

## West Seattle and Ballard Link Extensions

Fall 2019 Initial Assessments Comment Summary

Oct. 10, 2019

### Overview

In May 2019, the Sound Transit Board identified preferred alternatives and other alternatives to study in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The Board also directed Sound Transit staff to conduct initial assessments on additional route and station options that were suggested during the scoping period, to establish whether further study in the Draft EIS is appropriate.

The results of the initial assessments were shared with the System Expansion Committee on September 12 and then posted online at <https://wsblink.participate.online/> for public review and comment on September 13.

### Process and Outcomes

The Participate.Online site provided an opportunity for visitors to review maps of the alternatives, learn about the initial assessment results and provide feedback from Sept. 13 – Oct. 4, 2019.

Sound Transit received 501 communications on the Participate.Online site and through email (see Appendix). The comments are summarized below and will be shared with Sound Transit’s System Expansion Committee on Oct. 10, 2019 and Board on Oct. 24, 2019.

### Notifications

Sound Transit staff used a variety of tactics to let the public know about the initial assessment results and opportunity to provide feedback.

Event	Location	Schedule
Email update to project listserv	Online	Sept. 5
System Expansion Committee Meeting	Union Station	Sept. 12
Media briefing/update	Union Station	Sept. 12
Email update to project listserv	Online	Sept. 13
Chinatown-ID Night Market	Chinatown-ID	Sept. 14
Magnolia Farmers Market	Magnolia	Sept. 14
Personalized emails to community groups and stakeholders	Online	Sept. 16
Door-to-door flyering	West Seattle	Sept. 17 and 24
Door-to-door flyering	SODO	Sept. 19
Door-to-door flyering	Ballard	Sept. 20
Fishermen’s Fall Festival	Fishermen’s Terminal	Sept. 21
Board of Directors Meeting	Union Station	Sept. 26

Sustainable Ballard Festival	Ballard	Sept. 28
West Seattle Farmers Market	West Seattle	Sept. 29
Email update to project listserv	Online	Oct. 2
Briefings and meetings to community organizations	Various	Ongoing

## What We Heard

### WEST SEATTLE (253 people shared comments)

- **General**

- Some people provided general comments about West Seattle alternatives.
  - Many people expressed interest in tunnel stations.
  - Some people also expressed concern about the cost of tunnel options and support for elevated alternatives, particularly if that means they could be delivered faster.
  - Some people shared their preference for the Delridge station locations already being carried forward in the Draft EIS.
  - Some people noted their preference for alternatives that minimize residential displacement.
  - Some shared interest in serving more neighborhoods within West Seattle, particularly neighborhoods farther south.
  - Others shared feedback on the following topics:
    - Mixed feedback about a guideway going through and/or avoiding the West Seattle Golf Course.
    - Concern about traffic impacts with Delridge station locations.
    - Preference for a guideway north of the West Seattle Bridge.
    - Preference for stations that are lower in height.
    - Preference for stations that could best accommodate bicycle and pedestrian circulation.
    - Mixed feedback regarding business displacement, with people noting preference for displacing businesses over residences and others noting concern about business impacts.
    - Interest in deferring the Avalon station.

- **Yancy/Andover Elevated:**

- Of the comments received, there was mixed feedback about the Yancy/Andover Elevated option.
- Some people liked this option and they included the following reasons:
  - Many felt this option would limit residential displacement.
  - Others included the following reasons:
    - Preference for this option because of the lower cost [compared to Pigeon Point Tunnel] and/or shorter schedule [compared to Pigeon Point Tunnel].
    - Better fit with the busier/denser corridor along Avalon Way SW, with less visual impact in the Youngstown neighborhood.

- Opportunity to redevelop under-used parcels in north Delridge for the station location.
    - Better opportunity for multi-modal transfers.
    - Avoids golf course and Longfellow Creek.
  - Many people did not like this option and they included the following reasons:
    - Many felt that the station was in a less accessible location farther north with poor bus-rail transfer opportunities.
    - Many also shared concern about business impacts, including freight and industrial uses.
    - Others included the following reasons:
      - Concern about impacts to high-density residential buildings.
      - Concern about cost.
      - Concern about traffic impacts.
      - Concern about the number of curves in the guideway.
      - Questions about the need to avoid the golf course.
- **Pigeon Point Tunnel**
  - Of the comments received, there were mixed opinions about the Pigeon Point Tunnel.
  - The people that liked this option included the following reasons:
    - Many felt this option would limit residential displacement and minimize business impacts.
    - Many also felt this option would limit visual impacts and minimize disruption in the Youngstown neighborhood.
    - Others included the following reasons:
      - Preference for a station farther south to be more accessible and serve more people.
      - Potential to limit traffic impacts closer to the West Seattle Bridge.
      - Preference for a faster (more direct) route to West Seattle.
      - Potential for transit-oriented development.
      - Preference for a lower guideway on SW Genesee Street.
      - Preference for a route that avoids the north slope of Pigeon Point.
      - Preference for a route that avoids construction adjacent to the West Seattle Bridge and avoids impacts to the bike path near the bridge.
  - The people that did not like this option included the following reasons:
    - Most people expressed concern with the increased cost and increased project timeline.
    - Others included the following reasons:
      - Concern about construction and property impacts associated with the tunnel portals on SW Genesee Street and on Pigeon Point.
      - Concern about impacts to West Duwamish Greenbelt and safety of constructing a tunnel in the steep slope.
      - Concern about noise and vibration.

- Concern about impacts to residential areas, including the Riverside neighborhood.
- Other people shared general feedback or questions about the Pigeon Point Tunnel option including the following:
  - Preference for this option but only if third-party funding could be secured.
  - Questions about the feasibility to connect a Pigeon Point Tunnel to elevated alternatives for the Avalon and Junction stations.
  - Questions about proximity of Pigeon Point Tunnel portals to Youngstown Cultural Arts Center.

SODO: (87 people shared comments)

- **General**

- Some people shared general comments about the SODO alternatives.
  - Of the comments received, many people noted a preference for the at-grade stations because of better pedestrian access, better transfer environment for riders, benefit of overpasses to separate vehicles from trains and a simpler alignment.
  - Others shared feedback on the following topics:
    - Preferences to maintain the SODO busway.
    - Interest in preserving freight mobility.
    - Questions about travel times for elevated versus at-grade options.
    - Concern about increased costs of elevated options but interest in potential pick-up / drop-off areas under elevated guideway.

- **Double Elevated Station (Option A)**

- Of the comments received, there were mixed opinions about the options in SODO.
- The people who liked the double elevated option included the following reasons:
  - Many were concerned about the overpasses for the at-grade option. Concerns included increased construction impacts and short and long-term effects on traffic, freight movements and business operations in the area.
  - Others noted a preference for the double elevated option for the following reasons:
    - Preference to limit rail and vehicle conflict points.
    - Preference to maintain the SODO busway.
    - Concern about safety for pedestrians with at-grade tracks.
    - Preference for improved bus-rail transfer opportunities.
    - Preference for more space under guideways for pick-up/drop-off areas.
    - Interest in transit-oriented development potential.
    - Concern about the environmental impacts of overpasses.
- The people that did not like this option included the following reasons:
  - Many people expressed concern about increased costs and noted the at-grade alternative already provides desired grade separation between vehicles and trains.
  - Others noted concerns about the following:
    - Long-term closures of existing light rail service with the double elevated option during construction.
    - Concern that a double elevated option would not improve transit reliability compared to the at-grade alternative.

- Suggestions that the SODO busway would be less necessary with more light rail service in the area.
- **Partial Elevated Station (Option B)**
  - Some people liked this option and noted their support for the following reasons:
    - Concern about impacts to the existing light rail line with a double elevated option.
    - Preference for lower cost.
    - Interest in maintaining the SODO busway.
    - Preference for eliminating an overpass at South Lander Street.
  - Many people did not like this option for the following reasons:
    - Many people expressed concern about increased costs, limited improvements to transit reliability and noted the at-grade alternative already provides desired grade separation between vehicles and trains.
    - Some people also noted that the partial elevated option seems unnecessarily complex.

BALLARD (237 people shared comments)

- **General**
  - Some people expressed general support for a tunnel station at 20th Avenue NW because it could serve more people and was placed near the density of businesses and residences.
  - Many of the comments expressed interest in the following topics other than the two 20th Avenue NW options:
    - Support for tunnel stations in Ballard due to better operations, less property acquisition or disruption, fewer environmental impacts and less noise.
    - Support for the fixed bridge option due to lower costs, less disruption to businesses and residences and better views.
    - Support for 14th Avenue NW options due to less disruption to businesses and residences, larger right of way, lower costs, less risk, and growth opportunities around the station area.
    - Concern about 14th Avenue options due to lower ridership potential and potential impacts of future extensions.
    - Support for 15th Avenue options due to growth opportunities around the station area, lower costs than 20th Avenue NW options, location is accessible to central Ballard, and suggestion to include 20th Avenue NW station in future extension.
    - Concern with the ST3 Representative Project due to the potential impacts of a movable bridge on train operations and maritime traffic.
    - Support for the ST3 Representative Project.
    - Suggestion to have the Interbay station south of Dravus Street.
    - Support for a mix and match alternative that would include the Thorndyke Portal option, at-grade alignment between the Interbay Athletic Facility and the Golf Course, and then surface rail adjacent to BNSF with a downtown tunnel portal in Smith Cove west of Elliott Avenue.
  - Some people stated they did not support tunnel options to 20th Avenue NW because of the additional cost compared to the other alternatives, the technical risks, disruption to businesses and residences and potential for future extensions.

- Several people stated support for a new fixed bridge to 20th Avenue NW alternative because of the benefits of a station at 20th Avenue NW due to density and ridership, and in case funding for a tunnel was not available.
- **20th Avenue NW – BNSF Portal (Option A)**
  - Some people commented in support of the BNSF Portal option, because it seems reasonable, is worth the cost and is a shorter tunnel.
- **20th Avenue NW – Thorndyke Portal (Option B)**
  - Many people expressed support for the Thorndyke Portal option for the following reasons:
    - Many liked how this option was close to downtown Ballard and the density of businesses and residences.
    - Others said this option would have higher ridership and was less expensive than the BNSF Portal option.

**Total number of communications: 501**