



## **West Seattle and Ballard Link Extensions**

Stakeholder Advisory Group Meeting #14 – April 17, 2019

Meeting Notes

---

### **Agenda Item #1 – Welcome and introductions**

Diane Adams, Facilitator, welcomed Stakeholder Advisory Group (SAG) members to the group's final meeting. She took time to recap the volume of work SAG members have accomplished during the 14 meetings over the past 14 months and thanked them for the time and effort they have put into the process. Diane confirmed the agenda and stated the meeting's objective: to recommend a preferred alternative if third-party funding is secured and to recommend a second preferred alternative if third-party funding is not secured. She noted that much of the material included in the presentation would be a recap from previous meetings, serving to set the stage for the group to make their recommendations. In closing, Diane reiterated that the meeting is SAG members' opportunity to use what they have learned throughout the process, and based on their experience working in their communities, to provide recommendations to the Elected Leadership Group (ELG) that will inform that group's recommendations to the Sound Transit Board on April 26.

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
- Stephen Mak, High Capacity Transit Development Manager, Sound Transit
- Kate Lichtenstein, Light Rail Development Manager, Sound Transit
- Sandra Fann, High Capacity Transit Development Manager, Sound Transit
- Ron Endlich, Project Director, Sound Transit
- Carrie Avila-Mooney, Government & Community Relations Manager, Sound Transit
- KaDeena Yerkan, External Engagement Lead, EnviroIssues
- David Shelton, Central Segment Lead, HNTB
- Jenifer Chao, Department of Neighborhoods, City of Seattle

SAG members in attendance were:

- Andres Arjona, Community Representative – Ballard
- Becky Asencio, Seattle Public Schools
- Brian King, Community Representative – West Seattle
- Bryce Yadon, Futurewise
- Deb Barker, Community Representative – West Seattle
- Erin Goodman, SODO Business Improvement Area
- Greg Nickels, Former Mayor of Seattle
- Hamilton Gardiner, West Seattle Chamber
- Jon Scholes, Downtown Seattle Association
- Kelsey Mesher, Transportation Choices Coalition
- Larry Yok, Community Representative – Chinatown-International District



- Maiko Winkler-Chin, Seattle Chinatown-International District Preservation & Development Authority
- Mike Stewart, Ballard Alliance
- Peter Schrappen, Northwest Marine Trade Association
- 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:

- Colleen Echohawk, Chief Seattle Club
- Dave Gering, Manufacturing Industrial Council
- Ginny Gilder, Force 10 Hoops/Seattle Storm
- Katie Garrow, Martin Luther King Labor Council
- Mark Nagle, Expedia
- Steve Lewis, Alliance of People with disAbilities
- Warren Aakervik, Community Representative – Freight

### **Agenda Item #2 – Community engagement, equity and inclusion overview**

Leda Chahim, Sound Transit, provided a summary of the community engagement activities during alternatives development, from January 2018 to March 2019, noting the number of comments and questions, email updates, events, briefings, SAG and ELG meetings, and online open houses. She reviewed the timing and purpose of the recent EIS scoping period, highlighting the number of people who participated in-person and online, how many comments were received and the types of input shared. She noted that all scoping comments as well as an early summary of comment themes were provided to SAG members in advance of the meeting. She also noted that a Scoping Summary Report will summarize the scoping process and all the comments received.

Leda reviewed the partnership between the City of Seattle and Sound Transit in applying the City's Racial Equity Toolkit (RET) to the WSBLE project. Jenifer Chao, City of Seattle, provided background on the City's Racial Equity Toolkit (RET) and Mayor Durkan's executive order affirming the City of Seattle's commitment to its Race and Social Justice Initiative.

Leda shared that the RET has served to elevate issues and considerations throughout the alternatives development process. During Level 1, the interagency team identified Chinatown-International District and Delridge Stations as areas of focus, determined shared outcomes (shared below) and updated the screening criteria. The Level 2 evaluation measured connections, potential impacts and opportunities, and gathered community input, which informed Level 3 areas of focus and engagement priorities. Leda highlighted that today, Sound Transit would share results of Level 3 data analysis and community engagement, in an effort to understand how the Level 3 alternatives relate to the shared RET outcomes:

- Enhance mobility and access for communities of color and low-income populations
- Create opportunities for equitable development that benefit communities of color



- Avoid disproportionate impacts on communities of color and low-income populations
- Meaningfully involve communities of color and low-income populations in the project

Cathal Ridge reviewed the updated approach to project development Sound Transit is using on the West Seattle and Ballard Link Extensions project and future system expansion projects. He noted that the approach was developed in response to voters' expressed desire to accelerate project delivery timelines. While the prior ST2 process established a preferred alternative during the environmental process, the updated approach would establish a preferred alternative at the start of the environmental review process. The goal of the new approach is to streamline environmental review, permitting, right-of-way acquisition, final design and construction. Cathal stated that this meeting is a major milestone in completing the alternatives development phase of the project. He reviewed the definition of preferred alternative, noting that the Board's identification of a preferred alternative is a preference for an alternative at the time, not a final decision. He provided the two potential recommendations Sound Transit would be looking to the SAG to provide:

- Preferred alternative #1: If third-party funding is secured
- Preferred alternative #2: If third-party funding is not secured

Cathal summarized the Level 3 end-to-end alternatives, evaluation results, potential mix-and-match opportunities. Leda covered the common themes heard during the EIS scoping period in each segment. The Level 3 end-to-end alternatives are listed below. For additional details about each alternative and the evaluation measures and scoping feedback (common themes), see the [PowerPoint presentation](#).

- ST3 Representative Project
- West Seattle Tunnel / C-ID 4th Ave / Downtown 5th Ave / Ballard Tunnel
  - Junction station options: 41st Avenue, 42nd Avenue and 44th Avenue
  - C-ID station options: 4th Avenue Cut-and-Cover and 4th Avenue Mined
  - Ballard station options: 14th Avenue and 15th Avenue
- West Seattle Elevated / C-ID 5th Ave / Downtown 6th Ave / Ballard Elevated
  - C-ID station options: 5th Avenue Cut-and-Cover and 5th Avenue Mined

Following Cathal's overview of the Level 3 end-to-end alternatives and scoping feedback, Leda spoke on the RET work performed during Level 3. She shared the key focus areas in Level 3 for the Chinatown-International District Station and Delridge Station from a race and social justice standpoint and the approach to community engagement. For the Chinatown-International District Station, based on the evaluation results and community feedback, it is unclear which alternative(s) would pose the greatest benefit for the communities that live and work in the surrounding south downtown neighborhoods. In Delridge, the evaluation results and community feedback concluded that the Delridge station in the ST3 representative project offers the fewest net benefits to communities of color and low-income communities. For more information about the Level 3 RET findings, see the [Level 3 Racial Equity Toolkit Memo](#).

### **Agenda Item #3 – Level 3 recommendation discussions**

Diane introduced the proposed discussion format to identify recommendations. Working as a large group and attempting to reach consensus through discussions, the SAG identified recommendations on two preferred alternatives: one assuming third-party funding is secured and one assuming third-party



funding is not secured. Before opening the discussion, Diane noted that the discussions should be informed by all the knowledge SAG members have gained over the past year, as well as conversations with members' communities, the application of the Racial Equity Toolkit, scoping comments and public feedback.

SAG members discussed the Level 3 end-to-end alternatives and shared preferences to inform the recommendations as a large group. Questions (Q) and comments (C) from SAG members, as well as answers (A) from Sound Transit staff, included the following:

Preferred alternative if third-party funding is secured

*General discussion:*

Q: What is the order of magnitude in cost that would trigger requirements for third-party funding? And would the funding allocated to the project as part of ST3 cover 100% of the baseline costs?

A: At this point in the process, the comparisons are between the representative project and the alternatives. Those set the basis for what the potential additional funding needs may be. Third-party funding would only be required to cover additional costs above what was allocated by ST3.

Q: How far along is Sound Transit in terms of engineering progress?

A: Less than 5%.

Q: Are there any requirements to identify a preferred alternative at this point in the process?

A: It is not a requirement. (This is a new step in Sound Transit's project development process that is designed to accelerate delivery.)

Q: Is this meeting the right venue to discuss whether recommending a preferred alternative is appropriate at this time?

A: If there is consensus around any of the topics discussed tonight in each segment, we'll note it and share it with the ELG. If there is additional discussion, we'll also capture that and include it in the summary for the ELG.

C: First, I want to note all the persistent work by Sound Transit, especially to reach those in my community. In this group, we've been able to identify all the concerns in each of the neighborhoods around each of the stations. It will be hard to come up with a preferred alternative, because there are so many options. I am reluctant to identify a preferred alternative, especially in neighborhoods we may be less familiar, due to the complexity that exists throughout this project area and the number of options. I do not have the expertise or the license to make those decisions and doing so may compromise the EIS process.

Q: Are the items included as scoping feedback grounds for establishing new alternatives?

A: They were common themes we heard during the scoping period, so they are included for the discussion today.

Q: What are the disadvantages for Sound Transit of not identifying a preferred alternative?

A: If there are points of consensus around pieces of the alternatives that this group can share with the ELG, it will help inform their recommendations to the Sound Transit Board. From Sound Transit's



perspective, it is of interest and value to understand the thought behind the preferences and discussion, even if there is no consensus around an alternative.

C: Due to the status of the engineering work, it feels like there is not yet enough detail to make educated recommendations in several areas. That echoes what I have heard others say as well.

C: The ELG and the Sound Transit Board are looking to this body for advice as they make their recommendations and identify preferred alternatives, respectively. They want some guidance, some help. Although coming out of this meeting with a unanimous recommendation is unlikely, the goal is to continue to narrow down the alternatives for the elected officials to focus on and the key issues of what needs to be studied in the EIS. Going through the process to reach recommendations is a reasonable thing for us to achieve and a helpful thing.

#### *Ballard / Interbay*

C: With third-party funding, my preference is to build a tunnel under Salmon Bay.

C: Although the task at hand is challenging in many ways, the process and the outreach to-date have been solid. In Ballard, there is agreement that the preferred alternative is one with a tunnel under Salmon Bay and a station at 20th Avenue NW. That makes good on the promise of the urban village having excellent access to public transit. As a second option, the 15th Avenue NW station location is preferred over 14th Avenue NW. *Two SAG members seconded this comment.*

Q: How would a potential 20th Avenue NW station location be studied using the criteria that have been used throughout the alternatives development process?

A: A tunnel to a 20th Avenue NW station was looked at during Level 1 and not carried forward, noting additional technical, property and cost challenges including a longer tunnel and station location with construction effects in the Ballard core.

C: From a planning perspective, a station at 20th Avenue does make sense. However, there is a limit to how much third-party funding is going to be available and it may not be practical.

C: It would be good to understand how people east of 14th Avenue NW would utilize a 20th Avenue station location. I'm concerned they may continue to rely on cars because the station is too far away.

C: Considering the fact that we're talking about well over \$1 billion in funding, we should be considering what other solutions may be possible with that money and determine where those resources are best focused.

#### *Smith Cove*

C: Prospect Street is the preferred station location because it offers opportunities to build an additional pedestrian crossing to connect to the Double Helix Bridge.

C: The station should be located out of the right of way to limit impacts to freight mobility and traffic.

#### *Downtown*



C: Fifth Avenue and Harrison Street is the preferred alignment through downtown and South Lake Union because it increases ridership and has the most public support.

#### *Chinatown-International District*

C: The community has spoken loud and clear: there is no preferred alternative in Chinatown-International District. All the alternatives should continue to be looked at in the EIS to be able to identify which best weighs potential benefits and impacts.

C: The community outreach Sound Transit did over the past several months in Chinatown-International District is unprecedented in its thoroughness. People who have not traditionally been brought into the fold on these issues were involved in a meaningful way and pushing on without additional study would do an injustice to that process. All the options should stay on the table and continue to be studied in the EIS.

#### *SODO*

C: It's pleasing to see that the scoping feedback led to an additional option in SODO that takes into consideration the community's concerns and values. The biggest concern in SODO throughout this process has been losing the E-3 Busway. One of the options that arose in conversations during the scoping period would stack the two SODO stations and potentially retain the E-3 Busway.

C: Options that minimize transfer times are preferred, especially given that will set how the West Seattle line is utilized during its first five years of operation.

Q: Displacing the Metro bus bases is a big concern. Which options would result in impacts to Ryerson Bus Base?

A: The brown alternative would impact future expansion of the Central bus base; the blue alternative would impact Ryerson bus base, and the bored tunnel/mined option may require Ryerson bus base to be relocated.

Q: Since the buses have come out of the existing tunnel, have any of the bus routes changed? Is the bus base still being utilized? Do we expect it to be viable in 2030?

A: One of the major advantages of the current bus base location was that buses exiting the tunnel were able to easily enter and exit the base. We are working with Metro to understand what the future use of Ryerson Bus Base will be.

Q: Which of these options would facilitate the easiest transfers in SODO?

A: Regardless of which option is selected, the stations will be designed to facilitate seamless transfers between lines.

#### *Duwamish Crossing*

C: The south crossing is preferred because it limits impacts to marine operations.



C: The south crossing and the previously explored Pigeon Ridge crossing are the community's overwhelming preferences.

C: In SODO, the south crossing is preferred because it limits impacts to key businesses in the neighborhood.

#### *Delridge*

C: The previously-explored purple, Pigeon Ridge alignment is the community's preferred alternative. All the other options either have great station locations and major neighborhood impacts, or vice versa.

C: If third-party funding is secured, the preference is the purple, Pigeon Ridge alignment.

C: The amount of money required for that alignment is unprecedented. It has already gone to the ELG and they resolved that it is not worth the additional cost. If this body brings it back, it is going to diminish the credibility of our recommendations. There are many other improvements that could be built with that funding that would add to the value of the system.

C: The purple alignment deserves more study and consideration than it received. It offers benefits to four neighborhoods in West Seattle and should continue to be studied in the EIS so we can understand the actual costs and benefits.

C: The further south station locations in Delridge are preferred.

C: Although the community has voiced support for the purple line, it does go directly through a key Nucor facility that regularly takes large vessels and is key to the operations of the business.

C: There are major concerns with the opportunity cost associated with building an alignment that potentially costs over \$1 billion more than the representative project and doesn't result in any improvement in ridership.

C: There seems to be consensus around preferring a south crossing of the Duwamish and the blue station locations.

#### *Alaska Junction*

C: There is no strong preference between 41st Avenue SW and 42nd Avenue SW. There is agreement amongst the community that 44th Avenue SW does not make sense because it limits the walkshed and puts the station further from areas of higher density.

C: There are several feasible properties for a station in the area, including the property where Starbucks and Taco Time are located.

#### Preferred alternative if third-party funding is not secured

#### *Alaska Junction*



C: All the West Seattle representatives recently met and established our top two choices. The first is a modified representative project with the station oriented north-south on Fauntleroy Way SW or near Jefferson Square. The second is the blue line and eliminating the Avalon station.

Q: What are the potential cost savings associated with eliminating an entire station?

A: We would need to do more detailed analysis to determine that.

C: If the alignment runs along Fauntleroy Way SW, it should be cheaper.

C: There is consensus that the orange alternative should not be studied any further.

C: Although the designs are very preliminary, the elevated alignment through Delridge would be a huge disruption for the neighborhood.

#### *Delridge*

C: The red alignment with the light blue station location is preferred.

#### *Duwamish Crossing*

C: A south crossing is still the preference without third-party funding.

#### *SODO*

C: The SODO recommendations are consistent whether third-party funding is secured or not.

#### *Chinatown-International District*

C: Everything should continue to be studied in the EIS to identify what the precise costs and benefits are in the area.

C: In addition to what has already been stated, cost and transfer environment should be two major considerations.

C: Given the Chinatown-International District community has been given a chance to be heard, we have a responsibility to keep all the options on the table to reflect their feedback. There are lots of very complex issues to consider no matter the status of third-party funding.

C: The goal of this process is to limit what is studied in the EIS so that we can strive to meet the goal of accelerating the schedule. We know a 4th Avenue station likely cannot happen without third-party funding. If that's the case, we could recommend eliminating it.

C: At this point in the process, we do not know enough about the costs and impacts to make that type of call. The EIS should run its course in this area before that decision can be made.

#### *Downtown*



C: Fifth Avenue and Harrison Street is expected to have a lower cost and remains the preferred alternative without third-party funding.

*Smith Cove*

Q: What are the implications involved with poor soil conditions?

A: In short, it means that future geotechnical investigations are required to understand what challenges may exist.

C: Members of this group have said throughout this process that any impacts to 15th Avenue would result in major disruptions to freight movement. We should reflect those considerations in our recommendations and note that a station location out of the right of way is preferred.

*Ballard / Interbay*

C: If third-party funding is not available, building tunnels is not a viable option. A movable bridge is not feasible because of the service interruptions. A high-level fixed bridge is the only realistic option to recommend here.

C: Whatever can be done to make a tunnel feasible should be done to avoid the catastrophic impacts to the industrial area.

Q: How many times per day is the movable bridge anticipated to open?

A: While more analysis is required, our initial findings indicate about two to four times per day, hopefully during off-peak hours.

**Agenda Item #4 – Review group’s recommendations**

Following the group’s discussion on the recommendations, Diane reviewed the recommendations and key points from the discussion.

**Preferred alternative recommendation if third-party funding is secured**

Segment	Recommendation	Notes
Alaska Junction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>41st Ave SW or 42nd Ave SW tunnel station (blue)</li> </ul>	
Delridge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>North of Genesee station location (blue)</li> <li>Pigeon Ridge Tunnel (former purple alternative)</li> </ul>	
Duwamish crossing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>South crossing (orange)</li> </ul>	
Chinatown-International District / SODO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>N/A</li> </ul>	Majority interest in studying all options
Downtown	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5th Ave and Harrison (blue)</li> </ul>	
Smith Cove	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prospect St station (blue)</li> </ul>	

Ballard / Interbay	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tunnel with 15th Ave NW station (blue)</li> <li>• Tunnel with 20th Ave NW station location</li> </ul>	
--------------------	--	--

*General discussion: Ballard / Interbay*

- General support for tunnel crossing under Salmon Bay and a Ballard tunnel station serving the Ballard urban village
- Some interest in engaging and understanding the tradeoffs for communities east of 15th Ave NW that would be farther from the 20th Ave NW station location

*General discussion: Chinatown-International District / SODO*

- Interest in continuing to study all options in Chinatown-International District
- Interest in a thorough study of traffic impacts in the EIS process for the 4th Avenue Chinatown-International District station alternatives
- Concerns about impacts to the E-3 Busway and Ryerson Bus Base
- Importance of seamless transfers for both Chinatown-International District and SODO Stations

*General discussion: West Seattle*

- Support for Delridge station locations that are farther south

Preferred alternative recommendation if third-party funding **is not** secured

Segment	Recommendation	Notes
Alaska Junction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Elevated station with refinements (red)</li> <li>• 41st Ave SW or 42nd Ave SW tunnel station with consolidated Alaska and Avalon stations (blue)</li> </ul>	
Delridge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• North of Genesee station (blue)</li> </ul>	
Duwamish crossing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• South crossing (orange)</li> </ul>	
Chinatown-International District / SODO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• N/A</li> </ul>	Majority interest in studying all options
Downtown	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 5th Ave and Harrison (blue)</li> </ul>	
Smith Cove	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prospect St stations (green and blue)</li> </ul>	
Ballard / Interbay	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• N/A</li> </ul>	No support for movable bridge

*General discussion: West Seattle*

- Interest in a modified ST3 representative project Alaska Junction station location, oriented north-south staying east of the Alaska Junction (either on Fauntleroy or in the vicinity of Jefferson Square) with blue Delridge station location
- No support for the orange Alaska Junction station location
- Interest in studying the blue alternative with consolidated Alaska Junction and Avalon stations
- Some concerns about a high guideway through Delridge

*General discussion: Chinatown-International District / SODO*

- Concerns about impacts to the E3 Busway and Ryerson Bus Base
- Majority support to keep all the options on the table to be responsive to community input. Chinatown-International District's voice has not traditionally been listened to with respect to infrastructure projects. Comparative estimates are based on very preliminary design and should not limit alternatives to study in Chinatown-International District.
- Some concerns about additional costs associated with the 4th Avenue alternatives and interest in a 5th Avenue shallow station (brown) if third party funding is not secured.

*General discussion: Ballard / Interbay*

- Concerns about the potential traffic effects on Elliott/15th Ave of a green Smith Cove station location and interest in good access to that station
- No support for a movable bridge across Salmon Bay
- Mixed opinions and interest in studying the fixed bridge (brown) and the tunnel (blue)

In addition to the recommendations and discussion outlined above, the SAG provided the following general feedback:

- Some concerns about extent of 3rd party funding and whether there are other needs for that funding, such as improving mobility in the city
- Some concerns about identifying a preferred alternative at this stage to allow for comprehensive study in the EIS
- Comments about adding new alternatives into the process that have not yet been studied or vetted through public engagement

**Agenda Item #5 – Next steps and next phase**

Diane congratulated the group on working through the recommendations discussion. The group's recommendations will be presented to the ELG during their next meeting, which will be held at Union Station on April 26, 2019 from 9:30 to 11:30 AM. After that meeting, the Sound Transit Board will identify a preferred alternative(s) and other alternatives to be studied in the EIS. Environmental review



will continue through 2022, culminating with a federal record of decision. During the environmental review phase, Sound Transit will be engaging with potentially impacted property owners and continue conducting outreach throughout the corridor on a range of topics via a variety of engagement methods. After completion of the Final EIS, the Sound Transit Board will select the project to be built based on the EIS analysis and public and agency feedback. Design will take place over the four years following environmental review, from 2022 to 2026. Construction is anticipated to begin in 2025. The start of service is expected in 2030 in West Seattle and 2035 in Ballard.