



West Seattle and Ballard Link Extensions

To: Members of the Sound Transit West Seattle and Ballard Elected Leadership Group
RE: Stakeholder Advisory Group Recommendations (Level 1) Staff Report
Date: May 17, 2018

Summary

On Thursday, May 17, the Members of the Sound Transit West Seattle and Ballard (WSBLE) Elected Leadership Group (ELG) will make recommendations to the Sound Transit Board regarding the Level 1 alternatives for the West Seattle and Ballard Link Extensions project. The ELG will recommend alternatives to be carried forward for further evaluation based on the input of the project's Stakeholder Advisory Group (SAG), the public, and the voter-approved project scope, schedule and budget.

The Level 1 alternatives were developed based on public input provided through the Early Scoping process earlier this year. Over 2,800 comments were received that informed the alternatives. An Early Scoping Summary Report is included in your binder. After being identified through the Early Scoping process, the alternatives went through a Level 1 evaluation process. The alternatives and evaluation results were then shared with the SAG and the public through briefings, workshops and forums.

The SAG has met on four occasions and has provided recommendations for the ELG to consider as it develops its recommendations. The ELG recommendations will, in turn, be presented to the Sound Transit Board at the next full Board meeting on May 24, 2018.

Early Scoping

The Early Scoping public comment period was held between February 2 and March 5, 2018. Three open houses, an agency early scoping meeting, and an online open house were conducted during this time period. Over 700 people attended the three open houses and Sound Transit received over 2,800 individual comments in various formats. All of the public comments were captured in the Early Scoping Summary Report and key takeaways for each of the project segments are noted in the sections below.

Tribes

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) initiated government-to-government consultation with six federally recognized tribes in February 2018. Sound Transit distributed agency early scoping meeting invitations to these tribes, as well as two tribes that are not federally recognized. The Muckleshoot Indian Tribe attended the agency early scoping meeting and the Snoqualmie Indian Tribe provided comments on potential archaeological resources.

Agencies



Seven agencies attended an agency early scoping meeting and seven agencies and the University of Washington submitted written comments, which focused on the following topics:

- Suggestions for alternatives to the Representative Project
- Freight mobility and infrastructure
- Local and regional mobility
- Integration with transit and impacts on other transit facilities
- Transit-oriented development (TOD) and urban design
- Hazardous materials and contaminated sites
- Air quality
- Utilities
- Trails
- Vibration
- Electromagnetic interference

Stakeholder Advisory Group

The West Seattle and Ballard Link Extensions SAG was appointed by the ELG members in January 2018. The SAG was convened in February 2018 to inform the development of alternatives for the project. The SAG members approved a charter that outlines their purpose, role and responsibilities to work together to:

- Build consensus around key project decisions and work through project issues as needed
- Make recommendations at key milestones, including:
 - Identifying alternatives to study during environmental review
 - Identifying a preferred alternative
- Highlight specific issues and trade-offs in the corridor

During the Level 1 evaluation process, the SAG met four times to become oriented to the project, review public feedback received during early scoping, provide input on alternatives and screening criteria, and make recommendations regarding which alternatives should be carried forward for further evaluation in Level 2.

Meeting 1 – Feb. 8, 2018

The SAG was presented with an overview of the project and background, highlights of the regional system expansion program, and key project features. The SAG reviewed a flyover of the representative project, Sound Transit's new approach to project development, and were informed about the alternatives development timeline and community engagement process. The group then reviewed and approved the SAG charter.

Meeting 2 – March 14, 2018

The SAG was presented with an overview of the metrics and comment themes from early scoping. SAG members then met in small groups to review alignment and station concepts that were developed based on the feedback Sound Transit received during early scoping. Sound Transit provided an overview of the alternatives evaluation framework and walked through the project purpose and need statements and associated Level 1 evaluation criteria and measures. SAG members posed comments and questions throughout the discussion. Sound Transit staff then described the upcoming neighborhood forums noting that the events would be an



opportunity for community members to work with their neighbors in small groups to identify values and discuss their vision for light rail in their respective neighborhoods.

Meeting 3 – April 17, 2018

The SAG reviewed themes and metrics from early scoping. Sound Transit staff then provided an overview of public participation during March and an updated schedule for the neighborhood forums; SAG members were invited to attend one of the events in their respective neighborhoods. The group walked through changes to the project purpose and need statements and evaluation criteria based on feedback from the early scoping process and the previous SAG meeting. The Level 1 alternatives, evaluations results and segment summaries were presented for each segment. SAG members broke up into groups of five to seven to review and discuss the alternatives and evaluation results for each segment of the project.

Meeting 4 – April 24, 2018

The group reviewed the SAG charter and the meeting's goal: to reach a recommendation on the Level 1 alternatives to be carried forward for further evaluation in Level 2. Sound Transit answered questions posed during the April 17 SAG meeting regarding ST3 Plan consistency and third-party funding. SAG members then broke up into groups to consider their recommendations and proposed refinements to alternatives. Following the small group discussions, the larger group reconvened to review the group's recommendations.

Equity and Inclusion

Sound Transit is committed to delivering projects that support an equitable transportation system. In partnership with the City of Seattle, Sound Transit is applying the Racial Equity Toolkit (RET), consistent with the city's Race and Social Justice Initiative (RSJI), to the West Seattle and Ballard Link Extensions project. The following key community outcomes have been jointly proposed to guide RET analysis for the project:

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

During Level 1, screening measures were developed to evaluate alternatives relative to the representative project in terms of access to opportunities for historically underserved communities and burden on historically underserved populations. These measures used the access to opportunity and displacement risk indices prepared by the city as part of the Seattle 2035 Equity Analysis and look at both race and income.

Level 1 evaluation found that all of alternatives were comparable to the representative project in terms of access to opportunity. In terms of burden on historically underserved communities, all



of the alternatives were found to be comparable to the representative project with one difference in Chinatown/ID. Compared to the representative project, the Massachusetts Tunnel Portal alternative would perform higher because it would reduce the extent of potential in-street cut-and-cover construction along 5th Avenue in the Chinatown/ID neighborhood from approximately 1,600 lineal feet to approximately 400 feet (i.e. a reduction of approximately 1,200 feet).

West Seattle/Duwamish Segment

Below are details of the alternatives arising from early scoping, as well as feedback from the neighborhood forums, and the recommendations of the SAG.

Early Scoping

Many comments suggested a tunnel from the western edge of the Delridge valley to the Alaska Junction (the intersection of California Avenue SW and SW Alaska Street), with an underground station within a few blocks of the Junction. Several comments requested an alignment through the West Seattle Golf Course, while others requested alignments farther north. Many comments suggested removing the Avalon Station or consolidating it with the Alaska Junction Station in a more central location. Several other comments requested keeping the Avalon Station as an important bus transfer location. Most comments about the Delridge Station suggested moving it farther south. Many comments also requested consideration of future extensions to the south on Fautleroy Way SW, 35th Avenue SW, or Delridge Way SW. Several others also called for providing service farther south to Westwood Village or White Center as part of ST3, while others suggested improving bus service if a tunnel could not be built.

Alternatives from Early Scoping

Below are the alternatives that were developed based on feedback received during the Early Scoping period along with some key findings from the Level 1 evaluation process.

Oregon Street/Alaska Junction

- Avoids Fautleroy and Alaska; better orientation south
- Affects Oregon St and 44th Ave

West Seattle Bridge/Fautleroy

- Lessens effects to Junction and Delridge; better orientation south
- Creates isolated Delridge Station

Pigeon Ridge/West Seattle Tunnel

- Lessens effects to Port, Junction, Delridge; better orientation south
- Requires two tunnels; may require 3rd Party funding

Yancy Street/West Seattle Tunnel

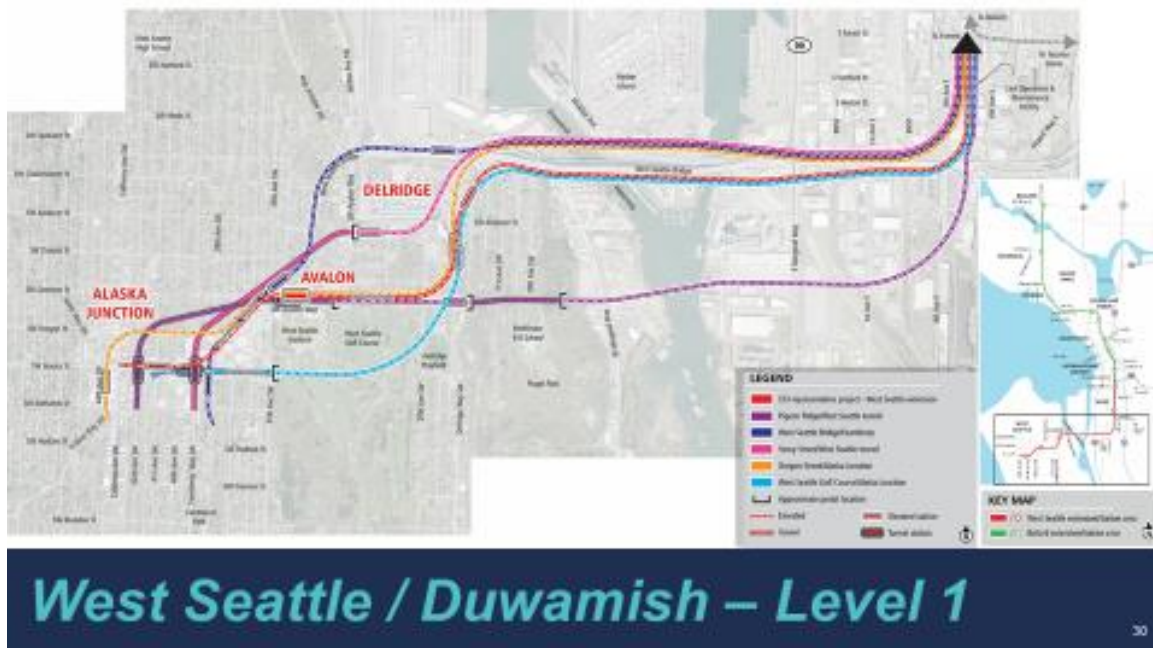
- Lessens effects to Junction and Delridge; better orientation south
- Consolidates stations; potentially not consistent with ST3 Plan
- Requires tunnel; may require 3rd Party funding

West Seattle Golf Course/Alaska Junction (Tunnel)

- Crosses golf course, Section 4(f)
- Lessens effects to Junction, Delridge
- Eliminates station; potentially not consistent with ST3 Plan

Not practical suggestions

- Tunnel under Duwamish
- West Seattle Bridge
- Gondola, rail/bus bridge
- Extensions to Alki, Admiral, etc.



Neighborhood Forum Feedback

A single neighborhood forum was held in West Seattle. In the forum, groups formed to focus discussions around the Alaska Junction, Avalon and Delridge stations.

A key takeaway from the forum was that West Seattle has a vibrant mix of character-rich neighborhood centers surrounded by density and single-family homes. With light rail on the way, it will be important to maintain a balance of the existing character and feel of West Seattle with the demand for additional density, as well as mitigate construction impacts. In general, there was support for an underground alignment, especially near and through the Junction. Additional discussions relating to neighborhood values, opportunities and challenges are described in the attached neighborhood forums summaries.

Stakeholder Advisory Group Summary

The SAG made the following recommendations and comments.

West Seattle / Duwamish – SAG recommendations

	Alternative	Carry forward?	Do not carry forward?	Notes/Comments
Alternatives with more potential	ST3 Representative Project	■		
	Oregon Street/Alaska Junction	■	✓	Explore elevated and tunnel options
	West Seattle Bridge/Fauntleroy	■		✓
	Pigeon Ridge/West Seattle Tunnel	■	✓	
Alternatives with greater challenges	Yancy Street/West Seattle Tunnel	■		✓
	West Seattle Golf Course/Alaska Junction (Tunnel)	■		✓ Add Avalon station, modify to reduce 4(f) impact
Not practical suggestions	Tunnel under Duwamish		✓	
	West Seattle Bridge		✓	
	Gondola, rail/bus bridge		✓	
	Extensions to Alki, Admiral, etc.		✓	

SODO and Chinatown-International District Segment

Below are details of the alternatives arising from early scoping, as well as feedback from the neighborhood forums, and the recommendations of the SAG.

Early Scoping

Most comments were concerned with transferring between light rail lines at the SODO Station and providing reliable service in this area. Several comments suggested fully grade-separating both the new and existing tracks in this area. Some comments requested having a Stadium Station on both lines.

Alternatives from Early Scoping

Below are the alternatives that were developed based on feedback received during the Early Scoping period along with some key findings from the Level 1 evaluation process.

Surface E-3

- Less service disruption during construction
- Accommodates Stadium Station on both lines
- Eliminates existing grade crossings at Lander, Holgate; closes Royal Brougham

Massachusetts Tunnel Portal

- Reduces cut-and-cover construction on 5th Ave in Chinatown/Int'l District
- Less service disruption during construction

- Eliminates existing grade crossing at Holgate
- Requires longer tunnel; more property; may require 3rd Party funding

Not practical solutions

- Maintain buses on E-3
- First Ave Alignment
- Design for potential extensions south to Georgetown



SODO & Chinatown/ID – Level 1 alternatives

Neighborhood Forum Feedback

Separate neighborhood forums were held for the Chinatown/ID and SODO/Stadium neighborhoods.

Chinatown/ID

The key takeaway from this forum was a need for inclusivity of all voices and acknowledgment of the history noting that past developments such as Union Station and I-5 were done *to* the community rather than *for* the community. Additional discussions relating to neighborhood values, opportunities and challenges are described in the attached neighborhood forums summaries.


SODO/Stadium

The key takeaway from this forum was that SODO is a busy, diverse and evolving neighborhood that is often “under-understood.” Large number of employees work a-typical schedules, contributing to a higher rate of single-occupancy drivers and parking issues. Attendees preferred

alternatives that included stations at both SODO and Stadium, and encouraged Sound Transit to explore creative options beyond the alternatives presented that would encourage the use of alternative transportation options and contribute to a more vibrant and safe neighborhood. Additional discussions relating to neighborhood values, opportunities and challenges are described in the attached neighborhood forums summaries.

Stakeholder Advisory Group Summary

The SAG made the following recommendations and comments.

SODO & Chinatown/ID– SAG recommendations				
	Alternative	Carry forward?	Do not carry forward?	Notes/Comments
Alternatives with more potential	ST3 Representative Project 			
	Surface E-3 	✓		
	Massachusetts Tunnel Portal 	✓		Consider hybrid with full grade separation
Not practical suggestions	Maintain buses on E-3		✓	Need to study impacts to buses during construction and long term
	First Ave alignment	✓		Explore modifications that meet operational requirements, including potential additional station to serve First Ave
	Design for potential extension south to Georgetown		✓	
New suggestion	Alternative station location	✓		Consider 4 th Ave Station in Chinatown/ID

Downtown Segment

Below are details of the alternatives arising from early scoping, as well as feedback from the neighborhood forums, and the recommendations of the SAG.

Early Scoping

Most comments on the Downtown segment focused on providing easy access to stations and convenient transfers between the existing and new tunnels, especially at the Westlake and Chinatown/International District Stations. Some comments on the Midtown Station suggested moving it east of Interstate 5 (I-5) to First Hill. Several comments suggested consolidating the Denny and South Lake Union Stations into one station, or spreading them farther apart. The need for good transit integration at these stations, particularly from the north and east, was also frequently noted. Comments on the Seattle Center Station generally suggested locations north or south of the Representative Project station location.

Alternatives from Early Scoping



Below are the alternatives that were developed based on feedback received during the Early Scoping period along with some key findings from the Level 1 evaluation process.

5th/Harrison

- Avoids utility conflicts on Republican and station under SR 99 off-ramp
- Decreased station coverage; potentially move Denny Station south

6th/Boren/Roy

- Avoids utility conflicts on Republican and station under SR 99 off-ramp
- Increases construction risk due to I-5 walls along 6th Ave; avoids tiebacks on 5th Ave

5th/Mercer

- Avoids utility conflicts on Republican and station under SR 99 off-ramp
- Increases construction risk due to large sewer on Mercer

5th/Roy/Consolidated SLU Station

- Avoids utility conflicts on Republican and station under SR 99 off-ramp
- Consolidates stations; potentially not consistent with ST3

8th/6th/Republican (First Hill)

- Increases construction risk due to two crossings under I-5
- First Hill station not consistent with ST3

Not Practical Suggestions

- Use Downtown Seattle Transit tunnel
- Design for potential extensions to North and/or East



Neighborhood Forum Feedback

Separate neighborhood forums were held for Downtown and the South Lake Union/Seattle Center neighborhoods.

Downtown







The key takeaway from this forum was that Downtown is a transit-dependent neighborhood that values the active downtown core and the proximity of key destinations and amenities. Attendees encouraged Sound Transit to create seamless transfer points between lines and shallower (rather than deeper) stations. Additional discussions relating to neighborhood values, opportunities and challenges are described in the attached neighborhood forums summaries.

South Lake Union/Seattle Center

The key takeaway from this forum was that in these rapidly growing and changing neighborhoods, light rail should be built to serve what will exist in 2035, not what exists today. Additional discussions relating to neighborhood values, opportunities and challenges are described in the attached neighborhood forums summaries.

Stakeholder Advisory Group Summary

The SAG made the following recommendations and comments.

Downtown – SAG recommendations					
	Alternative		Carry forward?	Do not carry forward?	Notes/Comments
Alternatives with more potential	ST3 Representative Project				
	5th/Harrison		✓		
	6 th /Boren/Roy		✓		Move Seattle Center station south
Alternatives with greater challenges	5 th /Mercer			✓	Freight impacts on Mercer; some prefer Seattle Center station location
	5 th /Roy/Consolidated SLU Station			✓	
	8 th /6 th /Republican (First Hill)		✓		Mix of opinions on carrying forward
Not practical suggestions	Use Downtown Seattle Transit Tunnel (DSTT)			✓	
	Design for potential extensions to north and/or east			✓	

Interbay/Ballard Segment

Below are details of the alternatives arising from early scoping, as well as feedback from the neighborhood forums, and the recommendations of the SAG.

Early Scoping

In the Interbay-Ballard area, many comments suggested a tunnel under Salmon Bay to avoid service interruptions that could occur with a movable bridge. Some comments also suggested a higher, fixed bridge for the same reason. Incorporating pedestrian and bike access into this crossing was also suggested. Many comments expressed concern with traffic congestion on 15th Avenue W and requested study of alternatives to the west with many comments specifically referencing 20th Avenue W. Many of the comments about the Ballard Station suggested moving it farther west, closer to the commercial core of Ballard, while other attendees favored a bridge crossing of Salmon Bay and were eager to learn more about the trade-offs between elevated and underground alternatives.

Alternatives from Early Scoping

Below are the alternatives that were developed based on feedback received during the Early Scoping period along with some key findings from the Level 1 evaluation process.

Elliott/15th/16th/Fixed Bridge

- Avoids 15th Ave/Dravus interchange
- Supports more reliable service (no bridge openings)

West of BNSF/20th/17th/Fixed Bridge



- Avoids Elliott Ave, 15th Ave and Fishermen's Terminal
- Supports more reliable service

East of BNSF/14th/Movable Bridge

- Avoids Elliott Ave, 15th Ave and Fishermen's Terminal
- Locates station on 14th Ave within industrial area

West of BNSF/20th/17th Tunnel

- Avoids Elliott Ave, 15th Ave, Fishermen's Terminal and Salmon Bay
- Requires tunnel; may require 3rd Party funding

Elliott/Armory Way/14th/Tunnel

- Avoids Elliott Ave, 15th Ave, Fishermen's Terminal and Salmon Bay
- Requires tunnel; may require 3rd Party funding

West of BNSF/20th/Tunnel

- Avoids Elliott Ave, 15th Ave, Fishermen's Terminal and Salmon Bay
- Requires longer tunnel; may require 3rd Party funding
- Requires construction and displacement within Ballard core

Non Practical Suggestions

- Tunnel through Queen Anne/Interbay
- Extensions to 65th, 85th, Northgate
- Multi-modal Salmon Bay bridge
- Eliminate or add stations



Neighborhood Forum Feedback

A single neighborhood forum was held for the Interbay/Ballard segment. In the forum, groups formed to focus discussions around the Smith Cove, Interbay and Ballard stations.

The key takeaway from this forum was that Smith Cove, Interbay and Ballard have unique opportunities and challenges due to the vibrant mix of industrial, commercial and residential uses. The neighborhoods' goal is to strike a balance between facilitating connections to the dense and developing neighborhoods on and adjacent to stations, while limiting impacts to freight, traffic, business and industry during and after construction. Many attendees were in favor of an underground alignment, especially near Fishermen's Terminal and under Salmon Bay into Ballard, while other attendees favored a bridge crossing of Salmon Bay and were eager to learn more about the trade-offs between elevated and underground alternatives. Additional discussions relating to neighborhood values, opportunities and challenges are described in the attached neighborhood forums summaries.

Stakeholder Advisory Group Summary

The SAG made the following recommendations and comments.

Interbay / Ballard – SAG recommendations

	Alternative		Carry forward?	Do not carry forward?	Notes/Comments
Alternatives with more potential	ST3 Representative Project				
	Elliott/15 th /16 th /Fixed Bridge		✓		
	West of BNSF/20 th /17 th /Fixed Bridge		✓		
	East of BNSF/14 th /Movable Bridge		✓		
	West of BNSF/20 th /17 th Tunnel		✓		
	Elliott/Armory Way/14 th /Tunnel		✓		
Alternatives with greater challenges	West of BNSF/20 th /Tunnel		✓		Mix of opinions on carrying forward; agreement to carry forward
Not practical suggestions	Tunnel through Queen Anne/Interbay			✓	
	Extensions to 65 th , 85 th , Northgate			✓	
	Multi-modal Salmon Bay bridge			✓	Minority opinion to carry forward
	Eliminate or add stations			✓	



Stakeholder Advisory Group Members

- Abigail Doerr, Transportation Choices Coalition
- Andres Arjona, Community Representative - Ballard
- *Becky Asencio, Seattle Public Schools
- Brian King, Community Representative – West Seattle
- Bryce Yadon, Futurewise
- Colleen Echohawk, Chief Seattle Club
- *Dave Gering, Manufacturing Industrial Council*
- Deb Barker, Community Representative –West Seattle
- Erin Goodman, SODO Business Improvement Area
- Ginny Gilder, Force 10 Hoops/Seattle Storm
- Greg Nickels, Former Mayor of Seattle
- Hamilton Gardiner, West Seattle Chamber
- Jon Scholes, Downtown Seattle Association
- Julia Park, Community Representative – Ballard
- *Katie Garrow, Martin Luther King Labor Council
- Larry Yok, Community Representative – Chinatown/ID
- Maiko Winkler-Chin, Seattle Chinatown International District Preservation & Development Authority
- *Mark Nagle, Expedia
- Mike Stewart, Ballard Alliance
- *Paul Lambros, Plymouth Housing
- 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
- Steve Lewis, Alliance for People with disAbilities
- *Walter Reese, Nucor Steel
- Warren Aakervik, Community Representative - Freight
- *Willard Brown, Delridge Neighborhood Development Association

* SAG member not present at the April 24, 2018 recommendations meeting.