

February 2023



West Seattle and Ballard

Link Extensions

Further Studies: Community Engagement Summary



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CID Open House

1. Introduction

In July 2022, after reviewing the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and comments from Tribes, the public and agency partners, the Sound Transit Board identified a preferred route and station locations for the West Seattle Link Extension and directed staff to conduct [further studies](#) and community engagement for the Ballard Link Extension. Since then, Sound Transit has been engaging the community and gathering feedback to share with the Sound Transit Board to inform potential action on a preferred alternative for the Ballard Link Extension.

Sound Transit shared information about the further studies and gathered feedback in a variety of ways, including hosting open houses, convening community workshops, providing community briefings, meeting with business, residents and property owners and participating in events and tours. Opportunities were provided for engagement in

person and online, with an online open house and surveys that complemented other further studies engagement.

In response to Sound Transit Board direction to further engage in the Chinatown-International District (CID), Sound Transit convened five public meetings and two online surveys where community members shared ideas for station locations outside of the CID, refinements to the 4th Avenue Shallow alternative and other urban design and place-keeping ideas. Community feedback at each meeting helped shape the scope and direction of the further study efforts and the engagement process. Over the course of five months, community members asked questions and shared thoughts on opportunities and issues, who might benefit and who might be burdened, and how concepts might support neighborhood goals. To gather additional feedback from community members, Sound Transit conducted door-to-door outreach, presented at residential and business forums in the CID neighborhood and met with community groups.

Language interpretation was provided at each CID open house, workshop and forum in Cantonese, Mandarin and Vietnamese, and meeting materials were available in Simplified Chinese, Traditional Chinese and Vietnamese, as needed. Meeting materials are part of an ongoing resource for community members and available on the Online Open House: <https://wsblink.participate.online>.

When all of the further studies were completed, Sound Transit provided an online survey between January 26 and February 17, 2023, and an in-person open house on February 8, 2023, for the public to provide additional feedback on the CID, Downtown and Interbay/Ballard further study results, and to learn more about the West Seattle, Duwamish and SODO further studies. The online further studies survey was available in Traditional Chinese, Simplified Chinese, Vietnamese and Spanish.

In addition to all the opportunities for feedback outlined above, the project team also responded to dozens of emails received in the project inbox and project phone line. Many community members also shared their feedback directly with the Sound Transit Board through written, in person or virtual public comment at a Board meeting.

Community feedback was gathered as part of engagement activities throughout the further study period. The following report shares a summary of common themes in community feedback on further studies from July 28, 2022, through February 23, 2023.

2. What we heard



2.1 Ballard/Interbay

Engagement at a glance



In-person engagement

- Interbay-Ballard Open House #1
Dec. 12, 2022 | **70+** participants
- Interbay-Ballard Open House #2
Jan. 11, 2023 | **100+** participants



Online surveys

- Interbay-Ballard survey
Dec. 9 – 23, 2022 | **488** responses
- Corridor-wide survey
Jan. 26 – Feb. 17, 2023 | **277** responses



Community briefings and property owner meetings

- July 28, 2022 – Feb. 24, 2023 | **10**



Project inbox correspondence

- Jan. 26 – Feb. 23, 2023 | **15**

2.1.1 Ballard

Tunnel 15th Ave Cost Savings: Draft EIS Station Entrance Refinements

- Strong interest in Tunnel 15th station location with access on both sides of 15th Ave NW, with some concerns about reducing future capacity with smaller entrances
- General interest in cost savings ideas that support siting station at 15th Ave NW, including smaller or fewer station entrances
- Some concerns about reduced equitable transit-oriented development (eTOD) opportunities

Tunnel 15th Ave Cost Savings: Station in Right-of-Way

- Strong concerns about road closures and potential effects to traffic, freight, and access, particularly at 15th Ave NW and NW Market Street
- Some concerns about reduced eTOD opportunities

Tunnel 15th Ave Entrance North of Market

- Some interest in entrance north of NW Market St to expand access
- Some concerns about potential traffic effects

Tunnel 14th Ave Station Access (*Pedestrian access improvements across 15th Ave with Tunnel 14th Station*)

- Some interest in grade-separated improvements to reduce passenger-vehicle interactions; others prefer at-grade improvements for sense of safety and accessibility, with more interest in improvements to sidewalks, lighting and other pedestrian elements

Shifted Tunnel 14th Ave Station

- Some interest in 14th Tunnel station location in Draft EIS for access from future areas of growth to the east and north, to avoid construction effects around 15th Ave NW and for lower cost
- Concerns about access from the west and additional street crossing
- Some concerns about reduced eTOD opportunity

Additional Feedback

- General interest in improving pedestrian safety and experience, particularly on 15th Avenue NW
- Interest in eTOD and retail opportunities
- Some interest in moving the station further west, closer to existing Ballard core (e.g., 20th, 22nd St NW)

2.1.2 Interbay/Smith Cove

Modified SIB-1 Alignment

- Interest in maintaining two stations in Interbay to support access and future development
- Some concerns about guideway crossings of Elliott Ave W and associated traffic and pedestrian challenges without intervention and accompanying roadway improvements
- Interest in Galer St Smith Cove Station location for accessibility to key destinations and improved pedestrian, bike and transit connections
- **Related to the Shifted Interbay Station:**
 - Interest in shifted Interbay Station location for improved pedestrian, bike and transit connections
 - Interest in reducing impacts to businesses and Seattle Storm practice facility
 - Some concerns about traffic effects, particularly the effect of temporary road closures on W Dravus St during construction for local access to Magnolia and Queen Anne neighborhoods
 - Some concerns about impacts to the Interbay playfield and other park effects in north Interbay

Modified SIB-3 Alignment

- Interest in maintaining two stations in Interbay to support access and future development
- Questions and concerns about slope stability and the overall feasibility of this concept
- **Related to the Shifted Smith Cove Station:**
 - Some interest in development potential of Armory site and future transit connections, questions about compatibility of station with likely uses and whether the site will be able to host the amount and type of redevelopment needed to make this location ideal for a station
 - Some concerns that shifted station location is not as accessible to dedicated pedestrian and bike connections like the Elliot Bay Trail and would make access to cruise terminals, key destinations along Elliott Ave and surrounding neighborhoods more difficult than a Smith Cove Station at Galer St
- **Related to the Shifted Interbay Station:**
 - Interest in shifted Interbay Station location for improved pedestrian, bike and transit connections
 - Interest in reducing impacts to businesses and Seattle Storm practice facility
 - Some concerns about traffic effects, particularly the effect of temporary road closures on W Dravus St during construction. Some concerns about how that

may impact access to Magnolia and Queen Anne, considering that W Dravus St is already congested in the area where construction would occur

- Some concerns about impacts to the playfield and other green spaces in north Interbay

Consolidated Alignment

- Concerns that a single station reduces access to surrounding neighborhoods and key destinations, potential for eTOD along the corridor, constrains future ridership potential in the corridor and is not consistent with community expectations
- Interest in extended tunnel alignment and potential station area redevelopment opportunities, including eTOD, recreation and transit connection opportunities
- Interest in fewer property, business and traffic effects along Elliott Ave W and in north Interbay with a consolidated station and potential pedestrian, transit and freight improvement opportunities on 15th Ave W associated with constructing a consolidated station
- Concerns about the extra costs associated with constructing a consolidated station and alignment
- Concerns that a single, consolidated station could decrease ridership
- Concerns about property and business displacement around a consolidated station
- Concerns about the temporary traffic challenges associated with lane closures on 15th Ave W during construction

Additional Feedback

- Questions about the types of realistic development and redevelopment opportunities around future stations in Interbay, especially at the Armory site and in industrial areas
- Questions about construction of the Magnolia Bridge replacement and how plans for this could work with a station in Smith Cove to improve access and connections
- Interest in potential opportunities to redesign connecting roadways and intersections in Magnolia and Queen Anne as part of the station area planning process to help them perform better
- Some concerns about property effects and potential impacts to residences and businesses, including industrial businesses, associated with the alignment and station options
- Some concerns that the study concepts prioritize future development potential at the expense of existing residents and businesses
- Some concerns about access to stations and concerns that parking in adjacent neighborhoods may become challenging or should be provided at the station

2.2 Downtown

Engagement at a glance



Workshops

- October 7, 2022 – Feb. 23, 2023 | **nearly 150 participants**



Online surveys

- **Corridor-wide survey**
Jan. 26 – Feb. 17, 2023 | **265 responses**



Door-to-door outreach

- **Door-to-door outreach in Uptown and Seattle Center**
Nov. 8, 2022 | **38 businesses**
- **Door-to-door outreach in Uptown**
Jan. 30, 2023 | **50 businesses**



Community briefings and property owner meetings

- July 28, 2022 – Feb. 24, 2023 | **39**



Project inbox correspondence

- Jan. 26 – Feb. 23, 2023 | **11**

2.2.1 Seattle Center

Seattle Center Mix-and-Match

- Interest in location to avoid construction effects near NW Rooms, access to Seattle Center and Uptown and potential for eTOD
- Some concerns about noise and vibration effects during construction to Seattle Opera and McCaw Hall
- Some concerns about additional cost and distance to Climate Pledge Arena and Seattle Center
- Concerns about potential traffic and transit effects on Mercer during construction, particularly when there are events at Seattle Center and Climate Pledge Arena
- Strong concerns about residential and small business displacements with station on Mercer, with concerns that these displacements could negatively impact the character of the neighborhood

Seattle Center: Republican West

- Interest in proximity to Climate Pledge Arena and Seattle Center as well as Uptown neighborhood without affecting traffic, transit and small businesses on Mercer and many key institutions on the Seattle Center campus
- Some concerns about alignment under NW Rooms and potential construction and property effects along Republican
- Some concerns about noise and vibration effects to SIFF Uptown Cinema
- Some concerns about temporary traffic and transit impacts associated with construction of the station, especially related to north-south traffic west of Queen Anne Ave
- Some concerns that pedestrians would need to cross 1st Ave N to access the station, which may cause traffic congestion and reduce safety during events at Seattle Center or Climate Pledge Arena
- Some concerns that a station west on Republican St may not connect as well to existing northbound bus routes
- Some concerns about the extra costs associated with a station further west on Republican Street

Additional feedback:

- Interest in locating the Seattle Center station as close as possible to Seattle Center and other key locations, with pedestrian and traffic improvements that improve safety and accessibility to key Seattle Center locations with either further study location
- Interest in DT-1 Seattle Center Station location for even closer proximity to Seattle Center and Climate Pledge Arena

- Concerns about DT-1 Seattle Center Station location for potential impacts to Seattle Center institutions, particularly related to noise, vibration and access during construction

2.2.2 South Lake Union

South Lake Union: Mix-and-Match

- Interest in mix-and-match, which includes a Denny Station on Terry, to avoid construction effects to Westlake, including streetcar, buses and other traffic and utility effects, as well as effects to residents and pedestrian-oriented businesses
- In terms of access to Denny Station at Terry, some have concerns about the slope, while others are interested in the entrances on both sides of Denny and north entrance location and better connection to the Cascade neighborhood east of South Lake Union
- Interest in Denny Westlake station location of DT-1 for access and transit integration, with Streetcar and future light rail station locations as close together as possible
- Concerns about additional cost, risk and project delay associated with Denny Terry station location
- Mixed opinions about impacts to streetcar, with many noting closures and/or disruptions are not a major concern, given current ridership and ability to mitigate with bus service; Others concerned that streetcar impacts may affect efforts to build Center City Connector and that streetcar service could be particularly important during light rail construction
- Interest in finding ways to minimize effects to Westlake and to the Streetcar, without having to shut it down completely during construction with DT-1 Denny Westlake station location
- Interest in whether buses could be deployed on similar streets to mitigate the effects of Westlake closure and effects to Streetcar
- Concerns about cost and risk of relocating the fiber infrastructure with a Denny Station at Terry and potential effects to communications and fiber needs for customers throughout Seattle and around the world

2.3 Chinatown-International District



CID Open House



CID Open House



CID Open House

Engagement at a glance



In-person engagement

- CID Open House
Oct. 13, 2022 | **200+ participants**
- CID Workshop #1
Nov. 2, 2022 | **65 participants**
- CID Workshop #2
Nov. 16, 2022 | **75 participants**
- CID Workshop #3
Dec. 14, 2022 | **88 participants**
- CID Workshop #4
Jan. 5, 2023 | **60 participants**



Online surveys

- CID survey #1
Oct. 4 – 23, 2022 | **90 responses**
- CID survey #2
Dec. 1 – 12, 2022 | **239 responses**
- Corridor-wide survey
Jan. 26 – Feb. 17, 2023 | **339 responses**



Door-to-door outreach

- Door-to-door outreach in the neighborhood
Nov. 23, 2022 | **40 businesses**
- Door-to-door outreach in the neighborhood
Jan. 18, 2023 | **43 businesses**
- Door-to-door outreach in the neighborhood
Feb. 4, 2023 | **22 businesses**



CID Lunar New Year Celebration



Fairs, festivals and other tabling activities

- July 28, 2022 – Feb. 23, 2023 | 4



Community briefings, property owner meetings and tours

- July 28, 2022 – Feb. 24, 2023 | 41



CID Residential Forum



Project inbox correspondence

- Jan. 26 – Feb. 23, 2023 | 11



CID Open House



Refinements to 4th Ave Shallow (CID-1a)

- Strong interest in transit hub with centralized access to CID, Pioneer Square and other transit modes and activating Union Station as part of broader community vision
- Interest in any potential construction efficiencies across public projects to minimize disruption and harm to CID and Pioneer Square residents
- Concerns about construction duration and traffic detour effects, including potential impacts to CID businesses, residents and services
- Some interest in 4th Shallower option for quicker transfers, others concerned about additional potential construction impacts, risk and cost
- Some interest in Midtown Station location for access to First Hill and connection to Rapid Ride G Line

Station North of CID

- Interest in direct, underground, transfers between Link lines at Pioneer Square Station and opportunities to improve existing entrance(s)
- Interest in opportunities for community driven eTOD, activating City Hall Park and improving safe pedestrian connections to existing station in CID and surrounding neighborhoods
- Interest in shorter construction duration and avoiding construction disruption in CID while still providing access
- Some concerns about reduced access to stadiums along Line 1 and Sounder
- Some concerns about consolidating Midtown and CID Stations, and questions about access to First Hill, connection to Rapid Ride G Line and community expectations

Station South of CID

- Interest in avoiding construction disruption in CID while still providing access
- Interest in opportunities for eTOD, entrance closer to CID with public space, improving pedestrian connections to existing station in CID, stadiums and Sounder
- Concerns that this option does not accommodate direct transfers between Link lines
- Limited interest in this option without North of CID station

Station North of CID and Station South of CID

- Interest in combination, which accommodates transfers between all Link lines and access to CID, Stadiums, Pioneer Square and south end of Downtown/Midtown, while avoiding station construction disruption in CID
- Interest in community driven eTOD opportunities and improving safe pedestrian connections between stations in south downtown

Additional Feedback

- Strong interest in supporting economic health of small businesses and maintaining cultural hub, avoiding displacement of businesses and residents in an area of high displacement risk
- Strong interest in improving safety and pedestrian connections throughout south downtown
- Strong interest in activating Union Station and plaza
- Interest in aligning public projects to limit impacts and contribute to long term community vision
- Strong interest in additional park/green space
- Continued concerns about past harms inflicted on the community from past infrastructure projects and policies that have ongoing effects today
- Continued strong concern about a CID station at 5th Avenue
- Interest in easy access for seniors and people of all ages and abilities
- Interest in more engagement and awareness building in the First Hill neighborhood regarding station locations and access
- Questions and interest in learning more about next steps in the process, including learning more about mitigation, environmental review, design and construction and how the community can continue to engage



CID Workshop #2

2.4 West Seattle Link Extension

Engagement at a glance



Online surveys

- **Corridor-wide survey**
Jan. 26 – Feb. 17, 2023 | **362 responses**



Door-to-door outreach

- **Residential and business door-to-door outreach in the Avalon area**
Jan. 24, 2023 | **53 residents and businesses**



Community briefings and property owner meetings

- July 28, 2022 – Feb. 23, 2023 | **27**



Fairs, festivals and other tabling activities

- July 28, 2022 – Feb. 23, 2023 | **2**



Project inbox correspondence

- Jan. 26 – Feb. 23, 2023 | **4**

SODO Access to S Lander Street

- Interest in refinements to minimize impacts to businesses west of SODO station and provide access from Lander
- Interest in continuing to find ways to enhance accessibility and support transfers when West Seattle Link Extension opens
- Continued questions and concerns about potential construction impacts and accessibility during construction, effects to SODO busway and SODO trail, and future pedestrian experience and access from the west
- Continued interest in opportunities to shift SODO station farther south (closer to S Lander Street) and suggestions about future of USPS facility

Delridge Access, Integration, and Alignment Refinement

- Interest in reduced impacts to Transitional Resources
- Interest in station refinement that improves pedestrian access and bus transfers
- Questions and concerns about environmental effects and displacement of residences, businesses and services and future transit integration
- Some continued interest in a Delridge Station farther south

Eliminate Avalon Station

- Interest in eliminating Avalon Station for cost savings and to minimize residential and business displacements, noting proximity to Alaska Junction and Delridge Stations
- Some interest in longer tunnel to further minimize effects to residences, businesses and social services
- Interest in retaining Avalon Station for easy access for nearby current and future residents and for communities of color and low-income populations connecting to light rail from the south, including the High Point neighborhood. Concerns with the distance and hills associated with walking to Alaska Junction or Delridge
- Some questions about tunnel construction and tunnel depth under residential properties with the eliminate Avalon station alignment

Alaska Junction Station Access Refinement

- Interest in providing station entrance on 42nd Avenue SW to enhance access to the Junction, with some interest in potential eTOD
- Interest in maintaining entrance on 41st Avenue SW to minimize business displacements

Additional feedback

- Interest in more engagement and awareness building in the West Seattle community and events in West Seattle about light rail expansion

- Some suggestions to expand bus network instead of light rail to save money, minimize disruption and displacement in West Seattle and the need to transfer from bus to rail
- Interest in tunnels to minimize displacement, construction disruption and character of neighborhoods, some concerns about tunnel impacts
- Interest in connections to other parts of West Seattle including Admiral, Alki and south Delridge/White Center
- Some concerns about environmental effects, particularly to rookery on Pigeon Point, Longfellow Creek and greenhouse gas emissions of construction
- Concerns about displacements to housing (both for renters and property owners), businesses and social services along the alignment in West Seattle

2.5 Corridor wide

- Interest in building for the future, ensuring light rail that will serve communities for decades to come
- Interest in understanding Link light rail line connectivity and transfers once multiple lines are in service
- Enthusiasm for transit expansion, interest in speeding up delivery of the project and moving beyond planning
- Interest in tours and on-the-ground engagement experiences between community members and staff
- Questions and concerns about displacement of residents (property owners and renters), businesses and services during or due to construction
- Interest in eTOD around station areas
- Some interest in understanding the utility of building a second downtown tunnel and suggestions to use existing Downtown Seattle Transit Tunnel
- Questions and concerns about vertical conveyance, with a strong interest in reliable and redundant escalators, elevators and stairs for stations
- General interest in improving safety and passenger experience
- Questions and interest in learning more about next steps in the process, including learning more about mitigation, environmental review, design and construction and how the community can continue to engage