

Motion No. M2022-57

Confirming or modifying the preferred light rail route and station locations for the West Seattle and Ballard Link Extensions Final Environmental Impact Statement and requesting further studies

Meeting:	Date:	Type of action:	Staff contact:
System Expansion Committee Board	07/14/2022 07/28/2022	Recommend to Board Final action	Don Billen, PEPD Executive Director Cathal Ridge, Executive Corridor Director

Proposed action

Confirms or modifies the preferred light rail route and station locations for the West Seattle and Ballard Link Extensions Final Environmental Impact Statement and requesting further studies in some areas to inform potential additional future Board action to confirm or modify the Preferred Alternative.

Key features summary

- This action confirms or modifies the preferred alternative(s) for the West Seattle and Ballard Link Extensions to be studied in the Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) from the range of alternatives evaluated in the Draft EIS and requests further studies and public engagement in some areas to inform potential additional future Board action to confirm or modify the Preferred Alternative.
- A status report on the further studies and public engagement will be provided to the Board no later than February 2023.
- Alternatives evaluated in the Draft EIS were identified by the Board in 2019 in Motion Nos. M2019-51 and M2019-104.
- Design of the preferred alternative(s) confirmed or modified by the Board will be advanced to Preliminary Engineering, or the 30 percent design stage (or development of project requirements if a design-build project delivery approach is chosen).
- The Final EIS will respond to comments received on the Draft EIS. The Board will not make a final decision on the project to be built until after publication of the Final EIS, anticipated in 2024.

Alternatives for consideration

The alternatives below were evaluated in the *West Seattle and Ballard Link Extensions Draft Environmental Impact Statement* (January 2022) and can be considered by the Board for confirmation or modification of the preferred alternative(s). At the time the Sound Transit Board identified alternatives for study in the Draft EIS (in Motion Nos. M2019-51 and M2019-104), some alternatives were anticipated to require third-party funding based on early cost estimates. The asterisk (*) identifies these alternatives and the alternatives that would only connect to these alternatives in adjacent segments.

Interbay/Ballard

Preferred Alternative

- Elevated 14th Avenue (IBB-1a) – The alignment crosses over West Dravus Steet, curving northeast to Interbay Station; continuing northeast over the West Emerson Street interchange and over Salmon Bay on a high-level fixed-span bridge on the east side of the Ballard Bridge. The bridge over Salmon Bay would have a clearance of approximately 136 feet; however, the height of the bridge could be adjusted through coordination with the United States Coast Guard. Elevated guideway would continue north within the 14th Avenue Northwest right-of-way, transitioning to the east edge of the road before Northwest Market Street. The Interbay Station would be elevated just north of West Dravus Street between the railroad tracks and 17th Avenue West. The Ballard Station would be elevated and on the east side of the 14th Avenue Northwest, straddling Northwest Market Street.

Preferred Alternative with Third-Party Funding

- Tunnel 14th Avenue (IBB-2a)* – The guideway would cross under West Dravus Street and enter a retained cut before the Interbay Station; entering a tunnel portal east of Thorndyke Avenue West, traveling under Salmon Bay to 14th Avenue Northwest. The tunnel would continue north to the Ballard Station. The Interbay Station would be in a retained cut north of West Dravus Street, between 17th Avenue West and Thorndyke Avenue West. The Ballard Station would be in a tunnel under 14th Avenue Northwest and Northwest Market Street.
- Tunnel 15th Avenue Station Option (IBB-2b)* – Similar to the Tunnel 14th Avenue Alternative until heading north under Salmon Bay, just north of West Nickerson Street, continuing in a tunnel east of 15th Avenue Northwest to the Ballard Station. The Interbay Station would be the same as the Tunnel 14th Avenue Alternative. The Ballard Station would be in a tunnel east of 15th Avenue Northwest and south of Northwest Market Street.

Other DEIS alternatives

- Elevated 14th Avenue Alignment Option (from Prospect Station/15th Avenue) (IBB-1b) – Similar to the Elevated 14th Avenue Alternative, except the alignment would start north of the Interbay Station, extending northeast of the intersection of 15th Avenue West and West Emerson Street on elevated guideway, connecting to the 14th Avenue bridge over Salmon Bay. The height of the bridge could be adjusted through coordination with the United States Coast Guard. The Interbay Station would be the same as the Elevated 15th Avenue Alternative. The Ballard Station would be the same as the Elevated 14th Avenue Alternative.
- Elevated 15th Avenue – Elevated guideway at West Barrett Street in the median of 15th Avenue West, continuing to the Interbay Station; crossing to the west side of 15th Avenue West. The elevated guideway would continue over the West Emerson Street interchange, crossing the eastern edge of Fishermen's Terminal before crossing Salmon Bay on a moveable bridge west of the Ballard Bridge. The bridge over Salmon Bay would have a clearance of approximately 70 feet when closed; however, the height of the bridge could be adjusted through coordination with the United States Coast Guard. The alternative would continue north to an elevated Ballard Station on the south side of Northwest Market Street. The Interbay Station would be elevated above 15th Avenue

West, straddling West Dravus Street. The Ballard Station would be elevated above the east edge of 15th Avenue Northwest.

South Interbay

Preferred Alternative

- Galer Street Station/Central Interbay – Alignment exits the downtown tunnel at West Republican Street and would continue along Elliott Avenue West to an elevated Smith Cove Station. The elevated guideway would cross over the Magnolia Bridge before continuing north between the BNSF Railway tracks and the Interbay Golf Center and Interbay Athletic Complex. The Smith Cove Station would be elevated above the West Galer Street bridge.

Other DEIS alternatives

- Prospect Street Station/15th Avenue – Alignment exits the downtown tunnel at West Republican Street and would continue elevated along Elliott Avenue West to an elevated Smith Cove Station. The elevated guideway would continue northeast and then transition to a retained cut along the western edge of the Southwest Queen Anne Greenbelt. It would then transition to elevated guideway in the middle of 15th Avenue West. The Smith Cove Station would be elevated on the east side of Elliott Avenue West, north of Kinnear Park and West Prospect Street.
- Prospect Street Station/Central Interbay – Alignment runs in a retained cut after exiting the downtown tunnel at a portal east of Elliott Avenue West near West Prospect Street, at the north end of Kinnear Park; continuing north to a Smith Cove Station. The guideway would continue north in a retained cut along the edge of the Southwest Queen Anne Greenbelt; transitioning to elevated guideway near West Howe Street, crossing 15th Avenue West, and traveling northwest along the northern side of West Armory Way. It would continue north along the western edge of Interbay Golf Center and Interbay Athletic Complex and then continue over West Dravus Street. The Smith Cove Station would be in a retained cut north of West Prospect Street.

Downtown

Preferred Alternative

- 5th/Harrison – Tunnel alignment generally under 5th Avenue and Westlake Avenue to Harrison Street, heading west under Harrison Street and Republican Street. Includes a Midtown Station under 5th Avenue between Columbia Street and Madison Street; a Westlake Station under 5th Avenue between Pike Street and Pine Street; a Denny Station under Westlake Avenue between Denny Way and Lenora Street; a South Lake Union Station under Harrison Street, between Dexter Avenue North and Aurora Avenue North; and a Seattle Center Station under Republican Street on the west side of Seattle Center.

Other DEIS alternatives

- 6th/Mercer– Tunnel alignment under 6th Avenue and Terry Avenue to Mercer Street, heading west on the north side of Mercer Street. Includes a Midtown Station under 6th Avenue between Spring Street and Seneca Street; a Westlake Station under 6th Avenue between Olive Way and Pine Street; a Denny Station under Terry Avenue North between Denny Way and John Street; a South Lake Union Station north of Mercer Street between Aurora Avenue North and Taylor Avenue North;

and a Seattle Center Station under Mercer Street between Warren Avenue North and 1st Avenue North.

Chinatown/International District

Preferred Alternative

- No preferred alternative was identified in this segment

Other DEIS alternatives

- 4th Shallow – At-grade alignment east of the existing light rail line, entering a tunnel between Edgar Martinez Drive South and South Royal Brougham Way; heading northwest to be under 4th Avenue South to a new International District/Chinatown Station. From the station, the tunnel alignment would continue north under 4th Avenue South and then transition to follow 5th Avenue or 6th Avenue in the Downtown Segment. The new International District/Chinatown Station would be under 4th Avenue South, west of the existing International District/Chinatown Station. The station platform would be approximately 80 feet deep. An underground connection would be provided to the southbound platform at the existing station. The 4th Avenue South Viaduct would be demolished and reconstructed to accommodate construction of this station. The Stadium Station on the existing light rail line would be removed and rebuilt to accommodate construction of this alternative.
- 4th Avenue Deep Station Option (CID-1b)* – Similar to the 4th Avenue Shallow Alternative, except the at-grade guideway would begin slightly farther east of the existing Link light rail line. The new International District/Chinatown Station would be under 4th Avenue South, west of the existing International District/Chinatown Station. An underground connection would be provided to the southbound platform at the existing station. The tunnel and station would be about 190 feet deep. The 4th Avenue South Viaduct would be demolished and reconstructed to accommodate construction of this station.
- 5th Avenue Shallow (CID-2a) and 5th Avenue Shallow (CID-2a) Diagonal Station Configuration – At-grade alignment east of the existing light rail line, entering a tunnel in the vicinity of South Massachusetts Street. The tunnel would continue north beneath 6th Avenue South and then transition to under 5th Avenue South near Seattle Boulevard South, east of the existing International District/Chinatown Station. There is also a diagonal station configuration where the tunnel would be under 6th Avenue South and transition to 5th Avenue South between South Weller Street and South Jackson Street. The station platform for the diagonal station configuration would be between 5th Avenue South and 6th Avenue South. From the station, the tunnel would continue north to James Street, either staying under 5th Avenue or transitioning to be under 6th Avenue in the Downtown Segment. The new International District/Chinatown Station would be under 5th Avenue South, east of the existing International District/Chinatown Station. An underground connection would be provided to the northbound platform at the existing station. The northbound station platform would be stacked over the southbound station platform and would be approximately 90 feet deep (to the lower platform). The station platform for the diagonal station configuration would be approximately 115 feet.
- 5th Avenue Deep Station Option (CID-2b) – Similar to the 5th Avenue Shallow Alternative, except with a deeper tunnel and station. The new International District/Chinatown Station would be under 5th Avenue South, east of the existing International District/Chinatown Station. An underground

connection would be provided to the northbound platform at the existing station. The tunnel and station would be about 180 feet deep.

SODO

Preferred Alternative

- At-Grade (SODO-1a) –The West Seattle Link Extension would begin just north of the existing SODO Station and travel at-grade west of and parallel to the existing Link light rail line in the SODO Busway. It would continue south at-grade under South Lander Street, which would be reconstructed as an overpass over the new and existing light rail. It would transition to an elevated guideway south of South Lander Street.

The Ballard Link Extension would permanently connect the West Seattle Link Extension tracks north of the SODO Station to the existing Link light rail line. The connection would begin north of the new SODO Station and continue north, in a retained cut under South Holgate Street, which would be reconstructed as an overpass over the new and existing light rail.

The new SODO Station (constructed as part of the West Seattle Link Extension) would be at-grade, immediately west of the existing SODO Station.

- At-Grade (SODO-1a) Staggered Configuration – Follows the same alignment as the At-Grade Alternative. The new SODO Station would have a staggered station configuration that was developed to avoid property owned by the United States Postal Service at 4th Avenue South and South Lander Street. The staggered station configuration features a narrowed center platform and staggered side platforms, with the southbound platform shifted slightly north so that it is not on the Post Office property.

Other DEIS alternatives

- At-Grade South Station Option (SODO-1b) – Follows the same alignment as the At-Grade Alternative. The new SODO Station configuration would be at-grade west of and 200 feet south of the existing at-grade SODO Station, just north of South Lander Street. The existing SODO Station would be relocated 200 feet south of its current location, adjacent to the new SODO Station. The guideway would continue north under the new roadway overpass of South Holgate Street.
- Mixed Profile (SODO-2) –The West Seattle Link Extension would begin just north of the existing SODO Station and travel at-grade west of and parallel to the existing Link light rail line in the SODO Busway. The guideway would transition to an elevated profile at South Walker Street and continue south over South Lander Street. The SODO Busway would be relocated to the west of the new rail line.

The Ballard Link Extension would permanently connect the West Seattle Link Extension tracks north of the SODO Station to the existing Link light rail line. The connection would begin north of the new SODO Station and continue north, at-grade under South Holgate Street, which would be reconstructed as an overpass over the new and existing light rail.

The new SODO Station (constructed as part of the West Seattle Link Extension) would be elevated north of South Lander Street, west of and 200 feet south of the existing SODO Station. The existing

SODO Station would be relocated 200 feet south of its current location, adjacent to the new SODO Station.

Duwamish

Preferred Alternative

- South Crossing (DUW-1a) – Elevated guideway along the west side of the existing light rail line, south from South Forest Street; continuing southwest to cross over to the south side of the Spokane Street Bridge and the West Seattle Bridge. The guideway would continue west and to the south side of the West Seattle Bridge, crossing over the Duwamish Waterway and Harbor Island on a new high-level fixed bridge. The guideway would then cross the northern edge of Pigeon Point in a combination of elevated guideway and retained cut-and-fill; turning southwest on an elevated structure that follows Delridge Way Southwest.

Other DEIS alternatives

- South Edge Crossing Alignment Option (DUW-1b) – Same as the South Crossing Alternative except the guideway would cross the Duwamish Waterway at a location farther south, over the southern edge of Harbor Island.
- North Crossing (DUW-2) – Elevated guideway along the west side of the existing light rail line south from South Forest Street; continuing west on a new high-level fixed bridge north of the existing West Seattle Bridge, crossing the West Duwamish Waterway. The guideway would cross over the West Seattle Bridge and associated ramps, continuing south of the west side of Delridge Way Southwest.

Delridge

Preferred Alternative

- Dakota Street Station (DEL-1a) – Elevated guideway along the west side of Delridge Way Southwest (except at Southwest Andover Street); continuing south to an elevated station; turning to the west and crossing to the south side of the Southwest Genesee Street right-of-way, north of the West Seattle Golf Course. The Delridge Station would be elevated south of Southwest Dakota Street, oriented southwest-northeast.

Preferred Alternative with Third-Party Funding

- Dakota Street Station Lower Height (DEL-2a)* – Elevated guideway along the west side of Delridge Way Southwest (except at Southwest Andover Street); continuing south to an elevated station; turning to the west and crossing to the south side of the Southwest Genesee Street right-of-way, north of the West Seattle Golf Course, with a tunnel portal for connecting to tunnel alternatives in the West Seattle Junction Segment in the northwest corner of the West Seattle Golf Course, south of Southwest Genesee Street and east of 31st Avenue Southwest. The Delridge Station would be an elevated station south of Southwest Dakota Street, oriented southwest-northeast.

Other DEIS alternatives

- Dakota Street Station North Alignment Option (DEL-1b) – Similar to the Dakota Street Station Alternative (Preferred Alternative) except alignment would shift to the north side of Southwest Genesee Street west of 28th Avenue Southwest. Dakota Street Station Lower Height North Alignment Option (DEL-2b)* – Similar to the Dakota Street Station Lower Height Alternative

(Preferred Alternative with Third-Party Funding), except alignment would shift to the north side of Southwest Genesee Street west of 28th Avenue Southwest, with a tunnel portal north of Southwest Genesee Street, between Southwest Avalon Way and 30th Avenue Southwest.

- Delridge Way Station (DEL-3) – Elevated guideway along Delridge Way Southwest to the station, turning west and crossing to the south side of the Southwest Genesee Street right-of-way, north of the West Seattle Golf Course and continuing west along the south edge of Southwest Genesee Street. The Delridge Station would be elevated in the middle of Delridge Way Southwest, north of Southwest Dakota Street.
- Delridge Way Station Lower Height (DEL-4)* – Similar to the Delridge Way Station Alternative, except at a lower height to connect to tunnel alternatives in the West Seattle Junction Segment.
- Andover Street Station (DEL-5) – Elevated guideway along the west side of Delridge Way Southwest, north of Southwest Andover Street; continuing west along Southwest Andover Street, then south along Southwest Avalon Way. The elevated guideway would continue south along Southwest Avalon Way, turning west on the north side of Southwest Genesee Street. The Delridge Station would be elevated north of Southwest Andover Street and west of Delridge Way Southwest in a northeast-southwest orientation.
- Andover Street Station Lower Height (DEL-6)* – Elevated guideway along the west side of Delridge Way Southwest, north of Southwest Andover Street; continuing west along Southwest Andover Street. The elevated guideway would cross over Southwest Avalon Way and turn south in the vicinity of 32nd Avenue Southwest to travel south along the east side of the West Seattle Bridge connection to Fauntleroy Way Southwest, transitioning from elevated into a retained cut. Near Southwest Genesee Street, the guideway would turn west, passing below Southwest Genesee Street. The Delridge Station would be the same as the Andover Street Station alternative.

West Seattle Junction

Preferred Alternative

- Elevated 41st/42nd Avenue Station (WSJ-1) – Elevated guideway along the south side of Southwest Genesee Street between 31st Avenue Southwest and Fauntleroy Way Southwest; turning southwest on the west side of Fauntleroy Way southwest, turning south in the vicinity of 41st Avenue Southwest and Southwest Alaska Street and continues south to Southwest Hudson Street; ends on the west side of 42nd Avenue Southwest with tail track south of the Alaska Junction Station. The Avalon Station would be elevated along the south side of Southwest Genesee Street, east of 35th Avenue SW. The Alaska Junction Station would be elevated between 41st Avenue Southwest and 42nd Avenue Southwest, south of Southwest Alaska Street.
- Elevated Fauntleroy Way Station (WSJ-2) – Elevated guideway along the south side of Southwest Genesee Street between 31st Avenue Southwest and Fauntleroy Way Southwest. The alignment would head southwest on Fauntleroy Way Southwest and continue along the west side of Fauntleroy Way Southwest. The guideway would cross to the east side of Fauntleroy Way Southwest north of Southwest Oregon Street. Elevated tail tracks would begin south of the Alaska Junction Station and end when the Fauntleroy Way Southwest right-of-way just past Southwest Edmunds Street. The Avalon Station would be elevated along the south side of Southwest

Genesee Street and east of 35th Avenue Southwest. The Alaska Junction Station would be elevated southeast of Fauntleroy Way Southwest straddling Southwest Alaska Street.

Preferred Alternative with Third-Party Funding

- Tunnel 41st Avenue Station (WSJ-3a)* – Tunnel alignment under Southwest Genesee Street heading west from 31st Avenue Southwest, then curving to the southwest between 37th Avenue Southwest and 41st Avenue Southwest, ending in the vicinity of Southwest Hudson Street, with the tail track under 41st Avenue Southwest. The Avalon Station would be in a tunnel beneath Southwest Genesee Street and Fauntleroy Way Southwest. The Alaska Junction Station would be in a tunnel beneath 41st Avenue Southwest and Southwest Alaska Street.
- Tunnel 42nd Avenue Station Option (WSJ-3b)* – Tunnel alignment under Southwest Genesee Street heading west from 31st Avenue Southwest, then curving to the southwest between 37th Avenue Southwest and 42nd Avenue Southwest, ending in the vicinity of Southwest Hudson Street, with the tail track under 42nd Avenue Southwest. The Avalon Station would be in a tunnel beneath Southwest Genesee Street and Fauntleroy Way Southwest. The Alaska Junction Station would be in a tunnel beneath 42nd Avenue Southwest and Southwest Alaska Street.

Other DEIS alternatives

- Short Tunnel 41st Avenue Station (WSJ-4)* – Elevated guideway along the south side of Southwest Genesee Street from 31st Avenue Southwest to the west side of Fauntleroy Way Southwest, continuing along the west side of Fauntleroy Way Southwest on elevated guideway before transitioning to at-grade near 37th Avenue Southwest. The guideway would turn west near Southwest Oregon Street and transition into a tunnel with a portal in the vicinity of Southwest Oregon Street and 38th Avenue Southwest. The tunnel would turn south and end south of Southwest Hudson Street, with a tail track under 41st Avenue Southwest. The Avalon Station would be elevated along the south side of Southwest Genesee Street and east of 35th Avenue Southwest. The Alaska Junction Station would be in a tunnel beneath 41st Avenue Southwest, south of Southwest Alaska Street.
- Medium Tunnel 41st Avenue Station (WSJ-5)* – Tunnel alignment begins in a retained cut south of Southwest Yancy Street and follows the east side of the West Seattle Bridge connection to Southwest Genesee Street, entering into a tunnel at Southwest Genesee Street and 37th Avenue Southwest and curving southwest west of 37th Avenue Southwest to 41st Avenue Southwest to terminate at Southwest Hudson Street with a tail track under 41st Avenue Southwest. The Avalon Station would be in a retained cut south of Southwest Genesee Street, beneath Fauntleroy Way Southwest. The Alaska Junction Station would be in a tunnel beneath 41st Avenue Southwest and Southwest Alaska Street.

Background

The West Seattle and Ballard Link Extensions project is part of the Sound Transit 3 Plan (ST3) of regional transit system investments, approved for funding by voters in the region in 2016. The Project will provide fast, reliable light rail connections to dense residential and job centers throughout the region and add a new downtown Seattle light rail tunnel to provide efficient operating capacity for the entire regional system. It consists of two separate Link light rail extensions: one to West Seattle and the other to Ballard. The extension to West Seattle will operate from downtown Seattle to West Seattle's Alaska Junction neighborhood with four stations and will eventually connect to Everett Link. The Ballard extension will operate from downtown Seattle to Ballard's Market Street area with nine stations and will include a new rail-only tunnel from the Chinatown/International District to South Lake Union and Seattle Center/Uptown. It will eventually connect with the Tacoma Dome Link Extension.

The project development process has three phases. Phase 1 included alternatives development, environmental scoping and identification of a preferred alternative(s) and other alternatives. Phase 2 includes the preparation of a Draft EIS and conceptual engineering of a preferred alternative(s) and other alternatives as identified through alternatives development. Phase 3 will include the preparation of a Final EIS, including responses to public and agency comments on the Draft EIS, and Preliminary Engineering of the Preferred Alternative.

To maintain eligibility for potential federal funding, the project will comply with the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). As the public agency proposing the project, Sound Transit is required to comply with the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA). The FTA, as the federal lead agency under NEPA, and Sound Transit, as the state lead agency under SEPA, has determined that the proposed project may have probable significant adverse environmental impacts. To satisfy both NEPA and SEPA requirements, the agencies are preparing a combined NEPA/SEPA EIS for the project.

Sound Transit and the FTA published a Draft EIS for the West Seattle and Ballard Link Extensions on January 28, 2022, starting a 90-day public comment period that ended on April 28, 2022. Hard copies of the Draft EIS were available for public viewing at public libraries and community-based organizations in the project area. Digital copies of the Draft EIS were also available on Sound Transit's website and online open house. One in-person and four virtual public meetings/hearings were conducted during the comment period. Four Community Advisory Groups organized by geographic area met approximately monthly during the comment period, providing another forum to share information and collaborate with community members around benefits, issues, and tradeoffs of the project. Numerous community briefings, office hours and property owner webinars were also held during the comment period to encourage public input. In addition, Sound Transit hosted or attended tours and community workshops focused on station areas, including the Chinatown/International District and Seattle Center stations. Comments were accepted by mail, email, online and hardcopy comment forms, transcribed phone messages and via a court reporter at the public hearings. The Board has received copies of the *West Seattle and Ballard Extensions Draft Environmental Impact Statement* and the *West Seattle and Ballard Link Extensions Public and Agency Comment Summary Report*, including copies of the nearly 5,200 individual communications (where each communication may contain one more comments) submitted during the comment period.

NEPA requires that Sound Transit identify its Preferred Alternative in the Final EIS (and SEPA also requires the same if the agency has one). In May 2019 (Motion M2019-51), the Board identified preferred alternatives and other alternatives for detailed study in the Draft EIS. This Motion is a statement of the Board's current intent regarding the West Seattle and Ballard Link Extensions project based on the Board's review of the Draft EIS findings, comments from Tribes and Tribal organizations, local and regulatory agencies, businesses and business organizations, community and arts organizations, and individuals during the comment period; it is not a final decision. The Board will make a final decision on the West Seattle and Ballard Link Extensions project to be built, including the route and station locations, after publication of the Final EIS. In advancing the West Seattle and Ballard Link Extensions, the evaluation of potential refinements will be conducted consistent with the project purpose and need (*West Seattle and Ballard Link Extensions Draft Environmental Impact Statement, Chapter 1, January 2022*), which builds upon the criteria established in the ST3 ballot measure (Resolution No. R2016-17) and the five core principles identified in both Motion No. M2020-36 and Motion No. M2020-37 (completing the spine, connecting centers, ridership potential, socio-economic equity, and advancing logically beyond the spine).

Consistent with the System Expansion Implementation Plan (SEIP), at the beginning of the project development process in 2017, Sound Transit and the City of Seattle finalized a partnering agreement specific to the project, which the Seattle City Council and the Sound Transit Board later adopted. The Partnering Agreement notes that "the parties acknowledge the importance of meeting Project schedule milestones and objectives in order to begin light rail operations on time. The Partnering Agreement further notes that "In cases where the City or other parties have an interest in changing Project scope

beyond that allowed under Sound Transit's financial plan, the City will collaborate with Sound Transit to identify reductions in scope or risk elsewhere on the project or provide increased funding through local contributions to finance the requested change." This requirement for local contributions for substantial scope expansions is mirrored in the partnering agreements Sound Transit has entered into with several other municipalities in the region. In May 2019 (Motion M2019-51), the Board built on this approach, and established a process outlining that after publication of the Draft EIS and receipt of public comment, if the City of Seattle or other parties had an interest in expanding scope beyond that allowed under Sound Transit's financial plan, identification as the preferred alternative would be contingent on the identification of third-party funding to cover the additional cost of delivering the project.

As part of the alternatives development process, Sound Transit developed comparative estimates to inform the evaluation of alternatives. Estimates were based on limited conceptual design. As design has advanced through the Draft EIS process, estimates have been updated and have changed. Estimates will continue to be updated as design advances and new information becomes available and will inform future discussions related to additional project scope elements and associated local funding contributions.

In 2020, the ST2 and ST3 Plan improvements were projected to become unaffordable due to growth in early cost estimate increases resulting in an estimated net shortfall of \$6.5 billion, as of July 2021. When the Plan improvements, or some portion thereof are unaffordable, the ballot measure requires the Board to use legally available funds to implement projects, or portions thereof, that best achieve the plan objectives after consideration of the ST2 and ST3 Plans and financial policies. As a result, in August 2021 (Resolution No. R2021-05), the Board established a flexible and accountable framework to implement ST2 and ST3 projects not yet in construction as close as possible to the dates promised to the voters that (1) allows project work to proceed right away within the confines of an affordable financial plan; (2) prioritizes maintaining project schedules through an accountable and transparent process to update the agency's revenue assumptions and financing approach and address cost increases at the project and program level; and (3) positions the agency to react quickly as new information becomes available, particularly on the revenue side, and provides greater oversight for the Board and transparency to the public through oversight mechanisms.

In order to improve projected financial capacity, reduce project affordability gaps and deliver projects in a timely manner, Resolution No. R2021-05 directed the chief executive officer to:

- Pursue expanded financial capacity to enable timely delivery of voter approved plans including, but not limited to, state funds, additional federal funds, reduced borrowing costs through federal and other sources, increased debt capacity, and other new sources such as tax increment financing partnerships;
- Develop and implement a cost savings work plan, to be overseen by the System Expansion Committee with regular quarterly reports, for projects and programs currently in development which will identify a menu of options to address project level affordability gaps;
- Identify opportunities to reduce cost and planning delays, including creating an ad-hoc technical advisory group of several outside experts to meet for several months with the mission of looking for all possible ways to accelerate system expansion, highlight schedule risk including current project delivery timelines, and identify opportunities to mitigate risk, streamline third party negotiations, reduce permitting delays and expedite the delivery of said projects; and
- Engage project stakeholders in intensive discussions to address the trade-offs between project scope, schedule, and new financial resources to inform Board decision-making on project schedules.

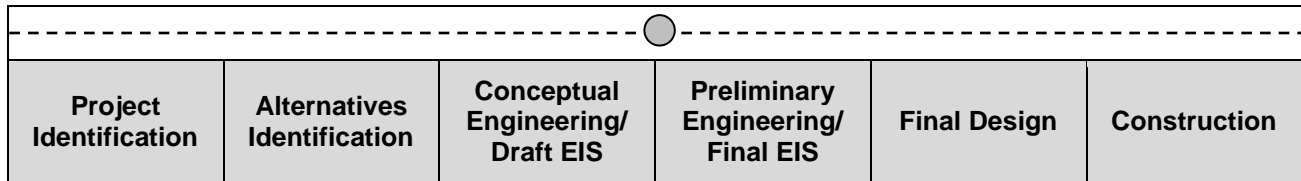
Under the adopted realignment plan, the funding likely to be available will inform preliminary engineering design, including contract packaging and phasing options. The realignment financial plan provides \$14.1 billion (2022\$) for the West Seattle and Ballard Link Extensions project and at this time is the funding likely to be available for the project. At the project to be built milestone, a full funding plan must be in

place to determine a timeline for final design, right-of-way acquisition, and planned construction that will not impact the ability to deliver other system expansion projects on the Affordable Schedule.

On July 7, 2022, staff presented an example of a modified preferred alternative to the Sound Transit Board Executive Committee. The example modified preferred alternative was intended to assist in Board discussions regarding a preferred alternative.

On July 12, 2022, the Seattle City Council adopted Resolution 32055 relating to Sound Transit; providing recommendations to the Sound Transit Board as to the selection of the Preferred Alternative for the West Seattle and Ballard Link Extensions project to be studied in the Final Environmental Impact Statement.

Project status



Projected completion date for Preliminary Engineering/Final EIS: 2024

Project scope, schedule and budget summary are located on page 124 of the May 2022 Agency Progress Report.

Fiscal information

The current cost estimate for the West Seattle and Ballard Link Extensions project is \$14.131 billion in 2022\$ and is affordable within the Agency’s Finance Plan by 2039. Staff are managing the project toward the Target Schedule of 2037, while working to close an affordability gap of \$2.2 billion in 2022\$. This action is consistent with the schedule and financial plan adopted by the Board in Resolution No. R2021-05 and does not impact the affordability of any other system expansion project. The financial plan impact of delaying the advancement of Preliminary Engineering in those areas requiring further study is negligible.

Disadvantaged and small business participation

Not applicable to this action.

Public involvement

Sound Transit has engaged stakeholders, the public and various agencies at the local, regional, state and federal levels to solicit early and continued feedback since project development was initiated in 2017. The main focus during the Draft EIS phase was on engagement activities leading up to and during the formal Draft EIS public comment period, which was held for 90 days from January 28 to April 28, 2022. Activities included:

- Four Draft EIS virtual public meetings/hearings and an in-person public open house event held in the International District/Chinatown Station plaza. Public notification was provided through a variety of methods including a project mailer translated into four languages and sent to over 130,000 residents and businesses in the project area, six project update emails sent to over 11,000 email addresses subscribed to the project newsletter, ongoing ad campaigns with traditional, social, and in-language ethnic media; press releases; radio; social media posts; online community calendars; and a notification through the project website. Sound Transit also

displayed over 1,200 posters, translated into six languages, at community gathering places throughout the project area. Over 400 people attended the four virtual public meetings/hearings.

- An Online Open House website, translated into 4 languages and a primary tool for accessing the Draft EIS, engaging the project, and providing public comments, was accessed by over 19,500 unique individuals during the comment period.
- Four virtual Community Advisory Group meetings that were livestreamed and recorded for the public to view.
- 83 briefings, meetings, workshops and tours with community, arts, business organizations and groups.
- 77 fair, festival, and other tabling events, door-to-door business and peer-to-peer outreach, and other information sharing opportunities
- Property owner notification letters mailed to approximately 1,400 potentially affected property owners, provided 19 virtual property owner group webinars prior to the Draft EIS publication and another 15 during the comment period, for a total of 34 webinars. Additional follow-up, one-on-one or small group conversations through emails, phone calls, in-person, and virtual meetings, as well as office hour sessions. 59 individual property owner meetings were also conducted.
- In partnership with the City of Seattle's Department of Neighborhoods Community Liaisons program, worked with 11 Community Liaisons who provided supportive outreach to environmental justice communities.
- Provided peer-reviewed translated materials and presentations online and at in-person events. Project materials, including the Online Open House website, printed project update materials, project folios, the Draft EIS Readers Guide, and the Executive Summary of the Draft EIS were translated into Traditional Chinese, Simplified Chinese, Vietnamese, and Spanish. With strategic guidance from community organizations and Community Liaisons, Sound Transit translated select additional materials in Somali, Korean, and Khmer.
- Proactively provided language interpretation at events in the Chinatown-International District, the Delridge Corridor, and at select engagement activities corridor-wide. simultaneous interpretation was provided during the virtual public meetings/hearings focused on Chinatown-International District, SODO, West Seattle, Duwamish segments and at the in-person open house event.

Sound Transit worked in collaboration with the City of Seattle to apply the Racial Equity Toolkit (RET) to the project. The RET informed aspects of the technical evaluation and the focus and extent of engagement, elevating issues and considerations that may affect communities of color and low-income communities. The RET work informed additional engagement efforts, particularly around the Chinatown-International District station area and Delridge corridor. RET findings were captured in a Racial Equity Toolkit Report: Environmental Review Phase (July 2022) and shared with Boardmembers and the public.

Time constraints

A delay in confirming or modifying the Preferred Alternative to be studied in the Final EIS would delay the start of the Final EIS and Preliminary Engineering and subsequent publication of the Final EIS.

Prior Board/Committee actions

Motion No. M2019-104: Recommended additional alternatives for study in the West Seattle and Ballard Link Extensions Draft Environmental Impact Statement.

Motion No. M2019-51: Identified the preferred alternative(s) and other alternatives for study in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the West Seattle and Ballard Link Extensions project.

Motion No. M2017-161: Authorized the chief executive officer to execute a Partnering Agreement with the City of Seattle for the West Seattle and Ballard Link Extensions Project.

Resolution No. R2017-32: Amended the Adopted 2017 Budget to create the West Seattle and Ballard Link Extensions Project by (a) establishing the Project Allocation to Date through the completion of the Preliminary Engineering Phase in the amount of \$285,896,000 and (b) establishing the 2017 Annual Budget in the amount of \$4,150,000; (2) authorized the project to advance through Gate 1 within Sound Transit's Phase Gate Process; and (3) established the name of the project as the West Seattle and Ballard Link Extensions Project.

Environmental review – KH 7/5/22

Legal review – DB 7/22/22

Motion No. M2022-57

A motion of the Board of the Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority to confirm or modify the preferred light rail route and station locations for the West Seattle and Ballard Link Extensions Final Environmental Impact Statement and requesting further studies in some areas to inform potential additional future Board action to confirm or modify the Preferred Alternative.

Background

The West Seattle and Ballard Link Extensions project is part of the Sound Transit 3 Plan (ST3) of regional transit system investments, approved for funding by voters in the region in 2016. The Project will provide fast, reliable light rail connections to dense residential and job centers throughout the region and add a new downtown Seattle light rail tunnel to provide efficient operating capacity for the entire regional system. It consists of two separate Link light rail extensions: one to West Seattle and the other to Ballard. The extension to West Seattle will operate from downtown Seattle to West Seattle's Alaska Junction neighborhood with four stations and will eventually connect to Everett Link. The Ballard extension will operate from downtown Seattle to Ballard's Market Street area with nine stations and will include a new rail-only tunnel from the Chinatown/International District to South Lake Union and Seattle Center/Uptown. It will eventually connect with the Tacoma Dome Link Extension.

The project development process has three phases. Phase 1 included alternatives development, environmental scoping and identification of a preferred alternative(s) and other alternatives. Phase 2 includes the preparation of a Draft EIS and conceptual engineering of a preferred alternative(s) and other alternatives as identified through alternatives development. Phase 3 will include the preparation of a Final EIS, including responses to public and agency comments on the Draft EIS, and Preliminary Engineering of the Preferred Alternative.

To maintain eligibility for potential federal funding, the project will comply with the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). As the public agency proposing the project, Sound Transit is required to comply with the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA). The FTA, as the federal lead agency under NEPA, and Sound Transit, as the state lead agency under SEPA, has determined that the proposed project may have probable significant adverse environmental impacts. To satisfy both NEPA and SEPA requirements, the agencies are preparing a combined NEPA/SEPA EIS for the project.

Sound Transit and the FTA published a Draft EIS for the West Seattle and Ballard Link Extensions on January 28, 2022, starting a 90-day public comment period that ended on April 28, 2022. Hard copies of the Draft EIS were available for public viewing at public libraries and community-based organizations in the project area. Digital copies of the Draft EIS were also available on Sound Transit's website and online open house. One in-person and four virtual public meetings/hearings were conducted during the comment period. Four Community Advisory Groups organized by geographic area met approximately monthly during the comment period, providing another forum to share information and collaborate with community members around benefits, issues, and tradeoffs of the project. Numerous community briefings, office hours and property owner webinars were also held during the comment period to encourage public input. In addition, Sound Transit hosted or attended tours and community workshops focused on station areas, including the Chinatown/International District and Seattle Center stations. Comments were accepted by mail, email, online and hardcopy comment forms, transcribed phone messages and via a court reporter at the public hearings. The Board has received copies of the *West Seattle and Ballard Extensions Draft Environmental Impact Statement* and the *West Seattle and Ballard Link Extensions Public and Agency Comment Summary Report*, including copies of the nearly 5,200

individual communications (where each communication may contain one more comments) submitted during the comment period.

NEPA requires that Sound Transit identify its Preferred Alternative in the Final EIS (and SEPA also requires the same if the agency has one). In May 2019 (Motion M2019-51), the Board identified preferred alternatives and other alternatives for detailed study in the Draft EIS. This Motion is a statement of the Board's current intent regarding the West Seattle and Ballard Link Extensions project based on the Board's review of the Draft EIS findings, comments from Tribes and Tribal organizations, local and regulatory agencies, businesses and business organizations, community and arts organizations, and individuals during the comment period; it is not a final decision. The Board will make a final decision on the West Seattle and Ballard Link Extensions project to be built, including the route and station locations, after publication of the Final EIS. In advancing the West Seattle and Ballard Link Extensions, the evaluation of potential refinements will be conducted consistent with the project purpose and need (*West Seattle and Ballard Link Extensions Draft Environmental Impact Statement, Chapter 1, January 2022*), which builds upon the criteria established in the ST3 ballot measure (Resolution No. R2016-17) and the five core principles identified in both Motion No. M2020-36 and Motion No. M2020-37 (completing the spine, connecting centers, ridership potential, socio-economic equity, and advancing logically beyond the spine).

Consistent with the System Expansion Implementation Plan (SEIP), at the beginning of the project development process in 2017, Sound Transit and the City of Seattle finalized a partnering agreement specific to the project, which the Seattle City Council and the Sound Transit Board later adopted. The Partnering Agreement notes that "the parties acknowledge the importance of meeting Project schedule milestones and objectives in order to begin light rail operations on time. The Partnering Agreement further notes that "In cases where the City or other parties have an interest in changing Project scope beyond that allowed under Sound Transit's financial plan, the City will collaborate with Sound Transit to identify reductions in scope or risk elsewhere on the project or provide increased funding through local contributions to finance the requested change." This requirement for local contributions for substantial scope expansions is mirrored in the partnering agreements Sound Transit has entered into with several other municipalities in the region. In May 2019 (Motion M2019-51), the Board built on this approach, and established a process outlining that after publication of the Draft EIS and receipt of public comment, if the City of Seattle or other parties had an interest in expanding scope beyond that allowed under Sound Transit's financial plan, identification as the preferred alternative would be contingent on the identification of third-party funding to cover the additional cost of delivering the project.

As part of the alternatives development process, Sound Transit developed comparative estimates to inform the evaluation of alternatives. Estimates were based on limited conceptual design. As design has advanced through the Draft EIS process, estimates have been updated and have changed. Estimates will continue to be updated as design advances and new information becomes available and will inform future discussions related to additional project scope elements and associated local funding contributions.

In 2020, the ST2 and ST3 Plan improvements were projected to become unaffordable due to growth in early cost estimate increases resulting in an estimated net shortfall of \$6.5 billion, as of July 2021. When the Plan improvements, or some portion thereof are unaffordable, the ballot measure requires the Board to use legally available funds to implement projects, or portions thereof, that best achieve the plan objectives after consideration of the ST2 and ST3 Plans and financial policies. As a result, in August 2021 (Resolution No. R2021-05), the Board established a flexible and accountable framework to implement ST2 and ST3 projects not yet in construction as close as possible to the dates promised to the voters that (1) allows project work to proceed right away within the confines of an affordable financial plan; (2) prioritizes maintaining project schedules through an accountable and transparent process to update the agency's revenue assumptions and financing approach and address cost increases at the project and program level; and (3) positions the agency to react quickly as new information becomes available, particularly on the revenue side, and provides greater oversight for the Board and transparency to the public through oversight mechanisms.

In order to improve projected financial capacity, reduce project affordability gaps and deliver projects in a timely manner, Resolution No. R2021-05 directed the chief executive officer to:

- Pursue expanded financial capacity to enable timely delivery of voter approved plans including, but not limited to, state funds, additional federal funds, reduced borrowing costs through federal and other sources, increased debt capacity, and other new sources such as tax increment financing partnerships;
- Develop and implement a cost savings work plan, to be overseen by the System Expansion Committee with regular quarterly reports, for projects and programs currently in development which will identify a menu of options to address project level affordability gaps;
- Identify opportunities to reduce cost and planning delays, including creating an ad-hoc technical advisory group of several outside experts to meet for several months with the mission of looking for all possible ways to accelerate system expansion, highlight schedule risk including current project delivery timelines, and identify opportunities to mitigate risk, streamline third party negotiations, reduce permitting delays and expedite the delivery of said projects; and
- Engage project stakeholders in intensive discussions to address the trade-offs between project scope, schedule, and new financial resources to inform Board decision-making on project schedules.

Under the adopted realignment plan, the funding likely to be available will inform preliminary engineering design, including contract packaging and phasing options. The realignment financial plan provides \$14.1 billion (2022\$) for the West Seattle and Ballard Link Extensions project and at this time is the funding likely to be available for the project. At the project to be built milestone, a full funding plan must be in place to determine a timeline for final design, right-of-way acquisition, and planned construction that will not impact the ability to deliver other system expansion projects on the Affordable Schedule.

On July 7, 2022, staff presented an example of a modified preferred alternative to the Sound Transit Board Executive Committee. The example modified preferred alternative was intended to assist in Board discussions regarding a preferred alternative.

On July 12, 2022, the Seattle City Council adopted Resolution 32055 relating to Sound Transit; providing recommendations to the Sound Transit Board as to the selection of the Preferred Alternative for the West Seattle and Ballard Link Extensions project to be studied in the Final Environmental Impact Statement.

Motion

Based on the Board's review of the findings from the *West Seattle and Ballard Link Extensions Draft Environmental Impact Statement* (January 2022); comments from Tribes and Tribal organizations, local and regulatory agencies, businesses and business organizations, community and arts organizations, and individuals during the comment period, and other information developed to date, it is hereby moved by the Board of the Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority that:

West Seattle Link Extension

The Preferred Alternative for the West Seattle Link Extension is the Medium Tunnel 41st Avenue Station (WSJ-5) alternative in the West Seattle Junction segment, the Andover Street Station Lower Height (DEL-6) alternative in the Delridge segment, the South Crossing (DUW-1a) alternative in the Duwamish Segment, and the At-Grade Alternative (SODO-1a) Staggered Station Configuration in the SODO segment. This alternative, if later implemented, is affordable within the realigned financial plan based on current cost estimates and revenue projections, and is consistent with the ST3 Plan,

The Board will also consider the At-Grade South Station Option (SODO 1-b) as a possible Preferred Alternative with future endorsement contingent on resolving with partner agencies federal property acquisition requirements and project funding needs in a manner that does not impact the West Seattle Link Extension schedule. A report for consideration will be provided to the Sound Transit Board no later than September 2022 and a determination will be made at that time as to whether or not it advances as the Preferred Alternative station location in SODO.

These alternatives are further described in the *West Seattle and Ballard Link Extensions Draft Environmental Impact Statement* (January 2022).

Additionally, the Board directs staff to further study the following potential refinements as options to enhance station access, prioritize an integrated and well-designed transfer experience from buses to light rail, and address concerns over potential displacements of organizations serving low-income and communities of color. These studies will also determine potential third party funding needs.

- In the West Seattle Junction segment, explore option to shift a station entrance to 42nd at the Alaska Junction station.
- In the Delridge segment, explore opportunities to provide access north and south of Andover Street at the Delridge station including a pedestrian bridge across Andover Street or shifting the alignment south towards SW Yancy St west of the station.
- In the SODO segment, explore opportunities to enhance access from the platform to S. Lander Street at the SODO station.

Additionally, the Board directs staff to further study the following potential cost savings concept:

- In the West Seattle Junction segment, eliminate the Avalon station.

Ballard Link Extension

In order to consider confirming or modifying the Preferred Alternative, the following studies are requested. The Board directs further study to recognize past harms, minimize displacements and potential loss of cultural identity, conduct additional engagement between community and agency partners, support investment in public spaces, improve experience for riders, and minimize construction impacts and risks. These studies will also determine potential third party funding needs.

- In the Chinatown/International District segment, further study and engagement between community and agency partners focused on the shallow CID station and alignment options will seek to collectively address remaining questions, minimize potential impacts and maximize community benefits through design, mitigation approaches and/or as part of broader partnerships. This work will include exploring how to create an integrated, well-connected hub for all modes of transportation, opportunities to enhance ridership and access, activation and/or modified uses of Union Station and the adjacent plaza, as well as funding and cost savings opportunities. The study should include concepts requested by community and agency partners, including but not limited to work to define a 4th Avenue shallow tunnel option with the goal of maximizing benefits while minimizing costs and impacts.
- In the Downtown segment, explore opportunities to reduce station depths, improve passenger access and experience at all depths under consideration for the Midtown station, and refinements to the Midtown station entrance.
- In the Downtown segment, explore connecting Westlake/5th Avenue station (DT-1) to Denny/Terry station (DT-2) to South Lake Union/Harrison station (DT-1).

- In the Downtown segment, explore opportunities to provide station access from both sides of Denny Street to the Denny/Terry station (DT-2).
- In the Downtown segment, explore connecting South Lake Union/Harrison station (DT-1) to Seattle Center/Mercer station (DT-2) to either north tunnel portal location.
- In the Downtown segment, explore shifting Seattle Center Republican station west.
- In the South Interbay segment, explore shifting tunnel portal south (Mercer).
- In the South Interbay segment, explore opportunities to address concerns with guideway along Elliott Avenue and potential effects to properties in Interbay including option to consolidate Smith Cove and Interbay stations.
- In the Interbay/Ballard segment, further study of pedestrian access improvements across 15th Avenue associated with the Tunnel 14th Avenue Station Option (IBB-2a).
- In the Interbay/Ballard segment, further study of station access and safety, including north and south of Market Street, as well as cost savings opportunities and potential third-party funding needs associated with the Tunnel 15th Avenue Station Option (IBB-2b).

Additionally, the Board directs staff to further study the following potential cost savings concepts:

- In the Downtown segment, potential station entrance refinements at Midtown and Denny stations (shifting entrances into public right of way) and Westlake (consolidating station entrances).
- In the Interbay/Ballard segment, shift Tunnel 14th Avenue alignment.

The results of all further study and public and stakeholder engagement shall be brought back to the Sound Transit Board for review and potential action to confirm or modify the Preferred Alternative. A status report on the studies and public engagement shall be provided to the Board no later than February 2023 including how the refinements and cost savings ideas perform against project screening criteria and their affordability within the realigned financial plan, plus an interim status report in November 2022.

In parallel, the Board requests that the City of Seattle, King County and other potential partners collaborate with Sound Transit to identify potential third party funding sources should the cost of the project from end to end, including potential refinements, exceed the assumptions in the realigned financial plan.

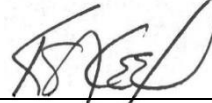
In advancing the West Seattle and Ballard Link Extensions, the evaluation of potential refinements will be conducted consistent with the project purpose and need (*West Seattle and Ballard Link Extensions Draft Environmental Impact Statement, Chapter 1, January 2022*), which builds upon the criteria established in the ST3 ballot measure (Resolution No. R2016-17) and the five core principles identified in both Motion No. M2020-36 and Motion No. M2020-37.

In addition, the Board directs staff to continue public engagement and planning to address other project-wide interests and concerns, as conveyed in comments received during the recent public comment period, including but not limited to: encourage more biking and walking mode share; accommodate future expansion; advance equitable TOD, particularly community-led/driven TOD; design shallower tunnel stations and fast and reliable transit transfers; enhance station accessibility and reliability of vertical conveyances.

This motion also authorizes staff to advance the Final EIS and Preliminary Engineering for the West Seattle Link Extension. Staff is also authorized to advance efforts in support of Final EIS development for the Ballard Link Extension to the extent possible, consistent with above direction regarding the preferred alternatives. This motion also authorizes staff to advance station planning activities and work

to respond to comments received on the Draft EIS. The Board will not make a final decision on the project to be built until after completion of the Final EIS.

APPROVED by the Board of the Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority at a regular meeting thereof held on July 28, 2022.



Kent Keel
Board Chair

ATTEST:



Kathryn Flores
Board Administrator