Ballard Link Extension
Feasibility study of potential additional alternative in South Lake Union

System Expansion Committee
12/14/23

Sound Transit
Why we are here

Motion No. M2023-109
Directing staff to assess the feasibility of an additional alternative in the South Lake Union area for potential inclusion in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Ballard Link Extension

Motion No. M2023-110
Contract modification with HNTB Corporation for the West Seattle and Ballard Link Extensions*

*Contract modification is contingent upon approval of revisions to 2024 Proposed Budget and TIP.
Prior board actions

Motion No. M2023-18 – approved in March 2023
Confirms or modifies the preferred alternative light rail route and station locations for the Ballard Link Extension for additional environmental review, including preparation of a Final Environmental Impact Statement

Motion No. M2023-57 – approved in July 2023
Confirms or modifies the preferred station location for the Denny Station for the Ballard Link Extension Environmental Impact Statement
What we’re currently studying

- Preferred alternative
- Other EIS alternatives
Preferred alternative

Currently in preliminary engineering design
Potential additional alternative

Sketch of newly suggested concept; has not yet been designed
Potential additional alternative

Opportunities

Accommodates two stations serving SLU area

Minimizes effects to Westlake Ave

Avoids utilities at 7th/Harrison
Potential additional alternative

Challenges

- Traffic/access for 5th Ave, MoPop, Memorial Stadium
- Curves/track speeds
- Station depth
- Conflicts with substation & 5th Ave garage
- Transit integration
- Climate Pledge Arena foundations
**Schedule implications**

**Dec 2023:** If Board authorizes feasibility study, would not result in any delay to overall project schedule

**May 2024:** Board considers results of feasibility study

- If Board does not direct further study, no delay to overall project schedule (2039)
- If Board includes the additional alternative in the Draft EIS, projected to cause 10-month delay to overall project schedule (2040)
- If Board modifies preferred alternative, projected to cause between 10-month and 2-year delay to overall project schedule depending on when preferred alternative is modified (2040-2041)
Operating Implications

Further delay to Ballard Link (and associated delay to opening of new downtown tunnel) extends the period during which:

- Trains from SW Everett, Tacoma and Redmond all need to operate through the existing downtown tunnel which will be constrained in capacity

- Trains from West Seattle operate as a shuttle to SODO
Ballard Link Extension: Board approves $0.8M HNTB (preliminary engineering) contract
Thank you.

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