicts with major underground utilities are also major concerns.

Q: When would construction occur in the South Lake Union area?

A: Our preliminary schedule assumes that Ballard Link construction would begin in 2026; the timing in the South Lake Union area has not yet been determined.

Q: When would property acquisition happen in the downtown and South Lake Union areas?

A: Property acquisition would generally happen after the EIS is finished and there is a Record of Decision on the project to be built, which is anticipated in 2022.

SODO and Chinatown-International District

C: Single occupancy vehicles in SODO have gone from 77% in 2017 to 82% in 2018. The number one reason listed was public safety. Public safety must be a key consideration for whichever station location is selected.

Q: Has the [City of Seattle's] assessment of land use in SODO been postponed indefinitely?

A: We do not have definitive information on the City of Seattle's plans with respect to land use and zoning in the SODO area.

Q: Will the stations in SODO be side by side no matter which alternative is selected?

A: Yes, the assumption for all alternatives is that stations will be side by side.

C: From SODO's perspective, bringing the station closer to S Lander Street is important for improving safety. The existing station is not utilized at night and is poorly lit. Having the station closer to the street will make it feel safer.

Q: Will the only access to the SODO station be from S Lander Street? Will there be any east-west entrances?

A: Station access is currently assumed to be from S Lander Street. There are currently fence and rail constraints for any east-west entrance.



Q: Would the detour routes for a 4th Avenue C-ID station alternative be identified in the EIS?

A: Yes. We've done some initial analysis, but potential detour routes would be identified in the EIS.

Q: How fast is the person assumed to be walking in the transfer time estimates?

A: It's based on the median walk speed, and is a preliminary estimate based on limited design

Q: Do all the options in Chinatown-International District assume an at-grade transfer between light rail and Sounder trains?

A: Yes. The heavy rail (BNSF) lines and soil conditions are major design constraints that likely render underground transfers between light rail and Sounder infeasible.

Q: Why are full detours required for a C-ID 4th Avenue mined station?

A: There is no room to stage and phase construction on 4th Avenue without fully closing the roadway. A large diameter construction shaft must be excavated in the street right-of-way in order to mine the station at that location before the viaduct structure is rebuilt above it.

Q: Is there any update to identifying third-party funding for the 4th Avenue viaduct replacement?

A: There are no updates at this time.

C: Given the development planned near the stadiums, it would make sense to add back in the Stadium station. That area will look very different once the new line is operational.

Q: Are the at-grade or elevated alignments more expensive in SODO?

A: The elevated options are generally more expensive, even with the overpasses factored in.

Q: What was the feedback during the SODO station area planning charrette?

A: There was a lot of conversation focused on how to improve access to the SODO station.

C: The transfer environment in SODO needs to be well thought out. It will dictate the success of the West Seattle line for five plus years [with the interim transfer].

Q: Could bikes be easily transferred between modes?

A: The goal is to build for a simple transfer experience that would allow people to move bikes between modes.

Q: What are the benefits of a mined station versus a cut-and-cover station on 5th Avenue?

A: The mined station would limit traffic detours and interruptions during construction but it would take longer to complete.

Q: With a deep station, how would the elevators function during peak times?

A: We are not yet at that point in the design process. There would need to be a larger concourse for queuing, additional and larger elevators. It would function similar to the Beacon Hill Station.

Q: What are the peak periods like for light rail?

A: There are A.M. and P.M. weekday peaks, as well as when Sounder transfers arrive at the station. There are also special-event surges in ridership, especially right after the conclusion of the events. There



is still some additional analysis that needs to be done to get a better picture of desired design capacity and circulation patterns.

Q: Would a deep mined station have stairs?

A: Yes, but for emergency use only.

Smith Cove, Interbay and Ballard

Q: Are the cruise ship terminals a consideration for the Smith Cove station?

A: Yes. We have heard some interest in a shuttle between the station and the terminals, regardless of the station's location.

Q: What is the purpose of the Smith Cove station? Whom does it serve?

A: Destinations include Expedia, which is building their campus near the station, the Port terminal, and other potential future uses in Smith Cove. It is also planned to be a major transfer point for buses serving Magnolia, Queen Anne, and Interbay, as well as regional destinations in South and East King County

Q: Could people riding bikes access the station from the trail that runs along the waterfront?

A: Yes. Bikes could access the stations using overpasses that cross over the BNSF tracks at either Galer St or the Helix Bridge.

Q: What are the mix-and-match options in Interbay?

A: Smith Cove Station could be at Prospect or Galer Streets and connect to the Central Interbay alignment. The Galer Street location would be difficult to connect to the alignment and Interbay Station location on 15th Ave W (representative project).

Q: What are the cost differences between the blue and brown alternatives crossing Salmon Bay?

A: Comparative cost estimates, based on very limited design, show a fixed bridge (brown alternative) and tunnel (blue alternative) comparing at \$100 million and \$350 million more, respectively, than the representative project. .

Q: Would Metro's Rapid Ride continue on 15th Avenue NW if the station is located on 14th Avenue NW?

A: We are early in discussions with Metro. Both agencies acknowledge there may be opportunities to route buses for direct access to stations on 14th.

C: If the station is on 14th Avenue NW, there should be a tunnel or bridge to connect to 15th Avenue NW.

Q: Is the layover area for buses near the Smith Cove station serving mainly Expedia employees?

A: Ultimately, the buses that use that layover zone would serve downtown and other communities around the region. There would also be buses that use the layover zone that serves Magnolia and Queen Anne.

Q: What is bike access like for the Smith Cove Station?

A: The Elliott Bay Trail is nearby. Queen Anne is not easily accessible because of topography.



C: Access to the Smith Cove station seems to be best facilitated by motorized transport.

Q: Is the Smith Cove station the only one with kiss-and-ride accommodations?

A: Drop-off is a consideration for all station locations.

C: The Smith Cove station should include space for affordable retail.

Q: What is near the proposed Interbay station locations?

A: It would be near the QFC, residential development, and some industrial uses.

Q: Is there a dedicated bikeway on W Dravus Street?

A: There is some existing infrastructure for people biking on W Dravus Street, though its ability to support anticipated walking and biking volumes accessing the station needs further study and design consideration.

C: There is a lot of existing transit service on NW Market Street.

Q: What is the plan for bus service near the Ballard station area in the future?

A: MetroConnects assumes considerable changes to the bus service network in Ballard with the activation of light rail service. All of the routes envisioned in the future service network, including the successors to the Rapid Ride D and Route 40, could potentially be routed to serve either 14th or 15th Ave NW station locations.

Agenda Item #4 – Next steps and next meeting

Diane Adams wrapped up the small group discussions and noted that the group's final meeting will be held on April 17. She explained that the group will be asked to provide their Level 3 recommendations during that meeting. One SAG member asked what Sound Transit was expecting in terms of Level 3 recommendations from the SAG. Leda Chahim explained that the SAG will be asked to recommend an alternative that would require third-party funding and one that would not. Those recommendations will be shared with the ELG. Another SAG member asked how the Sound Transit Board decision will be publicized and who weighs in after that decision. Leda reiterated that the Board will identify the preferred alternative and other alternatives to study in the EIS on May 23, after which Sound Transit will report out to communities on next steps. In closing, Leda noted that she would plan to follow up with more information about the next steps in the process prior to the group's final meeting.