



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

Stakeholder Advisory Group Meeting #1 – Feb. 8, 2018

Meeting Summary

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

Diane Adams, Facilitator, welcomed the Stakeholder Advisory Group (SAG) members to the group's first meeting. She introduced Don Billen, Sound Transit, who provided a high-level overview of the project, including a summary of past studies that informed the development of the ST3 ballot measure. Don welcomed Joe McDermott, King County Councilmember, and Mike O'Brien, Seattle City Councilmember, and noted that they serve as the co-chairs of the Elected Leadership Group (ELG).

Councilmember Mike O'Brien and Councilmember Joe McDermott welcomed the SAG members and described how the meeting was one of the first steps in the planning process for the West Seattle and Ballard Link extensions. They emphasized Sound Transit's commitment to community involvement throughout the process and highlighted the need to balance the complexity of the project with the public's desire to accelerate the timeline. Councilmember O'Brien closed his comments by asking that SAG members strive to be representative members of their communities both during and outside of meetings by hearing and bringing forth their community's priorities, concerns and input. Councilmember Joe McDermott emphasized that bringing forward as many ideas as possible early in the process, as well as adding a community perspective to the conversation, is what the ELG and Sound Transit are hoping for. He stressed that the timeline requires the alternatives to be developed and vetted early in the process to reach a preferred alternative by April 2019. Councilmember O'Brien noted that having buy-in at key points during the planning process will be important to meet the timeline but called on the group to be open to discussion as disagreements arise.

Don Billen summarized the role of the SAG as navigating the information brought forth to collectively arrive at a recommendation on the preferred alternative. He noted that Sound Transit would be interested in both individual opinions and consensus decisions. The end goal of the planning process is to determine how the projects will be delivered on time and on budget. Don reviewed the complexities that are involved in the project, including traveling through vibrant and dense neighborhoods, the need to connect to an expanding regional transportation system and building a second tunnel under the region's densest jobs center. He thanked the group for being part of the process and expressed confidence in delivering an expanded system on time and on budget.

Diane Adams reviewed the meeting's objectives and confirmed the agenda. She noted that, while the first meeting would mostly be a one-way information share, future meetings would be much more interactive.

Agency directors, project leads and staff in attendance were:

- Don Billen, Acting Executive Director-PEPD, Sound Transit
- Cathal Ridge, Central Corridor Director, Sound Transit
- Chris Rule, Central Corridor Project Manager, Sound Transit
- Jim Parsons, Consultant Project Manager, HNTB
- Leda Chahim, Government and Community Relations, Sound Transit



- Andrea Burnett, Community Outreach Supervisor, Sound Transit
- Diane Adams, Facilitator

SAG members in attendance were:

- Abigail Doerr, Transportation Choices Coalition
- Andres Arjona, Community Representative - Ballard
- Becky Asencio, Seattle Public Schools
- Deb Barker, Community Representative –West Seattle
- Brian King, Community Representative – West Seattle
- Dave Gering, Manufacturing Industrial Council
- Erin Goodman, SODO Business Improvement Area
- Greg Nickels, Former Mayor of Seattle
- Jon Scholes, Downtown Seattle Association
- Julia Park, Community Representative – Ballard
- 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
- 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

NOTE – the following members were not in attendance:

- Bryce Yadon, Futurewise
- Colleen Echohawk, Chief Seattle Club
- Ginny Gilder, Force 10 Hoops/Seattle Storm
- Hamilton Gardiner, West Seattle Chamber of Commerce
- Katie Garrow, Martin Luther King Labor Council
- Savitha Reddy Pathi, Wing Luke Museum of the Asian Pacific American Experience

### **Agenda Item #2 – Introductory project overview**

Cathal Ridge, Sound Transit, presented background on the West Seattle and Ballard Link Light Rail Extensions project. He summarized the series of regional system improvements planned to come online between 2017 and 2041. Narrowing the focus to West Seattle and Ballard, he described the representative project as identifying mode, corridor and station areas, as well as informing cost, schedule and operating needs. The alignment builds on over fifty years of planning efforts and studies



which culminated with the ST3 system plan being approved by Puget Sound voters in 2016. Cathal highlighted the volume of public input that was part of developing ST3 through written comments, open houses, an online survey, open-ended commentary and comments from local jurisdictions, agencies and stakeholder organizations.

Cathal also presented the key features of the West Seattle and Ballard Link Light Rail Extensions. He provided a description of the new Downtown Transit Tunnel, with underground stations near the existing underground stations at Westlake/6th Avenue and International District/5th Avenue South. He noted that transfers between lines would be made at these stations.

Chris Rule, Sound Transit, operated a flythrough of the representative project from West Seattle to Downtown and from Downtown to Ballard. He focused on the stations, elevated sections, key crossover structures, tunnel entrances and paths, underground stations, and terminal at 15th Avenue Northwest and Northwest Market Street.

Questions from SAG members including the following:

Q: What is the purpose of the moveable bridge over Salmon Bay?

A: *The moveable bridge would allow for the movement of vessels through Salmon Bay.*

Q: Why are the tracks elevated near the stadiums in the representative project?

A: *With the existing tracks at-grade, the representative project is elevated to avoid cross-traffic and limit conflicts.*

Q: Is the Google Earth representative project flyover available online?

A: *It is not currently available, but it can be sent out to SAG members.*

Q: Would the elevated section along 15th Avenue West and Elliott Avenue West in Interbay in the representative project require removing a lane of traffic?

A: *In the representative project, the tracks would be elevated to the east of Elliott Avenue West and transition to the center turn lane on 15th Avenue West near the Magnolia Bridge.*

Q: Is the station in Queen Anne intended to serve Seattle Center or the neighborhoods north of Seattle Center?

A: *The locations of the entrances have not been determined, but in general the stations would be designed to serve both the surrounding neighborhoods and points of interest.*

Q: Why is the Ballard line estimated to open in 2035, five years after the West Seattle line?

A: *Boring and construction of the tunnel will take longer. The current timeline has already been accelerated from what was proposed in ST3. Sound Transit will continue to look at ways to further accelerate the schedule and bring those options forward as they arise.*

Q: What is the planned height of the moveable bridge over Salmon Bay? Are bridge openings expected to impact transit reliability?

A: *Under ST3, the bridge would be 70 feet tall. Analysis during the ST3 planning process indicated that at 70 feet, there are anticipated to be from two to four bridge openings per day.*



Q: What type of tunnel is planned in SODO?

A: *Per the representative project, it would be a cut-and-cover tunnel.*

Q: What accommodations are there for people walking from the ferry terminal to the Midtown Station? Would a connection be accessible for people with disabilities?

A: *Such a connection has not been proposed, but it can be looked into.*

Q: Would it be possible to stagger the opening of stations as they are completed, similar to what was done with the Angle Lake and UW stations?

A: *The tunnel under downtown would complicate staggered openings, as there will only be one opening at either end of the tunnel.*

Q: At what point will the SAG learn about the financial assumptions and considerations being used to make decisions?

A: *The costs of the alternatives will be part of the screening process. These details will be presented and discussed during future meetings.*

### **Agenda Item #3: Alternatives development**

Cathal Ridge presented the new approach to project development Sound Transit will use for future system expansion projects. He shared that the approach stems out of voters' expressed desire to improve project delivery timelines. While the old process timeline established a preferred alternative during the environmental process, the new approach would establish a preferred alternative at the start of the environmental process, along with other alternatives to be studied. Cathal noted that the new approach would streamline the environmental review process, permitting, right-of-way acquisition, final design and construction. Alternatives for the West Seattle and Ballard Link Extensions will be developed between late 2017 and early 2019. Following the identification of a preferred alternative, the projects will go through environmental review, final design, construction and testing before starting service in 2030 and 2035 for the West Seattle and Ballard lines, respectively. Before closing, Cathal noted that the partnership agreement signed by the City of Seattle and Sound Transit in December 2017 was an important step in committing to maintain the project schedule and find ways to streamline the permit review process.

Jim Parsons, HNTB, began an overview of the process to reach a preferred alternative by April 2019. The planning process will be broken up into three screening levels. During each level of screening, community updates, neighborhood forums, a Stakeholder Advisory Group, an Elected Leadership Group and briefings to the Sound Transit Board will be used to develop recommendations that will culminate in the identification of a preferred alternative by the Sound Transit Board in April 2019.

Jim described the public engagement infrastructure in place to answer questions and solicit feedback throughout the process. He noted that the goal would be to get as much feedback as possible early in the process to get all the ideas on the table and inform the development of alternatives.

Questions from SAG members included the following:

Q: Was the process timeline refined based on feedback from the ELG?

A: *Yes. The version being presented has been updated per the ELG's feedback.*



Q: When will the impacts to freight movement be analyzed?

A: *Freight impacts would be part of the alternatives screening process. These will be discussed during future meetings.*

Q: Are any of the guiding principles related to preserving and protecting communities as they are today? Considerations for current and past character of Seattle should be part of the conversation about future system expansion.

A: *We will look into that.*

Q: Will Rapid Ride continue to be developed? How would light rail impact those, and other transit services?

A: *Light rail coming online could result in modifications to existing transit routes. As part of the planning process, Sound Transit will be looking at transit integration and the implications for existing routes.*

Q: Is there a requirement for transit-oriented development, low-income housing and/or worker housing near future stations?

A: *As is the case around the Capitol Hill Station, there is often surplus land on the station properties. Sound Transit will pursue opportunities for affordable housing units on those surplus areas.*

Q: Is there the potential for a station that would serve First Hill?

A: *A First Hill Station was looked at during earlier studies and it is not part of the current plans.*

#### **Agenda Item #4 – Community engagement**

Andrea Burnett, Sound Transit, provided an overview of the community engagement efforts that will inform the alternatives development process. She reviewed the goals stated in the Community Engagement Guide, the tools that will be used during the process and the various opportunities available for the public to provide input. Andrea covered the objectives of early scoping, highlighting the opportunities to learn about the project and provide input on the representative project and potential alternatives, the purpose and need, and to help identify potential project benefits and impacts to the community, environment and transportation. She noted the ways in which the public could provide comments during early scoping and shared the dates for the upcoming open houses. Following early scoping, feedback will be documented and shared with the SAG and ELG, discussed at neighborhood forums in the Spring and used to inform, shape and review alternatives later in 2018.

Cathal Ridge added that Sound Transit hopes SAG members will take in and pass along the information shared with them to their respective community members throughout the planning process. He noted that the SAG is meant to be a channel for Sound Transit to engage with the community. He also offered to set up briefings if there are community groups or organizations that would like to learn more about the projects.

Questions from SAG members included the following:

Q: Will the SAG have a chance to review public comments during and following early scoping?

A: *Yes. They will be summarized and shared during future meetings.*



Q: What is the difference between open houses and neighborhood forums?

A: *Open houses will feature a presentation, time for attendees to view information and ask questions directly of project staff. The neighborhood forums will be more programmed and will be more neighborhood- and area-specific. They will provide time to dive deeper into neighborhood priorities and converse with neighbors and the project team about alignment considerations.*

Q: What notifications were distributed ahead of the open houses?

A: *Postcards were sent to all addresses within a half-mile of the alignment, ads were placed in a diverse range of local media, email invites were sent to the project listserv and we've held briefings with many groups.*

Q: Who is the best person for SAG members to contact during the planning process?

A: *Leda Chahim, Sound Transit, will serve as the main point of contact and will pass questions along to other staff as appropriate.*

Q: How will early scoping comments be distributed to the public?

A: *The environmental team will produce an Early Scoping Summary Report which will be made available online.*

#### **Agenda Item #5 – Stakeholder Advisory Group chartering**

Diane Adams provided an overview of the SAG charter and asked for the group's approval of the charter, following an overview and discussion. She highlighted the SAG's role as presenting recommendations to the ELG, which would in turn, would present recommendations to the Sound Transit board. Diane also noted the ELG's role in selecting and approving the SAG members and stressed the importance of having SAG members present at meetings. Leda Chahim said if SAG members are approached by the media, they should represent their constituency's perspective, rather than the perspective of the SAG. They may also direct media inquiries to Kimberly Reason at Sound Transit. Diane Adams reviewed the operating guidelines and membership responsibilities, highlighting that the SAG would not be a voting body, but would strive to achieve consensus. Leda distributed a schedule of potential dates for future SAG meetings, noting that the schedule would ensure the group stays up-to-date with the alternatives development process.

Questions from SAG members included the following:

Q: In the future, can materials be distributed as early as possible to give SAG members time to digest the information and develop informed feedback?

A: *We will strive to send out materials in advance.*

Q: Can the August SAG meeting be moved to September to avoid summer vacation conflicts and possibly increase attendance?

A: *We will look into rescheduling, but there may be constraints based on when other decisions are planned.*

Q: Will all the meetings be held at Sound Transit?



A: *The space is available to us, but we are not assuming all meetings will be held in the same room. There may be other rooms that allow for more informal conversation and would make sense for future meetings.*

Q: Can the list of potential meeting dates be sent out electronically?

A: Yes.

Q: There are dozens and dozens of individual decisions to be made. How will the SAG weigh those decisions?

A: *This will be one of the challenges moving forward. Sound Transit’s goal will be to present the material in a way that is both comprehensive and easy to understand. This will lead to informed conversations and decisions on a variety of complicated subjects.*

Q: Was there a similar group formed during the ST2 planning process?

A: *Not at the start of the process. Smaller groups were formed as needed.*

Q: Are SAG members required to sign the photo release form included in the binders?

A: *No. The release form is meant to make it easier for Sound Transit staff to develop materials in the future, but there are not requirements for SAG members to sign the form.*

Q: How is the Seattle Department of Transportation involved in the planning process?

A: *Per Sound Transit’s partnership with the City of Seattle, we are coordinating closely with all the key City departments through a number of discipline-specific working groups. There will also be an interagency group that will be discussing issues in depth.*

Q: Will the US Coast Guard be involved, particularly regarding the waterway crossings?

A: *Yes. We will be meeting with them in mid-February to kick off those discussions.*

Q: During the alternatives screening process, will there be dollar amounts assigned to benefits?

A: *The screening criteria will be discussed during future meetings.*

The following comments were provided by SAG members:

- Unlike buses, it is not feasible for light rail to make frequent stops. Therefore, the spines should be well-connected to a wide variety of multimodal transportation options.

The SAG approved the charter.

**Agenda Item #6 – Next steps and next meeting**

Diane Adams thanked the SAG members for attending the meeting and being available to be part of the planning process. The next SAG meeting is scheduled for March 14 and will be held on the Sound Transit campus.

	<b>Action Items</b>
<b>1.</b>	Distribute the Google Earth representative alignment flyover to SAG members.
<b>3.</b>	Include “safety” in the guiding principles.

4.	Strive to distribute materials for future meetings early to give SAG members time to review and develop informed feedback.
5.	Look into pushing the August SAG meeting to September to avoid potential summer vacations.
6.	Distribute the list of potential meetings dates to SAG members via email.