



West Seattle and Ballard

Link Extensions

Community Engagement Guide

January 2018-April 2019

Updated: Summer 2018

Overview

Introduction

Sound Transit is undertaking an ambitious mass transit system expansion as part of the regional **Sound Transit 3 (ST3)** Plan that voters approved funding for in November 2016. The West Seattle and Ballard Link Extensions Project is one piece of the expansion plan that will add 4.7 miles of light rail service from downtown Seattle to West Seattle's Alaska Junction neighborhood and 7.1 miles of light rail service from downtown Seattle to Ballard's Market Street area, including a new downtown Seattle rail-only tunnel.

Planning for this project is underway and your participation is important. In response to community feedback, we are engaging stakeholders early and more frequently to build these projects more quickly. Sound Transit has established an aggressive planning and environmental analysis timeline that relies on early and lasting community consensus on a **preferred alternative**.

This plan is your guide to engaging in the project. It explains:

- Sound Transit's goals for **public engagement**.
- How you can get involved.
- How your feedback will shape the project.
- Sound Transit's methods for gathering feedback.
- Roles and responsibilities.

See a word in **bold**?

Find it in our glossary (page 16) for more information about that term.

Get updates
soundtransit.org/subscribe



Who is Sound Transit?

Sound Transit is a public transit agency that plans, builds and operates express bus, light rail and commuter train services in the urban areas of King, Pierce and Snohomish counties.

Our Board

Sound Transit is governed by an 18-member Board made up of local elected officials and the Secretary of the Washington State Department of Transportation. The Board establishes policies and gives direction and oversight.

Members

Dave Somers, Chair
Snohomish County Executive

John Marchione, Vice Chair
Redmond Mayor

Nancy Backus
Auburn Mayor

David Baker
Kenmore Mayor

Claudia Balducci
King County Councilmember

Dow Constantine
King County Executive

Bruce Dammeier
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Transportation Secretary

Peter von Reichbauer
King County Councilmember

Paul Roberts
Everett Councilmember

Dave Upthegrove
King County Councilmember

Victoria Woodards
Tacoma Mayor



Project background

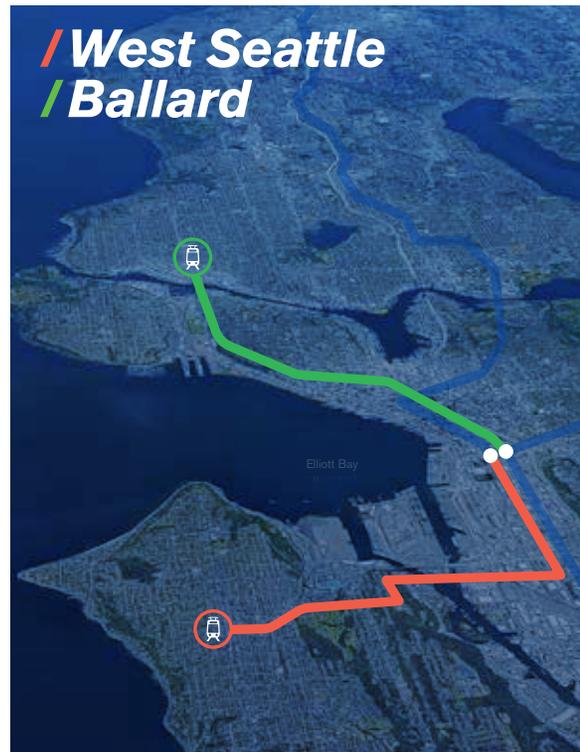
The West Seattle and Ballard Link Extensions will provide fast, reliable light rail connections to dense residential and job centers throughout the region while the new downtown Seattle Light Rail Tunnel will provide capacity for the entire regional system to operate efficiently.

The **representative project** for the West Seattle Link Extension builds light rail from West Seattle's Alaska Junction neighborhood to downtown Seattle, primarily on an elevated guideway with a new rail-only fixed span crossing of the Duwamish River. The West Seattle Link Extension will connect to existing Link service, continuing north to Lynnwood and Everett in the future.

The representative projects for the Ballard Link Extension and downtown Seattle Light Rail Tunnel build light rail from Ballard's Market Street area through downtown Seattle with both tunneled and elevated alignments and a rail-only movable bridge over Salmon Bay. In the future, these extensions will connect to Link service, which will also continue south to Tacoma.

During the **alternatives development** phase of this project, Sound Transit will be asking the public to:

- Comment on the purpose and need of the project.
- Provide input on the representative projects and potential alternatives.
- Help identify and provide feedback on potential project benefits and impacts on your community, the environment and transportation.



What are representative projects?

The ST3 Plan that voters approved funding for included representative projects that establish the transit mode, approximate route, number of stations and general station locations. These were critical in developing detailed project budgets and schedules. Representative projects for the West Seattle and Ballard Link Extensions and the downtown Seattle light rail tunnel are the starting point for alternatives development. Building on the representative project captures work already publicly-vetted and approved rather than starting anew, helping to meet overall project schedules and budgets.

How were they developed?

The representative projects are the result of extensive and years-long planning and public involvement work. Public input in the final phases of ST3 outreach included:

- 2,320 written comments.
- 1,250 attendees at open houses, including in West Seattle, Ballard and downtown.
- 34,706 responses to online survey.
- 18,032 narrative "open-end" commentary.

For more information about ST3, visit soundtransit.org/st3.

Anticipated project schedule



*West Seattle: Design is expected to begin in 2022 and be completed in 2025. Construction and testing is expected to begin in 2025 and be completed in 2030.

Ballard and downtown Seattle light rail tunnel: Design is expected to begin in 2023 and be completed in 2026. Construction and testing is expected to begin in 2027 and be completed in 2035.

Engagement goals



Be proactive

Engage audiences, including the communities most affected by the project, in conversations that lead to an early agreement on a preferred alternative.



Be transparent

Foster public trust through transparent communication, meaningful and inclusive public engagement and timely responses to project questions and feedback.



Be accountable

Ensure accountability by clearly communicating when, where and how public feedback was used to make project decisions.



Ensure accessibility

Ensure accessibility by presenting project information in easy-to-read and understandable formats, including in-language documents, with an eye toward accessibility for all audiences.



Encourage awareness

Encourage local and regional awareness of the benefits, effects and progress of the project.

Equity and inclusion

Sound Transit is committed to inclusively engaging communities along the project corridors, including those in historically underrepresented communities. We recognize this project will bring both benefits and impacts to many who live and work in the area. During **environmental review**, which includes the preparation of an **Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)**, we will work to identify and analyze such benefits and impacts with the goal of reaching out, translating and delivering projects that best serve the needs of all.

We strive to engage the public and historically underrepresented communities in understanding the project and providing feedback throughout the public involvement process. Input from the public is especially important during the alternatives development phase when a preferred alternative and other alternatives to be studied in the EIS are identified.

In order to gather your ideas and feedback about various alternatives, Sound Transit will provide meaningful engagement opportunities that are designed to meet the unique needs of historically underrepresented populations, including low-income, non-English speaking, and communities of color. Some of those opportunities may include:

- Conducting interviews with social service providers to better understand various populations in the project area.
- Utilizing translators at public meetings and community gatherings.
- Translating key materials into languages spoken along the project corridor.
- Holding smaller meetings focused on individual communities.
- Meeting communities where they gather, like churches, community centers and people's homes.

Sound Transit is also working with the City of Seattle on a Racial Equity Toolkit (RET) to assess and address impacts on racial equity. Expected outcomes from the RET process include:

- Enhance mobility and access to create opportunity for communities of color and low-income populations.
- Create opportunities for equitable development that benefit communities of color.
- Avoid disproportionate adverse impacts on communities of color and for low-income populations.
- Meaningful involvement with communities of color and low-income populations.

If you are interested in learning more about this project and how it may affect your community, please contact us at 206-903-7229 or wsblink@soundtransit.org. We will work with you to find an appropriate medium for providing project information.

Equity and inclusion during environmental review

Our approach to outreach and public engagement will be inclusive and consistent with the principles of the City's Race and Social Justice Initiative and Executive Order 2017-13.

During the environmental review process, Sound Transit will conduct an **environmental justice analysis** in compliance with federal regulations. The analysis will:

- Describe the demographics of the project corridor.
- Evaluate whether the project would disproportionately impact minority and low-income communities.
- Review potential impacts and who may be affected and consider potential mitigation and benefits.
- Document our efforts to involve minority and low-income populations in the planning process.

FAQs

Q Why is it important for me to engage now?

Alternatives development is an important time to engage. It's during this phase that route, station locations, the preferred alternative and other alternatives to study during the environmental review process will be identified.

Q What is early scoping?

Early scoping was the first public involvement opportunity in the alternatives development process. Sound Transit requested public and agency input on route and station location alternatives as part of this early phase, which preceded environmental review of the project.

It was an opportunity to:

- Learn about the project background and timeline.
- Provide input on the ST3 representative project and potential alternatives.
- Comment on the purpose and need of the project.
- Help identify and provide feedback on potential project benefits and impacts on your community, the environment and transportation.

Q What type of feedback are you looking for during the alternatives development phase?

During alternatives development, staff will assess the representative project included in the ST3 Plan and, based on additional public feedback and technical analysis, further refine the specific route, station locations and other project elements. We will be looking for your feedback on:

- Routes
- Station locations
- Benefits and concerns

Q How will public input shape this phase?

Numerous opportunities will be identified for elected officials, community and business groups, and the public to weigh in with their priorities and ideas, and to shape which other alternatives should be studied as part of the EIS. In April 2019, the Sound Transit Board will identify a preferred alternative and other alternatives to study in the EIS. Public engagement will continue through all subsequent phases of the project.

Q How has public input shaped the representative project?

The representative project reflects years of public engagement, starting with high-capacity transit studies for Ballard and south King County in spring 2014; the Long-Range Plan update in December 2014; and the ST3 Plan development during 2015 and 2016. Public involvement during those efforts developed representative projects that will serve as starting points for developing more refined alternatives.

Q Will changes to the representative projects be considered in the alternatives development process?

Suggestions from the public engagement process that involve changes to the representative project will be assessed for their consistency with the intent of the ST3 Plan, consistency with the purpose and need for the project, and their implications for a broad range of factors and project impacts, including transportation, environmental, land use, engineering, construction, operations, cost and schedule.

Q Can you provide information about this project in other languages or formats?

Yes, we provide translated materials at our in-person outreach activities and have some [translated materials online](#) as well. If we are missing your language, please call our project line at 206-903-7229 and we will do our best to meet your needs. We will also provide translation services over the phone and at in-person meetings if requested in advance.

Engagement tools



Online

Website

The project web page, within the Sound Transit website, provides the hub for all up-to-date project information. The web page will be updated frequently with the latest project information, opportunities to be involved, upcoming events and meetings, project materials and more.

soundtransit.org/wsblink

Email updates

Email updates will be sent on a regular basis to the project's email subscriber list. Email updates will include up-to-date information on the project and be sent to people who have opted in. [Sign-up](#) on the project web page.

Social media

Sound Transit will utilize our existing social media platforms to share news and updates about the West Seattle and Ballard Extensions. You can find us at @SoundTransit.



Surveys

Sound Transit will conduct online surveys to collect ideas and understand preferences. This feedback will be used to help shape decisions and inform outreach efforts.

Email us

Send an email with questions, concerns or comments to wsblink@soundtransit.org.



In person

Open houses (in-person and online)

Open houses will be held at key milestones and decision points during the entirety of the project, especially when public feedback is sought to help inform key decisions during the alternatives development process. At these open houses, attendees can drop in at any time during the event to view information and discuss the project with Sound Transit. In-person open houses will be held in various locations along the project alignment, and will be accompanied by online open houses.

Neighborhood forums

Composed of neighborhood members and other interested members of the public, these forums will be used to engage and educate communities around key project milestones and to work through project issues as they arise. At these forums, participants will be able to spend more time delving into issues specific to their neighborhood, working together in small groups. The forums will be hosted in communities along the project alignment and will provide an opportunity for you to connect with your neighbors, follow the project's progress and voice your opinions at major decision points.

Briefings and meetings

Sound Transit will proactively reach out to groups to offer project updates. Any group may request a briefing from the project team by emailing wsblink@soundtransit.org or calling 206-903-7229. We will prioritize historically underrepresented communities and can join you in your workplace or training events to provide project updates.

Fairs and festivals

During the spring, summer and fall, our outreach staff will be in communities around the region and along the project corridor at farmer's markets, festivals and community events. We will be available to discuss the project in detail and answer your questions.

Other ways to engage

Existing community engagement efforts

Sound Transit recognizes that there are many ongoing efforts to engage communities on a variety of topics. To increase accessibility, we will align and coordinate with existing efforts already underway to provide project updates, when appropriate.

English and translated materials

Fact sheets, infographics, presentations and other printed materials will be developed as needed throughout the project. Key materials will be translated into multiple languages. Materials may also include mailed notifications such as postcards or flyers.

Media

Media coverage can help reach audiences that might not otherwise know about the project, or have an opportunity to be engaged in other means. Sound Transit will engage community, local, regional and in-language media sources to ensure that accurate project information is shared and distributed via a variety of media outlets.

Information line

Call the project line to speak with an Outreach Specialist.
206-903-7229



Audiences

Sound Transit will actively engage a wide variety of audiences, which are broken down into three key categories: neighborhood and community stakeholders, general public and the media.



Neighborhood and community stakeholders

WHO

- Community-based organizations
- Cultural groups
- Advocacy groups
- Social service organizations
- Current and future transit riders
- Limited English-speaking populations
- Communities of color
- Immigrant and refugee populations
- Renters and homeowners
- People in low-income households
- People experiencing homelessness
- People with disabilities
- Businesses, including small and disadvantaged businesses



Public

WHO

People who live, work and commute in, through and around the Puget Sound region.



Media

WHO

Print, digital and broadcast media, including community, local and in-language media sources.



Roles and responsibilities

Implementing ST3 consistent with the scope, budget and schedule approved by the voters will take extraordinary effort by Sound Transit and its federal, state and local partners. To meet the challenge of delivering projects as quickly as possible, Sound Transit developed a **System Expansion Implementation Plan** that embraces new ways of working together. Those adjustments include internal changes at Sound Transit, as well as new approaches to working with project partners, local jurisdictions, elected officials, community members and the public.



As a member of the public, your job is to communicate your ideas, concerns and questions about the project through a variety of communications channels:

- Learn about the project and ask questions.
- Provide feedback on topics and issues that interest you.
- Communicate to Sound Transit how you want to be engaged.
- Share information and discuss the project with your community.



Neighborhood forum events will provide an opportunity for community members to connect with their neighbors, follow the project's progress, delve more deeply into issues specific to their neighborhood, and voice their opinions at major decision points. At neighborhood forums, participants will work together to:

- Examine and discuss area- and community-specific issues and concerns associated with the proposed alternatives.
- Provide detailed feedback to inform alternatives development and decision-making, which will be shared with the Stakeholder Advisory Group, Elected Leadership Group and the Sound Transit Board of Directors.



The Stakeholder Advisory Group will provide a forum for community members to inform the development of alternatives for the project. Meetings will be open to the public. Visit the [web page](#) for more details and a schedule of upcoming meetings. Advisory group members will:

- Highlight issues and consider trade-offs in the corridor.
- Make recommendations on a preferred alternative to the Elected Leadership Group.



Elected Leadership Group

The Elected Leadership Group is a comprehensive group of elected officials who represent the project corridor and the Sound Transit Board. The purpose of this group is to reach consensus around key decisions and work through project issues as needed. Meetings will be open to the public and include public comment. Visit the [web page](#) for more details and a schedule of upcoming meetings. The Elected Leadership Group will:

- Appoint Stakeholder Advisory Group members.
- Work with project staff to understand and evaluate trade-offs.
- Recommend a preferred alternative to the Sound Transit Board based on the recommendations from the Stakeholder Advisory Group, public input and the voter-approved project scope, schedule and budget.



Sound Transit Board

The Sound Transit Board will oversee the implementation and delivery of the project, and have final voting authority on identification of the preferred alternative and other major decisions. The Board will consider recommendations and feedback from the Elected Leadership Group, Stakeholder Advisory Group and public when making decisions.



Coordination with Agencies

Sound Transit will work closely and coordinate with a number of agencies and governments as this project moves forward, including, but not limited to:

- City of Seattle
- Federal Transit Administration
- King County
- Port of Seattle
- Washington State Department of Transportation

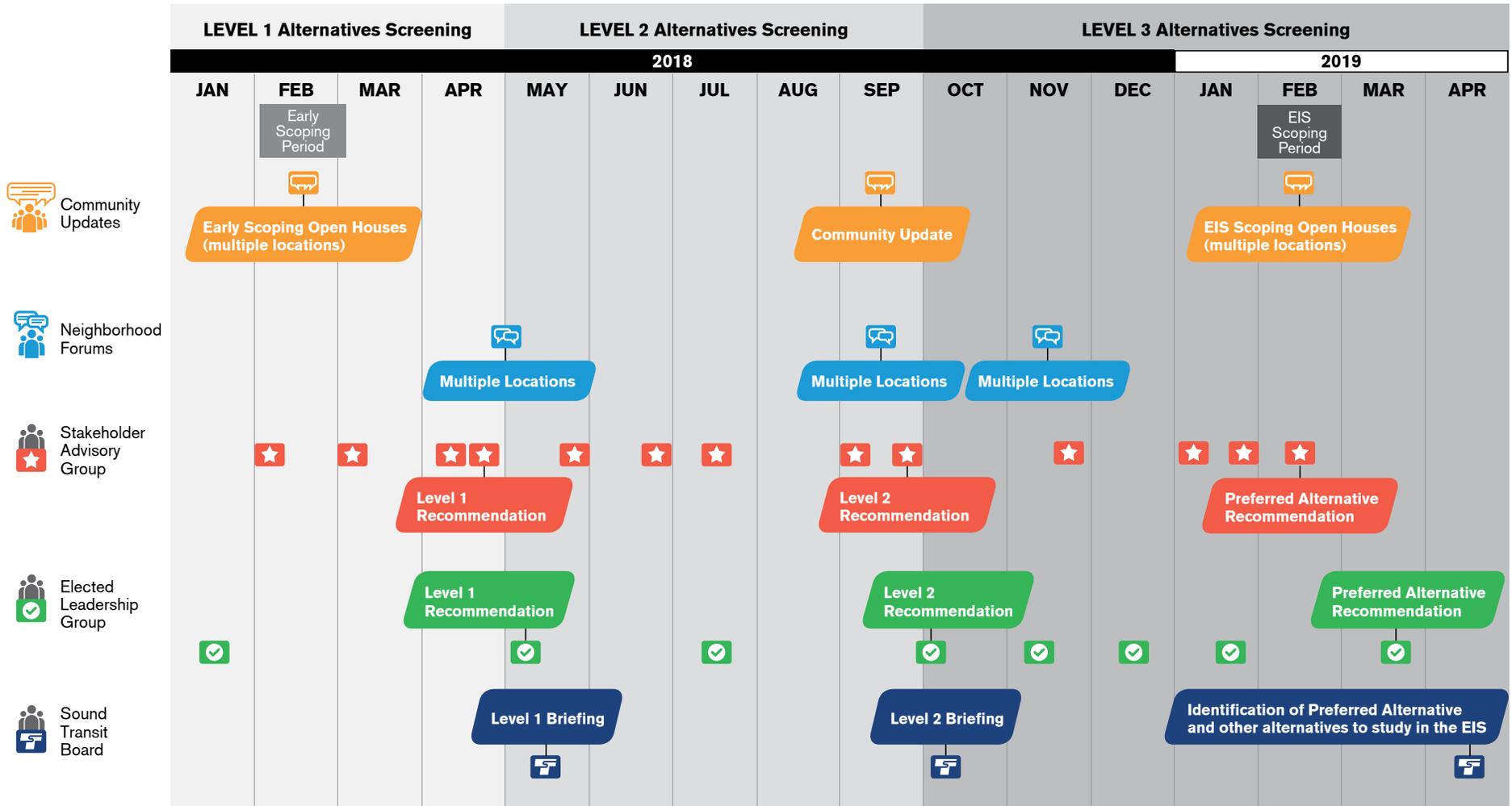


City of Seattle

Sound Transit and the City of Seattle have entered into a partnering agreement that provides a framework for Sound Transit and the City to work closely together during the alternatives development phase of the project to identify a preferred alternative as well as other alternatives to study in the EIS.

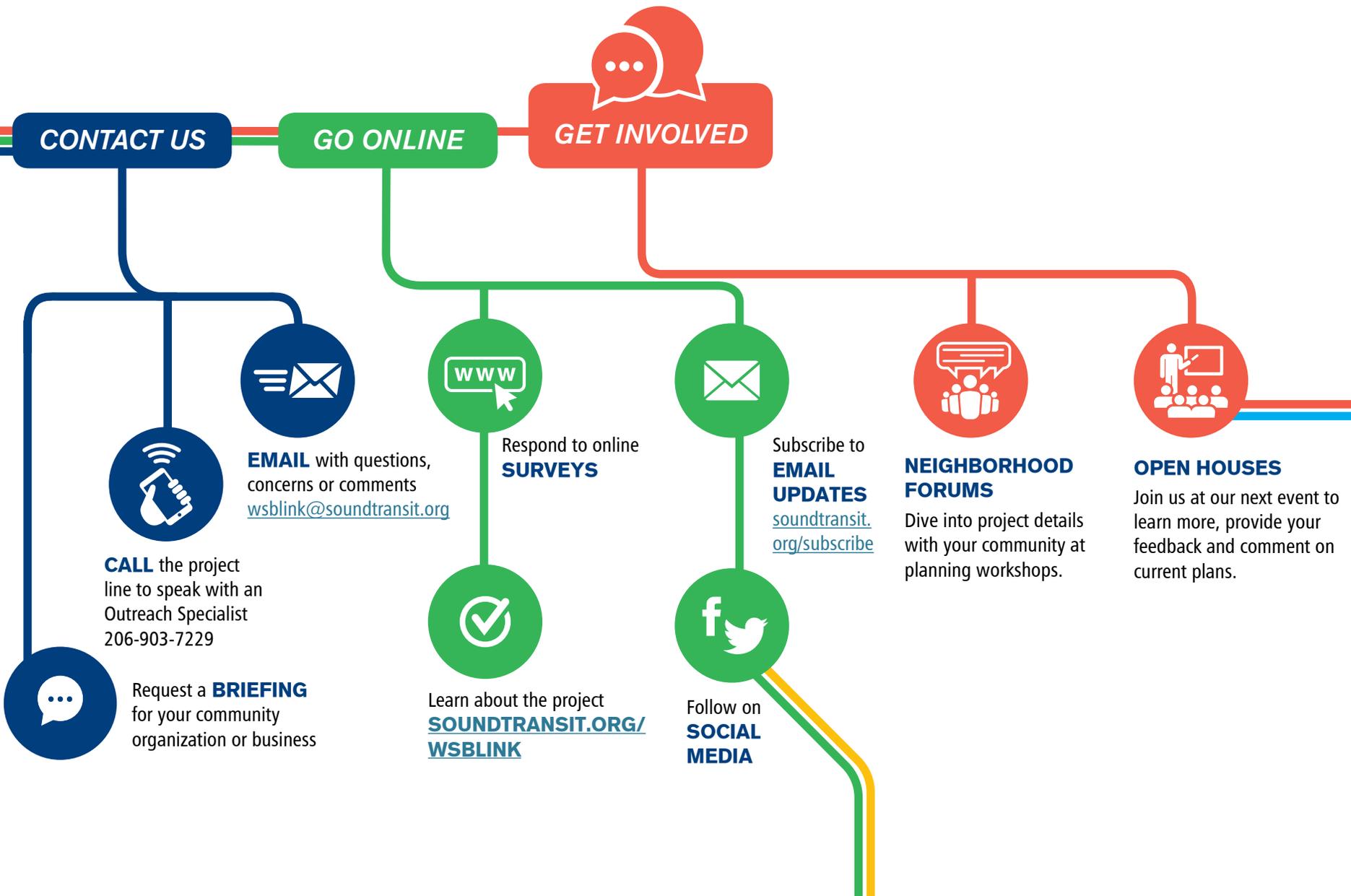
Community engagement and collaboration process

The schedule below shows planned meetings across three levels of alternatives screening. Alternatives will be narrowed at each level until a preferred alternative is identified by the Sound Transit Board in April 2019. Dates are subject to change.



Meeting dates subject to change. Updated August 2018.

Get involved



Glossary of terms

Alternatives development

Project phase during which staff will assess the representative project included in the ST3 Plan and, based on additional public engagement and technical analysis, further refine the specific route, station locations and other project elements.

Early scoping

Public process that engages the community to provide feedback and comments to help develop, evaluate and compare corridor alternatives as part of the alternatives analysis process.

Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)

A document used for decision-making that analyzes impacts of project alternatives.

Environmental justice analysis

An evaluation of whether a project would result in disproportionately high and adverse effects on minority and low-income populations after consideration of impacts, benefits and mitigation.

Environmental review

An evaluation of impacts and benefits to inform the public, agencies and decision makers about the environmental consequences of building and operating the project.

Preferred alternative

At the end of the alternatives development phase, the Sound Transit Board identifies a preferred alternative, including route and station options. The EIS further evaluates the preferred alternative as well as other alternatives. The final decision on the alternative to be built will not be made until after the Final EIS is issued.

Public engagement

A process that engages community members in a public dialogue about an issue that affects them.

Representative project

The representative projects were developed after years of public engagement and were included in the ST3 Plan to serve as starting points for developing more refined alternatives.

Sound Transit 3 (ST3)

The Sound Transit 3 Plan adds 62 new miles of light rail with stations serving 37 additional areas. When complete, the Link light rail network will consist of 116 miles of light rail and 83 stations. The funding for ST3 was approved by voters in November 2016.

System expansion implementation plan

[A plan](#) that describes Sound Transit's approach to delivering the expanded system of projects as well as needed reforms based on lessons learned from delivering major capital infrastructure to date.

