

7 COMMENT SUMMARY

7.1 Overview of the West Seattle and Ballard Link Extensions Draft Environmental Impact Statement Comment Period

The West Seattle and Ballard Link Extensions (WSBLE) Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) was published on January 28, 2022. Comments were accepted during a 90-day comment period that ended April 28, 2022. Comments were accepted via letter, comment form, email, online submittal form, or voicemail. Comments received in languages other than English were translated. Approximately 5,200 comment submittals were received including comments from Tribes and Tribal organizations, government agencies, elected officials, businesses and business organizations, community and arts organizations, and individual members of the public.

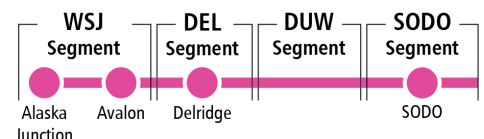
Sound Transit held four virtual public open house public hearings for the WSBLE Draft EIS. Each event was focused on a specific geographic area, but anyone could attend any event and provide public comment at any event. Each event included a presentation and opportunity for public comment recorded by a court report. Dates and times of the events were:

- March 15, 2022, 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.; focused on Interbay/Ballard
- March 22, 2022, 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.; focused on Downtown
- March 24, 2022, 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.; focused on Chinatown-International District and SODO
- March 30, 2022, 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.; focused on West Seattle

In addition, one in-person drop-in open house was held at the Union Station Plaza from 12 p.m. to 7 p.m. on March 17, 2022. Information was available on both the West Seattle Link Extension and Ballard Link Extension at this event, and attendees could provide comments on paper or via computer. Over 400 people attended the four virtual public meetings/hearings and there were over 19,500 unique views on the Online Open House website during the comment period. Appendix F, Public Involvement, Tribal Consultation, and Agency Coordination, provides more information on outreach during the public comment period.

7.2 Overview of Comments

Comment submittals on the WSBLE Draft EIS specifically about the West Seattle Link Extension or that discussed both the West Seattle Link Extension and the Ballard Link Extension are summarized and responded to in this West Seattle Link Extension Final EIS in Appendix O, Draft EIS Comment Summary and Response to Comments. Comments specific to the Ballard Link Extension as well as those that apply to both projects will be responded to as part of the environmental review process for the Ballard Link Extension Project.



Appendix O includes the comment summary of all the comments received on the WSBLE Draft EIS published in May 2022 following the public comment period. Copies of the comment submittals that are specific to the West Seattle Link Extension or that are project-wide (as described above) and responses to comments within these submittals are organized into the following categories:

- Tribes and Tribal Organizations
- Agencies: separated into federal, state, regional, county, and local agencies or elected official submittals
- Businesses and Business Organizations
- Community and Arts Organizations
- Individuals: separated into form letters and individual comment submittals

Each of these categories has an index that presents letters in alphabetical order. Individuals can find their name and a unique identification number for their comment submittal. Comment submittals from individuals are printed in order of identification number. Additional directions are provided in the introduction to Appendix O.

The following sections describe the common themes for the overall West Seattle Link Extension and the common themes by West Seattle Link Extension project segment.

Frequent common themes for the overall West Seattle Link Extension included the following:

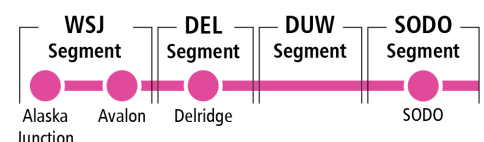
- Concern about property acquisitions, displacements, noise and vibration, and construction period roadway closures
- Concern about potential road closures associated with the project adding to business impacts from closure of the West Seattle Bridge
- Building a gondola instead of light rail to reduce costs, shorten the project schedule, minimize greenhouse gas emissions, and minimize impacts

The following sections further summarize the major comment themes by project segment.

7.2.1 SODO Segment

Frequent common themes for the SODO Segment included the following:

- Similar support from individuals for at-grade and mixed profile alternatives. Support for Alternative SODO-2 was mostly related to preserving the SODO Busway.
- Support from businesses and business organizations for Alternative SODO-1b to have SODO Station closer to South Lander Street.
- Interest in avoiding the United States Postal Service Carrier Annex and Distribution Center/Terminal Post office at 4th Avenue South and South Lander Street.
- Concern about freight access and mobility, maintaining the SODO Trail, and stadium event traffic during construction.
- Concern about property acquisition and business displacements.



7.2.2 Duwamish Segment

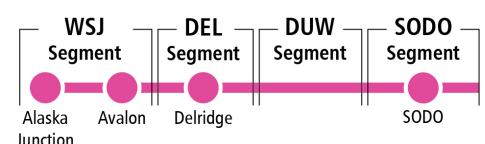
Frequent common themes for the Duwamish Segment included the following:

- Support from Port of Seattle, Northwest Seaport Alliance, and most businesses and business organizations for Preferred Alternative DUW-1a or Option DUW-1b due to reduced impacts on port, marine, and industrial facilities when compared with Alternative DUW-2.
- Support from individuals for Alternative DUW-2 to avoid or minimize residential and employee displacements and impacts to the West Duwamish Greenbelt (including impacts to herons) from Preferred Alternative DUW-1a and Option DUW-1b.
- Concern about impacts to the West Duwamish Greenbelt from Preferred Alternative DUW-1a or Option DUW-1b and Terminal 25 planned restoration site from Alternative DUW-2.
- Concern about direct and indirect impacts on the maritime industrial sector from business displacements and freight movement.
- Concern about maintaining bike trail connections during construction.

7.2.3 Delridge Segment

Frequent common themes for the Delridge Segment included the following:

- General support for lower height alternatives that would lead to tunnels in the West Seattle Junction Segment to minimize neighborhood impacts.
- Opposition to tall guideway structures that feel out of character with the existing neighborhood context and would result in visual and noise impacts.
- Most support for Alternative DEL-6 (Alternative DEL-6a in this Final EIS) to reduce residential displacements and visual impact to the Youngstown neighborhood.
- Opposition to Alternative DEL-5 and Alternative DEL-6, particularly due to displacement of one or more Transitional Resources facilities and Alki Beach Academy. Other reasons provided include residential displacements, access to residences after construction, neighborhood impacts, construction impacts, and impacts to greenbelts and wetlands.
- Concern about freight traffic and station access near Nucor Steel for Alternative DEL-5 and Alternative DEL-6.
- Opposition to residential displacements, especially on the north side of Southwest Genesee Street and along 32nd Avenue Southwest.
- Concern about overall loss of affordable housing in this area.
- Concern about impacts to the West Seattle Golf Course.
- Concern about impacts to Longfellow Creek.
- The need for efficient, easy transfers to/from buses, especially for low-income and people of color populations connecting from the south.
- Support for equitable transit-oriented development (TOD) at the Delridge Station, regardless of alternative.



7.2.4 West Seattle Junction Segment

Frequent common themes for the West Seattle Junction Segment included the following:

- General support for tunnel alternatives to minimize neighborhood impacts
- Interest in station locations closer to Alaska Junction
- Some support for removing Avalon Station to save cost
- Concern about residential displacements, especially removal of new multi-family buildings with elevated alternatives
- Concern about impacts to businesses and planned development during construction
- Desire that designs consider future extensions to the south

7.3 Responses to Common Comments

Comments related to the West Seattle Link Extension or that generally apply to both the West Seattle Link Extension and Ballard Link Extension projects are included in Appendix O along with responses. Table 7-1 provides responses to the most common comments. These responses are also referenced in Appendix O, using the common comment number found in the second column of the table.

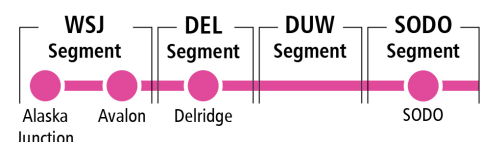
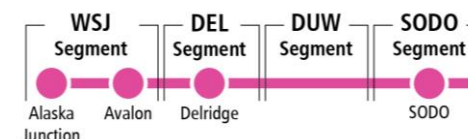
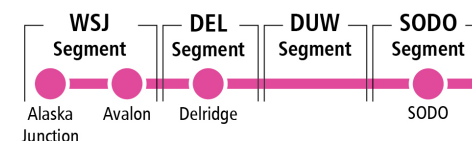


Table 7-1. Responses to Common Comments on WSBLE Draft EIS

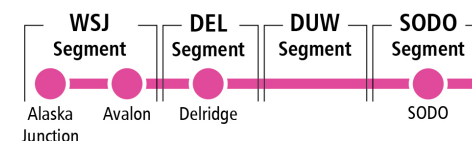
| Common Comment Category | Common Comment No. | Common Theme | Common Response |
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| General | CCG1 | The EIS is inadequate because it does not provide enough detail on the project design, impacts, or mitigation of impacts. Additional documentation should be prepared with more detail about impacts and mitigation or phased under the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA). | Consistent with SEPA, this West Seattle Link Extension Final EIS provides the public and decision makers with information about the West Seattle Link Extension “at the earliest possible point in the planning and decision-making process, when the principal features of a proposal and its environmental impacts can be reasonably identified” (Washington Administrative Code [WAC] 197-11-055(2)). This is also consistent with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), which provides that “Agencies shall integrate the NEPA process with other planning at the earliest possible time to ensure that planning and decisions reflect environmental values, to avoid delays later in the process, and to head off potential conflicts” (40 Code of Federal Regulations 1501.2). This EIS has been prepared using approximately 10 to 15 percent level of design. This level of design allows for meaningful evaluation of alternatives, impacts, and potential mitigation measures. As noted in several places in this Final EIS, after a decision has been made to select the project to be built, the project would undergo additional engineering and design and mitigation measures would be refined. SEPA acknowledges that “the EIS need not analyze measures in detail” (WAC 197-11-440(6)(c)(iv)). Specific mitigation measures would be developed during the final design, and permitting phases and process would be coordinated with local permitting authorities. |
| General | CCG2 | Comments limited to expressing a preference or objection to one or more alternatives. | <p>Sound Transit and the FTA reviewed all comments submitted during the WSBLE Draft EIS comment period. The NEPA and SEPA require FTA and Sound Transit to respond to substantive comments related to the content of the WSBLE Draft EIS, but not to questions or comments limited to public policy decisions (e.g., general statements of support or opposition). However, before identifying the preferred alternatives for this West Seattle Link Extension Final EIS, the Sound Transit Board (the Board) received a comment summary report with a copy of all comments submitted. Appendix O, Draft EIS Comment Summary and Response to Comments, of this Final EIS includes copies of comment submittals and responses to them.</p> <p>As described in Section 2.1.1, Sound Transit Board Direction on Modified EIS Alternatives, for this Final EIS, the Board modified the Preferred Alternative in the SODO Segment from Alternative SODO-1a to Option SODO-1c. This option includes a staggered station configuration in SODO. The Board confirmed Alternative DUW-1a as the Preferred Alternative in the Duwamish Segment. The Board modified the Preferred Alternative in the Delridge Segment to Option DEL-6b, which is a refinement of Alternative DEL-6 in the WSBLE Draft EIS. The Board modified the Preferred Alternative in the West Seattle Junction Segment to Option WSJ-5b, which is a refinement of Alternative WSJ-5 in the WSBLE Draft EIS. Please see Section 2.6, Refined Alternatives and Options for the Final EIS, for more information on the Sound Transit Board Motion and modification of alternatives following the WSBLE Draft EIS comment period. The Sound Transit Board will select the project to be built after this Final EIS is issued.</p> |
| General | CCG3 | What factors, such as cost and environmental impacts, are considered and how are they considered by the Board in selection of the project to be built? | The Sound Transit Board considers a number of factors in selecting the project to be built. Those factors include potential environmental impacts; equity; Tribe, agency, business, community organization, and public comments; cost; schedule; ridership; and potential long-term benefits. |



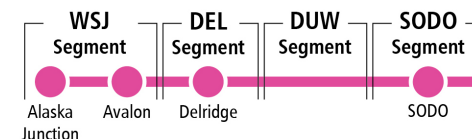
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| General | CCG4 | Concern about schedule, specifically the length of time until start of service and potential for further delays to the schedule. | The West Seattle Link Extension is a highly complex project in a dense urban environment, and the process of completing environmental review in coordination with agency partners and stakeholders, completing final design, acquiring property, conducting construction planning, obtaining permits and approvals, and constructing the project takes many years. Please see Section 1.5, Next Steps and Schedule, of this West Seattle Link Extension Final EIS for more information on the project schedule. The project milestones chart in this section shows the schedule for development of the project from the planning phase through final design and start of service. Section 1.5 also describes the benefits and disadvantages of delaying project implementation. |
| General | CCG5 | The public comment period for the WSBLE Draft EIS should be extended. | An extended comment period was provided for review of the WSBLE Draft EIS. The comment period for the WSBLE Draft EIS was 90 days. This is twice the 45 days required by NEPA, three times the comment period required by SEPA, and longer than the comment period for any prior Sound Transit Draft EIS. |
| Chapter 1, Purpose and Need | CC1a | Ridership should be re-estimated based on the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic which has allowed more working from home, less need for commuting to and from Downtown. | <p>FTA and Sound Transit acknowledge the current impacts of the recent social response to the (COVID-19) pandemic and the resulting decline in travel demand that began in March 2020. At this time, it is impossible to predict future changes to the project purpose and need, schedule, and impacts that may result from a COVID-19 response of an unpredictable nature and length. Should substantial changes in the planning assumptions, project schedule, project scope, or surrounding project environment result because of a prolonged COVID-19 response, FTA and Sound Transit will consider additional project evaluation and public input consistent with NEPA and SEPA.</p> <p>Puget Sound Regional Council also acknowledges the pandemic in VISION 2050 (Puget Sound Regional Council 2020, page 124), stating:</p> <p>Over the last decade, transit ridership has experienced robust growth, with the central Puget Sound region being one of only four regions across the county with consistent growth in transit boardings. While COVID-19 has caused sudden and dramatic drops in transit ridership and revenue and has perhaps accelerated the acceptance of remote work environments, transit will continue to be a critical element for mobility as the region grows over the next 30 years.</p> <p>The region's historic investment in transit, and continued investments across modes, are critical due to the increases in congestion and travel delay seen in the region over the past decade. Since 2010, the region has grown by over 440,000 residents and 381,000 jobs. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, delay on the region's freeway corridors had increased more than 50 percent since 2014, and the average travel time to work had continued to steadily increase across all modes, averaging around 30 minutes. Notably, the share of commuters with travel times over 60 minutes increased steeply and was higher than the share of commuters with travel times less than 10 minutes.</p> <p>Puget Sound Regional Council's <i>Regional Transportation Plan 2022 – 2050</i> (Puget Sound Regional Council 2022) also acknowledges the pandemic's effect on ridership along with the continuing need to serve growth:</p> <p>The COVID-19 pandemic will continue to have near-term impacts on regular transit boardings. However, jurisdictions and transit agencies in the region are continuing to plan for growth in a way that will increase ridership and meet long-term projections of transit boardings.</p> |



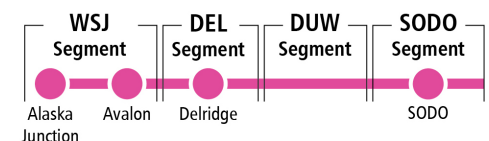
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| Chapter 1, Purpose and Need | CC1b | Why is another tunnel needed downtown? Why can the existing downtown transit tunnel not be used for this project? | <p>Sound Transit studied the operational feasibility of using the existing Downtown Seattle Transit Tunnel for light rail extensions rather than constructing a new downtown tunnel during the Sound Transit 3 Plan planning process in 2013 and 2014. The agency concluded that once all Sound Transit light rail extensions are operational, the Downtown Seattle Transit Tunnel will not have enough capacity to reliably serve downtown because of operational headway (service frequency) requirements and future passenger volumes. Connecting future light rail lines to the Downtown Seattle Transit Tunnel would also be difficult to construct and would require lengthy system closures and/or service disruptions.</p> <p>To address these challenges, the Sound Transit 3 Plan includes a new second transit tunnel as part of the Ballard Link Extension. The new tunnel would provide additional capacity by distributing passengers and trains in two downtown tunnels. This would also improve system reliability and provide shorter running times for train operators compared with running service through a single downtown tunnel.</p> |
| Chapter 1, Purpose and Need | CC1c | Why do none of the alternatives include service to other communities such as South Park, Georgetown, and White Center? | <p>A potential light rail extension from West Seattle to Burien was considered in the <i>Regional Transit Long-Range Plan</i> (Sound Transit 2014a), which identifies Sound Transit’s envisioned network of services when the regional transit system is complete. The West Seattle Link Extension represents the portion of the long-range plan for the West Seattle to Burien corridor that was included in the Sound Transit 3 Plan, the next phase of mass transit improvements in the Puget Sound region approved by the voters in 2016. Light rail to South Park, Georgetown, White Center, and Burien was studied as part of the <i>South King County High-Capacity Transit Corridor Study</i> (Sound Transit 2014b), which identified alternatives for consideration in the Sound Transit 3 package. Ultimately this service was not included in the Sound Transit 3 Plan. Instead, the plan includes service to West Seattle, which is an important access point for regional connections from more affordable areas south of the project corridor, such as High Point, Highland Park, and the unincorporated King County neighborhood of White Center.</p> <p>The West Seattle Link Extension would allow for future extension south, and the Sound Transit 3 Plan includes study of future high-capacity transit connecting West Seattle to Burien.</p> |
| Chapter 2, Alternatives Considered | CC2a | More detail is needed for the project definition and mitigation measures. Mitigation should be included in cost estimates. | <p>Mitigation measures for the West Seattle Link Extension are described in this West Seattle Link Extension Final EIS consistent with the current level of project design and the requirements of the environmental review process. Mitigation measures are detailed in Chapter 3, Transportation Environment and Consequences, and Chapter 4, Affected Environment and Environmental Consequences, for all alternatives. Appendix I, Mitigation Plan, includes detailed mitigation measures for the preferred alternatives evaluated in this Final EIS. Since preparation of the WSBLE Draft EIS, further detail has been added to Section 2.7, Construction Approach, describing bridge type and construction on Pigeon Point and construction near Longfellow Creek.</p> <p>Mitigation measures will continue to be refined through final design and as the project goes through the permitting phases and process. As stated in Section 1.5.1, Final Environmental Impact Statement and Project Decision, the Record of Decision for the West Seattle Link Extension issued after this Final EIS will include a list of committed mitigation measures for the project to be built.</p> <p>Costs to implement mitigation measures are included in the cost estimates prepared for this Final EIS as described in Section 2.9, Project Funding and Cost Comparison.</p> <p>Sound Transit is committed to satisfying all applicable federal, state, and local environmental regulations and to responsibly and reasonably mitigate significant adverse environmental project impacts consistent with Sound Transit policies and applicable regulations.</p> |



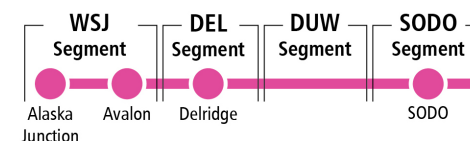
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| Chapter 2, Alternatives Considered | CC2b | Need more information on construction methods, schedule, and staging areas. | <p>An overview of the construction methods for each light rail profile type—At-grade, elevated (including bridges), tunnel, and retained cut—is provided in Section 2.7, Construction Approach, of this West Seattle Link Extension Final EIS. Information on the construction staging areas, the estimated duration of the major construction activities, and estimated hours of construction is also included. Work-specific construction plans will be confirmed during final design. Construction impacts for each element of the environment and alternative are discussed in the corresponding sections of this Final EIS.</p> <p>Following preparation of the WSBLE Draft EIS, further detail has been added to Section 2.7 of this Final EIS that describes bridge type and construction on Pigeon Point for Preferred Alternative DUW-1a, and construction near Longfellow Creek for Preferred Option DEL-6b and Alternative DEL-7.</p> |
| Chapter 2, Alternatives Considered | CC2c | Is third-party funding still needed for tunnels in West Seattle if they are similar cost to elevated alternatives? | <p>Yes, third-party funding or found cost savings will likely be needed for some of the West Seattle Link Extension alternatives. For example, based on current cost estimates and revenue projections, the Preferred Alternative for the West Seattle Link Extension is anticipated to exceed the cost assumptions contained in Sound Transit’s re-aligned financial plan.</p> <p>Sound Transit, City of Seattle, and King County acknowledge there may be shared responsibility to address the additional cost difference between the final project to be built and the re-aligned financial plan through either additional funding or cost-savings opportunities. As described in Motion 2023-52, the City of Seattle and King County provided letters to Sound Transit on March 23, 2023, indicating their intent to work with Sound Transit to further analyze costs and funding sources over the next year and develop a funding agreement in advance of the Board action to select a project to be built.</p> <p>Chapter 2, Alternatives Considered, of this West Seattle Link Extension Final EIS, explains that when the Sound Transit Board identified alternatives for study in the WSBLE Draft EIS, early cost estimates indicated that alternatives with a tunnel in West Seattle could have required additional funding; that is, funding beyond what was assumed in the Sound Transit 3 financing plan. Additional funding for these alternatives would have needed to come from contributions from partner agencies outside of Sound Transit, such as the City of Seattle or others. The alternatives that were anticipated to require “third-party” funding were identified with an asterisk (*) throughout the WSBLE Draft EIS.</p> <p>Following publication of the WSBLE Draft EIS, more specific cost estimates were reviewed by Sound Transit. Due to the rising price of real estate, some tunnel alternatives would not necessarily cost more than elevated alternatives. As a result of these developments, the asterisk indicating third-party funding has been removed from alternative names in this Final EIS.</p> <p>Please see Section 2.9, Project Funding and Cost Comparison, of this Final EIS for updated capital costs.</p> |
| Chapter 2, Alternatives Considered | CC2d | Ensure that the project plans for future light rail expansion. | <p>All alternatives evaluated in this West Seattle Link Extension Final EIS provide opportunities for future light rail expansion consistent with the Sound Transit <i>Regional Transit Long-Range Plan</i> (Sound Transit 2014a). In addition, the Sound Transit 3 Plan included funding for high-capacity transit studies of potential light rail extension from West Seattle to Burien, Tukwila, and Renton.</p> <p>At the West Seattle Junction terminus, the representative Alaska Junction Station in the Sound Transit 3 Plan was an east-west station along Southwest Alaska Street. During alternative development, Sound Transit developed alternatives oriented north-south to facilitate future light rail expansion to the south.</p> |



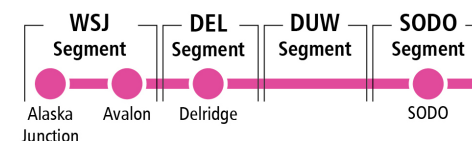
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| Chapter 2, Alternatives Considered | CC2e | Elevated guideway and/or stations would be too high. | <p>In response to public and agency comments, Sound Transit has developed lower height guideway alternatives that are evaluated in this West Seattle Link Extension Final EIS.</p> <p>Sound Transit uses elevated structures to cross over geographic or physical barriers and in areas of varying topography. An elevated guideway must have a minimum clearance of at least 16.5 feet over roadways and 23.5 feet over railways, as determined by the roadway or railway owner. The crossing over the Duwamish Waterway’s West Waterway needs to have a 140 foot vertical clearance so that it does not restrict vessel heights more than the existing West Seattle Bridge for vessels in the West Waterway navigation channel. Guideway heights are described in Chapter 2, Alternatives Considered, and shown in Appendix J, Conceptual Design Drawings, of this Final EIS. Visual simulations are shown in Attachment N.2A, Key Observation Point Analysis, to Appendix N.2, Visual and Aesthetics Technical Report, of this Final EIS.</p> <p>In addition, topography can result in higher guideway elevations in some areas. The topography of the Puget Sound Basin consists of a series of north-south trending ridges separated by deep troughs, including Puget Sound, the Duwamish Waterway, and the north Delridge valley. Land elevations range from about 15 feet to approximately 380 feet (North American Vertical Datum of 1988) across the West Seattle Link Extension project corridor. The range in land elevation and presence of large waterways in the project corridor, combined with the design requirement for light rail guideway to have a maximum grade of 6 percent for no more than 2,500 feet, has necessitated higher guideway profiles and stations in some areas, particularly in the Delridge Segment.</p> <p>To provide a range of solutions to these engineering challenges, the WSBLE Draft EIS considered a wide range of alternatives that provided a range of maximum heights in the Delridge Segment from 60 feet to 150 feet high.</p> <p>Following publication of the WSBLE Draft EIS, alternatives have been refined in this Final EIS, including two alternatives in the Delridge Segment that would connect to a tunnel in the West Seattle Junction Segment and have maximum heights of 80 feet. Please see Section 2.1.1, Sound Transit Board Direction on Modified EIS Alternatives, and Section 2.5, Alternatives Development and Scoping, of this Final EIS for more information.</p> |



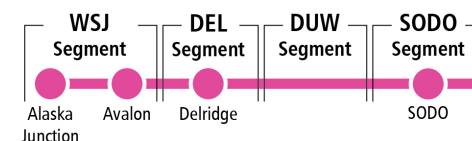
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| Chapter 2, Alternatives Considered | CC2f | Can station areas and light rail alignment footprints be reduced/minimized and designed to integrate into the existing environment? | <p>All light rail stations require certain minimum features, including station entrances, boarding platforms (which are about 380 feet long), passenger conveyances (escalators, elevators, and/or stairs) to provide access to the platforms, and other components such as ticket vending machines. Many stations also need space for traction power substations, signal bungalows, and mezzanines. Each station would also have a dedicated bicycle storage area. Stations typically require an area of approximately 1.5 acres to incorporate these components, depending on factors such as the number of station entrances. All stations are also designed to include multi-modal access to the station (refer to common comment CC3a for additional information). See Section 2.1.2.2, Stations, and Appendix J, Conceptual Design Drawings, of this West Seattle Link Extension Final EIS for the conceptual design of station features.</p> <p>As discussed in Section 4.5, Visual and Aesthetic Resources, of this Final EIS, and 4.2.5, Visual and Aesthetic Resources, of the WSBLE Draft EIS, Sound Transit coordination with applicable City of Seattle agencies and adjacent communities will occur throughout the design process to minimize visual impacts and develop a civic aesthetic for each station that is aligned with the community vision.</p> <p>The City of Seattle is responsible for shaping the “station area”—the neighborhood around the station. Sound Transit and the City may partner on improvements within the “station context”—typically two or three blocks from the station itself. Adding a light rail station to a neighborhood introduces new opportunities for the City to enhance livability in a neighborhood by adding different types of housing, new shopping, employment opportunities, and public open space or other recreational amenities. Sound Transit strives to support equitable TOD around the stations and explores opportunities to partner in potential joint development, with a priority on affordable housing and other uses that benefit communities. Please refer to common comment CC4.2a and Section 4.2, Land Use, of this Final EIS for more information on TOD and joint development.</p> <p>During preparation of the WSBLE Draft EIS, Sound Transit, the City of Seattle, King County Metro (Metro), and other agencies, and the community were engaged in discussions on how best to address the needs and desires of community members while creating an active and comfortable environment that reflects the unique character of each station location. A list of community participation opportunities and agency coordination can be found in Appendix F, Public Involvement, Tribal Consultation, and Agency Coordination. Sound Transit’s <i>West Seattle and Ballard Link Extensions Station Planning Progress Report</i> (Sound Transit 2022) contains more information on proposed station concepts as well as ideas and recommendations covering urban design, access and mobility, and TOD. The purpose of the document was to help communities along the corridor better understand the project alternatives in the WSBLE Draft EIS, as well as associated opportunities and challenges. The Station Planning Progress Report also provides a reference point for future conversations and decisions around station area planning and design, including minimizing property acquisition. Sound Transit has been working on minimizing property acquisitions and will continue to do so as design advances.</p> |



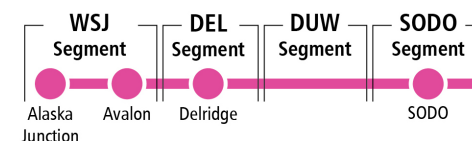
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| Chapter 2, Alternatives Considered | CC2g | The gondola proposed by SkyLink should be studied. | <p>A gondola system like the one proposed by SkyLink is not consistent with the Sound Transit 3 Plan and the goals for the West Seattle Link Extension project. Nonetheless, in response to public comments, the Sound Transit Board requested a feasibility report ^a, which was completed in April 2022.</p> <p>The report found that gondola technology is infeasible for the West Seattle Link Extension corridor due to significant technical limitations. It found that gondolas are not an appropriate regional high-capacity transit technology “because they operate on a local circulation level, lack regional applications, and each application would require new supporting facilities and services.” In addition, Sound Transit is not authorized to use the Sound Transit 3 tax revenue approved to construct a light rail system to instead construct a gondola system without additional voter approval.</p> <p>Light rail was identified as the mode for the West Seattle Link Extension through the multi-year planning process for Sound Transit’s <i>Regional Transit Long-Range Plan</i> (2014a) and Sound Transit 3 Plan (2016). The <i>Regional Transit Long-Range Plan</i> represents Sound Transit’s goals, policies, and strategies to guide the long-term development of the high-capacity transit system. It is based on years of intensive planning, environmental analysis, and public outreach. It is intended to guide how the Sound Transit system can best address the region’s mobility needs and support growth management objectives. Funding for the project, as identified in the Sound Transit 3 Plan, was approved by voters in 2016. Please see Chapter 1, Purpose and Need, of this West Seattle Link Extension Final EIS for more information on the planning history and the purpose and need for the West Seattle Link Extension.</p> <p>The purpose of the West Seattle Link Extension includes the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide high-quality rapid, reliable, and efficient light rail transit service to communities in the project corridor as defined through the local planning process and reflected in the Sound Transit 3 Plan. • Connect regional centers as described in adopted regional and local land use, transportation, and economic development plans and Sound Transit’s <i>Regional Transit Long-Range Plan</i> (Sound Transit 2014a). • Implement a system that is technically and financially feasible to build, operate, and maintain. |
| Chapter 2, Alternatives Considered | CC2h | The Pigeon Ridge/West Seattle Tunnel “purple line” evaluated in Level 1 and Level 2 of Alternatives Development should be studied again. | <p>A Pigeon Point Tunnel was considered during the initial alternatives development, and it was screened from further consideration largely due to cost. This alternative would have crossed the Duwamish Waterway on a high-level, rail-only bridge and included a tunnel under Pigeon Ridge starting between 18th Avenue Southwest and 19th Avenue Southwest in the vicinity of Southwest Andover Street. The west tunnel portal would have been east of Delridge Way Southwest in the vicinity of Southwest Genesee Street. This alternative also considered a second tunnel with a tunnel portal near Southwest Avalon Way and an Alaska Junction tunnel station.</p> <p>The alternatives development process is described in Appendix M, Summary of Alternatives Development and Initial Assessment Process, of this West Seattle Link Extension Final EIS. The Sound Transit Board did not advance this alternative for study in the WSBLE Draft EIS. As described in Appendix M, this alternative was not identified for study in the WSBLE Draft EIS for various reasons, including cost, engineering constraints, community construction impacts, potential impacts to archaeological resources, and potential schedule effects.</p> |



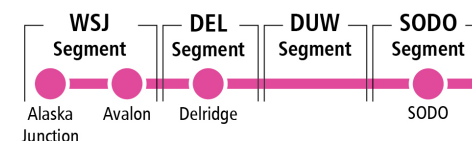
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| Chapter 2, Alternatives Considered | CC2i | The Alaska Junction Station should be closer to the Junction (Southwest Alaska Street and California Avenue Southwest). | The WSBLE Draft EIS identified six alternatives in the West Seattle Junction Segment that included Alaska Junction stations one to four blocks away from the Alaska Junction (the intersection of Southwest Alaska Street and California Avenue Southwest). In 2022, after publication of the WSBLE Draft EIS and review of comments received on the WSBLE Draft EIS, including those that suggested new or modified alternatives, the Sound Transit Board directed staff to study a number of project refinements (Motion M2022-57). Preferred Option WSJ-5b was added as a refinement to the WSBLE Draft EIS Alternative WSJ-5 (now Alternative WSJ-5a) to shift the Alaska Junction Station entrance closer to 42nd Avenue Southwest, which is closer to the Alaska Junction. Please see Chapter 2, Alternatives Considered, of this West Seattle Link Extension Final EIS for complete information on the alternatives studied. |
| Chapter 2, Alternatives Considered | CC2j | The Avalon Station should/should not be eliminated. | In 2022, after publication of the WSBLE Draft EIS and review of comments received on the WSBLE Draft EIS, including those that suggested new or modified alternatives, the Sound Transit Board directed staff to study a number of project refinements (Motion M2022-57). Alternative WSJ-6, which would not include an Avalon Station, was added for study in this West Seattle Link Extension Final EIS for consideration as a cost-savings measure. This Final EIS includes alternatives with and without an Avalon Station. Please see Chapter 2, Alternatives Considered, of this Final EIS for complete information on the alternatives studied and Chapter 6, Alternatives Evaluation, for a discussion of how the alternatives without an Avalon Station compare to the alternatives with an Avalon Station. The Sound Transit Board will make a decision on the project to be built after this Final EIS is issued. |
| Chapter 2, Alternatives Considered | CC2k | Tunnel stations are too deep, which will reduce ridership. Elevators and escalators for stations need to be more reliable. | Sound Transit uses tunnels where considerable changes in terrain would result in very high elevated structures, physical barriers must be crossed, right-of-way is inadequate for at-grade or elevated profiles, and/or the density of development is high. The depth of the tunnels for the project was determined by the terrain, the depth of existing buildings (foundations and tie backs), and the depth of other structures such as large utilities. The depth of tunnel stations as well as the ease of circulation and conveyances within the station were considered in calculating ridership at the stations. A rider's trip time would vary depending on the station platform's vertical distance from the street level, with deeper tunnel stations increasing the time for a rider to walk within the station between the train platform and the ground-level entrance. Travel time, including the amount of time it takes a rider to get between ground level and the underground station platform, was considered in the model used to determine ridership. Use of an elevator can reduce or eliminate this extra walk time. Please see Section 3.3.2, Build Alternatives, of Appendix N.1, Transportation Technical Report, of this West Seattle Link Extension Final EIS for more information on how the depth of specific stations affect trip time. Sound Transit is continuing to improve reliability of escalators and elevators throughout the system. Regular updates on the status of the repair and replacement program are provided on the Sound Transit website. |



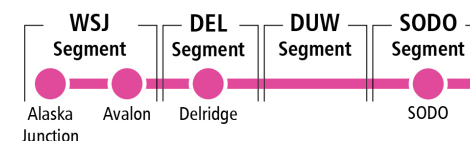
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| Chapter 3, Transportation Environment and Consequences | CC3a | Multi-modal access to the stations should be a high priority. Sound Transit should accommodate all modes, including buses, bicycles, pedestrians, and automobiles. | <p>Multi-modal station access is a priority for Sound Transit and the West Seattle Link Extension. The project’s purpose includes expanding the Sound Transit Link light rail system to provide high-quality, rapid, reliable, and efficient service to increase capacity and connectivity for regional connections and to encourage convenient and safe non-motorized access to stations, such as bicycle and pedestrian connections. See Chapter 1, Purpose and Need, for the West Seattle Link Extension, for additional information.</p> <p>Sound Transit considers compatibility with all transportation modes during the station design process, including buses, bicycles, pedestrians, automobiles, paratransit, and persons with disabilities. As described in Section 2.1.2.2, Stations, of this West Seattle Link Extension Final EIS, all light rail stations are designed to include multi-modal access to the station. Stations have bus stops and some stations have automobile drop-off/pick-up, pedestrian connections, and bicycle connections and storage. Appendix J, Conceptual Design Drawings, of this Final EIS illustrates the conceptual design of the multi-modal access at each station. Sound Transit has also adopted a system access policy to help guide access decisions throughout the region.</p> <p>In the Delridge Segment, after publication of the WSBLE Draft EIS and review of comments on the WSBLE Draft EIS, including those that suggested new or modified alternatives, Preferred Option DEL-6b was added as a refinement to WSBLE Draft EIS Alternative DEL-6 (now Alternative DEL-6a) in part to provide better multi-modal station access opportunities. Station design for the alternative selected to be built will continue to evolve through coordination with the public, King County Metro, and the City of Seattle during final design.</p> |
| Chapter 3, Transportation Environment and Consequences | CC3b | Concern about safety of pedestrians and bicyclists around stations during construction and operation. | <p>Information on the safety of pedestrians and bicyclists during project construction and operation is provided in Section 3.7, Affected Environment and Impacts during Operation – Non-motorized Facilities; Section 3.11, Construction Impacts; and Chapter 7, Safety, of Appendix N.1, Transportation Technical Report, of this West Seattle Link Extension Final EIS.</p> <p>During construction, some sidewalks, crosswalks, and bicycle facilities may be temporarily closed. Sound Transit would work with the City of Seattle to develop and implement a construction management plan to provide alternate facilities for non-motorized travel that, to the extent feasible, offer a similar level of protection and comfort to the temporarily closed facility. Sound Transit would provide clearly marked detours within construction areas, such as dedicated walkways and alternate bicycle routes that could include treatments such as pedestrian and bicycle signals. Temporary facilities would comply with Americans with Disabilities Act requirements and, where possible, would meet other applicable design standards such as Seattle Streets Illustrated (City of Seattle 2022).</p> <p>The primary safety impacts during operation would be the increase in potential conflicts around station areas as a result of increased vehicle or non-motorized activity in these areas. However, only small increases in daily vehicle traffic around stations can be expected, which suggests that the project’s impact on safety due to additional vehicular volumes would be negligible. Please see the response to common comment CC3a for more information on pedestrian and bicycle access at stations.</p> |



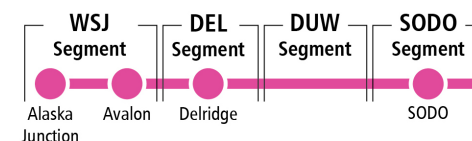
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| Chapter 3, Transportation Environment and Consequences | CC3c | More detail is needed regarding construction impacts on vehicle traffic, transit, pedestrians, and bikes and mitigation for impacts. Impacts of concurrent road closures and detours need to be discussed. | See response to comment CCG1 in this table regarding the amount of detail provided in the WSBLE Draft EIS. An updated and more refined assessment of construction period impacts for the Preferred Alternatives and Preferred Design Options is discussed in Section 3.11, Construction Impacts, of Chapter 3, Transportation Environment and Consequences, and Attachment N.1D, Permanent and Temporary Facility Closures, to Appendix N.1, Transportation Technical Report of this West Seattle Link Extension Final EIS. The methodology for this construction analysis is in Attachment N.1A, Transportation Technical Analysis Methodology Report, of Appendix N1 of this Final EIS. As part of this assessment, the number of construction vehicles and potential haul routes are provided based on the level of information known at this time. In addition, potential roadway lane closures and their impacts on traffic operations, parking impacts, property access, transit service disruptions, neighborhood cut-through traffic, and detour route opportunities are also described in this Final EIS by alternative. |
| Chapter 3, Transportation Environment and Consequences | CC3d | How would access to my property be affected during operation and/or construction? | Information on access changes in areas along the alignment during construction and operation is provided in Section 3.5, Affected Environment and Impacts During Operation – Arterial and Local Street Operations, Section 3.11, Construction Impacts, and Chapter 4, Arterial and Local Street Operations, of Appendix N.1, Transportation Technical Report, of this West Seattle Link Extension Final EIS. Appendix J, Conceptual Design Drawings, of this Final EIS provides additional detail about access changes during operation. As described in Section 3.5.4, Mitigation for Operation Impacts, and Section 3.11.6, Mitigation for Construction Impacts, of this Final EIS, Sound Transit will maintain access as much as possible to each business and coordinate with businesses during times of limited access. |
| Chapter 3, Transportation Environment and Consequences | CC3e | How will bus service be changed with the project? | A list of bus route service changes for each of the Build Alternatives is provided in Section 3.3.2, Build Alternatives, of Appendix N1, Transportation Technical Report of this West Seattle Link Extension Final EIS. Bus service assumptions for both the No Build Alternative and Build Alternatives were developed by Metro and Sound Transit as part of the project's Transit Service Integration technical memorandum, provided as Appendix B, Transit Service Integration Technical Memorandum, to Attachment N.1A of Appendix N1. Bus service would be restructured to integrate with the project, which would result in removing or truncating some lines but generally replacing them with reliable, high-frequency light rail service. The 2042 Build Alternatives assume there will be changes to bus service in the West Seattle Link Extension project corridor to integrate with the new light rail line. The service changes are based on Metro Connects and coordination with Metro regarding this project. |
| Chapter 3, Transportation Environment and Consequences | CC3f | How will the SODO Busway be impacted? | Impacts to the SODO Busway are described in Section 3.4, Affected Environment and Impacts during Operation – Transit, and Section 3.5, Affected Environment and Impacts during Operation – Arterial and Local Street Operations, and Section 3.11, Construction Impacts, of this West Seattle Link Extension Final EIS as well as Chapter 3, Transit, and Chapter 4, Arterial and Local Street Operations, of Appendix N1, Transportation Technical Report. Preferred Option SODO-1c, Alternative SODO-1a, and Option SODO-1b would permanently close the SODO Busway to accommodate light rail. Alternative SODO-2 would allow the SODO Busway to be relocated to the west within the existing right-of-way and remain open after light rail construction is complete. Alternative SODO-2 would require the closure of the SODO Busway from South Massachusetts Street to South Spokane Street during the 5-year construction period. Additional coordination with King County Metro and Sound Transit Regional Express service will occur as detailed construction plans regarding transit service are developed during the final design and permitting phase of the West Seattle Link Extension project. Please see Section 3.11.6, Mitigation for Construction Impacts, of this Final EIS for a discussion of mitigation for the busway closure during construction. Additional information on mitigation for this closure has been added to this Final EIS to reflect the additional coordination that has already occurred. |



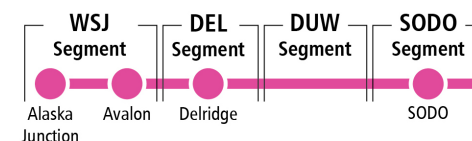
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| Section 4.1, Acquisitions, Displacements, and Relocations | CC4.1a | Under one or more alternatives, I will be displaced from my home or business. How will residents and businesses be relocated and what assistance will be offered? | <p>Sound Transit notified potentially affected property owners prior to publication of the WSBLE Draft EIS in the winter of 2022 and prior to publication of this West Seattle Link Extension Final EIS in 2024. Sound Transit staff are available to meet with potentially affected property owners, residents, and business owners to discuss the process and concerns about their properties.</p> <p>As described in more detail in Section 4.1, Acquisitions, Displacements, and Relocations, of this Final EIS, Sound Transit would comply with appropriate provisions of the federal Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act and the State of Washington’s relocation and property acquisition regulations. Property owners whose entire or partial property would be acquired by Sound Transit would receive just compensation for their land and improvements. Just compensation is an amount paid to a property owner for property acquired for public purposes that is not less than the fair market value of the property acquired including damages or benefits to the remaining property. Compensation would include any measurable loss in value to the remaining property as a result of a partial acquisition. Sound Transit’s relocation assistance and advisory services would include, but not be limited to, measures, facilities, or services that may be necessary or appropriate to determine the relocation needs and preferences of each household, business, and non-profit organization to be displaced. Sound Transit would provide current information on the availability, purchase prices, and rental costs of comparable replacement dwellings. Other benefits and compensation may include payment of residential moving expenses and replacement housing payments, nonresidential moving expenses, and reestablishment expenses. Sound Transit’s Business and Residential Acquisition and Relocation handbooks outline compensation and acquisition procedures in detail.</p> <p>Sound Transit is committed to working closely and proactively with residents and businesses to help them plan ahead for relocation, find new homes or sites, and solve problems as they may occur. While relocation assistance would help mitigate the displacement, relocation could still represent a hardship to some property owners.</p> <p>Sound Transit has adjusted alternatives during conceptual design to avoid or minimize impacts, including property acquisitions, to the extent possible. Refinement of project design will continue throughout final design.</p> |
| Section 4.1, Acquisitions, Displacements, and Relocations | CC4.1b | Residential and business displacements should be minimized. | <p>Sound Transit works to minimize displacements by designing Link light rail to be within existing roadway right-of-way as much as possible. However, in some areas, the width of the existing right-of-way is not wide enough to accommodate project elements. In these areas, building and operating the project would require acquiring public and private property for right-of-way and other facilities, and displacing and relocating some residential, commercial, and public uses.</p> <p>During construction, additional property would be needed for staging areas and construction access. Most of the area needed for construction would be accommodated within areas required for permanent right-of-way, although some additional properties would need to be acquired for construction and are accounted for in estimated acquisitions in Section 4.1, Acquisitions, Displacements, and Relocations, of this West Seattle Link Extension Final EIS.</p> <p>Please see also the response to common comment CC2f.</p> |



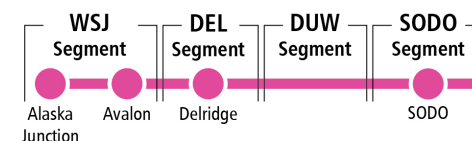
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| Section 4.1, Acquisitions, Displacements, and Relocations | CC4.1c | Concern that displaced residents will no longer be able to afford to live in their same neighborhood. | <p>Property availability will change over time, but research of market conditions indicates that there are adequate opportunities for most residents and businesses to successfully relocate within the project vicinity. Some affected properties with unique characteristics or uses, such as water-dependent uses, assistive living and supportive housing, and public facilities, could be difficult to relocate.</p> <p>Currently available residential units in Seattle also exceed the number of units potentially displaced, and there is a sufficient supply of relocation housing similar in size and quality for renters in the study area. However, depending on market conditions and individual circumstances, the replacement property may cost more.</p> <p>Please see the response to common comment CC4.1a for a discussion of the relocation process. Section 4.1.9, Relocation Opportunities, of this West Seattle Link Extension Final EIS describes the types of relocation assistance that Sound Transit provides. Sound Transit would offer relocation assistance that includes compensation and supporting services that consider the needs of those being relocated, to help reduce inconveniences or hardships. Sound Transit would also satisfy federal and state requirements for residential relocation, which define a “comparable replacement dwelling” as follows (42 United States Code 4601(10)):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decent, safe, and sanitary; • Adequate in size to accommodate the occupants; • Within the financial means of the displaced person; • Functionally equivalent; • In an area not subject to unreasonable adverse environmental conditions; and • In a location generally not less desirable than the location of the displaced person’s dwelling with respect to public utilities, facilities, services, and the displaced person’s place of employment. <p>To meet these requirements, Sound Transit may identify relocation properties that are in better condition and of higher value than the properties being acquired. If so, tenants may be eligible for a rent supplement. Owners may be eligible for price differential payment and mortgage interest differential payment if the cost of comparable decent, safe, and sanitary housing is greater than the value of their existing property. Likewise, tenants may be eligible for replacement housing payments if comparable decent, safe, and sanitary replacement housing rents are more than their current rental cost. In these cases, Sound Transit would pay the difference, or a portion of the difference, between the tenant’s current and new rental rates for a 42-month period.</p> <p>Surplus property could be used to support Equitable Transit Oriented Development, which would create more affordable housing and potentially new business opportunities. Please see the response to common comment CC4.2a.</p> |



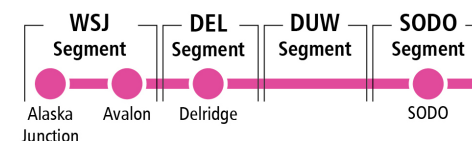
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| Section 4.1, Acquisitions, Displacements, and Relocations | CC4.1d | Concern that some businesses, such as maritime or industrial businesses, have very unique needs and/or specially built facilities that will be hard to relocate. | <p>Sound Transit acknowledges that some businesses could be difficult to relocate. As discussed in Section 4.1, Acquisitions, Displacements, and Relocations, affected properties with unique characteristics or uses, such as water-dependent uses, assistive living and supportive housing, and public facilities could be difficult to relocate.</p> <p>For Option SODO-1b and Alternative SODO-2, the United States Postal Service Carrier Annex and Distribution Center/Terminal Post Office at 4th Avenue South and South Lander Street would be difficult to relocate. Working with the United States Postal Service, Sound Transit would identify a replacement property for this facility. Sound Transit would be responsible for future environmental review, design, and construction of a replacement facility. The replacement facility would meet siting criteria and requirements identified by the United States Postal Service.</p> <p>Because of their locations around the Duwamish Waterway, all alternatives in the Duwamish Segment would displace some businesses that are water-dependent or that support water-dependent businesses. Please see the response to common comment CC4.3c for more information on impacts to water-dependent businesses. Alternative DUW-2 would also displace a Washington State Department of Social and Health Services facility that would be difficult to relocate.</p> <p>Alternative DEL-6a would displace a behavioral health facility with supportive housing and assisted living that also provides services to nonresidents who live in the area. It would be difficult to relocate this facility.</p> |
| Section 4.2, Land Use | CC4.2a | What does Sound Transit do with surplus property after construction? Sound Transit should promote TOD and equitable TOD near stations as much as possible. | <p>After project construction, Sound Transit surplus property (property that would be acquired for construction purposes but not needed for the project permanently) could be redeveloped into TOD. Redevelopment of surplus property would be required to be consistent with the City of Seattle’s zoning and Sound Transit’s Equitable Transit Oriented Development Policy. Information on TOD and equitable TOD can be found in Section 4.2.7, Indirect Impacts of the Build Alternatives, of this West Seattle Link Extension Final EIS. This section has been updated since the WSBLE Draft EIS and compares the potential for TOD development between alternatives and options so that the Sound Transit Board can consider TOD potential when deciding on the project to be built. Although the project would directly affect land use through property acquisitions, the project would not directly change surrounding land use regulations that determine the type of development that can take place. Cities and counties control land use regulations, including zoning, and property owners make decisions about developing or redeveloping their property. The project could indirectly affect land use by acting as a catalyst for others to develop or redevelop land near project facilities consistent with City of Seattle land use and zoning requirements.</p> |
| Section 4.3, Economics | CC4.3a | Will the project lower property values due to a nearby station or light rail corridor that generates noise, vibration, and visual impacts? | <p>The potential positive and negative economic impacts of the project, including property value impacts, are described in Section 4.3, Economics, of this West Seattle Link Extension Final EIS. Studies indicate that residential and commercial property values near light rail transit stations typically increase and are valued higher than similar properties not in the vicinity of transit stations. Studies have also found that property value impacts from light-rail transit can be negative, particularly along a light rail route not in the vicinity of a station. These negative impacts to property values are most likely to occur when the light rail project results in noise or visual impacts noticeably greater than what currently exists and are more often associated with elevated, and to a lesser degree, at-grade alternatives. Sections 4.5, Visual and Aesthetic Resources, and Section 4.7, Noise and Vibration, of this Final EIS describe these impacts. Higher height alternatives in the Delridge Segment would be more likely than other alternatives to have impacts on adjacent property values.</p> |



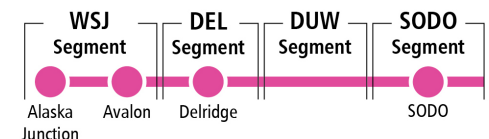
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| Section 4.3, Economics | CC4.3b | Concern that project construction will create too many impacts to businesses. | <p>Project construction requires the acquisition and relocation of a number of businesses. Sound Transit has worked to minimize displacements as much as possible, as described in response to common comment CC4.1b. Section 4.3, Economics, provides information on the property acquisition impacts to businesses.</p> <p>Relocation assistance would be provided to businesses as appropriate. It is anticipated that many of the jobs at these businesses would be relocated and not lost. The highest number of employees displaced would be in the Duwamish Segment, where the project would displace industrial businesses. As described in Section 4.3.4, Environmental Impacts of the Build Alternatives during Operation, of this West Seattle Link Extension Final EIS, some of these businesses are water-dependent and would be difficult to relocate nearby. Please see the response to common comment CC4.1d regarding businesses that would be difficult to relocate.</p> <p>The project would displace some off-street parking and reduce the ability to make some left-hand turns in some locations as described in Section 4.3.4 of this Final EIS. This could result in impacts on adjacent businesses; however, the extent is expected to be minimal and in some situations would be offset by the improved visibility of businesses for transit riders.</p> <p>During construction, business impacts could include noise, vibration, dust, loss of parking, and traffic congestion in the areas of construction activities. Depending on the location of the construction activities and nature of the activities, the impacts on businesses would vary.</p> <p>Business-related impacts are more likely to occur near surface construction activities. Businesses that tend to rely on drive-by traffic to attract customers would experience the greatest impacts. Section 4.3.5, Environmental Impacts of the Build Alternatives during Construction, of this Final EIS, provides information on the economic impacts associated with construction in each project segment. The project's contribution to cumulative construction impacts on businesses and the economy are discussed in Section 5.4.4, Economics, of this Final EIS.</p> <p>As described in Section 4.3.7, Mitigation Measures, of this Final EIS, a number of mitigation measures have been identified that would minimize the impacts on businesses during construction. In addition, other sections of this Final EIS identify mitigation measures related to noise (Section 4.7, Noise and Vibration), dust (Section 4.6, Air Quality), acquisitions (Section 4.1, Acquisitions, Displacements, and Relocations), and traffic (Chapter 3, Transportation Environment and Consequences).</p> |
| Section 4.3, Economics | CC4.3c | Concern that displacement of maritime industrial businesses will impact the greater maritime industry. | <p>Please see the response to common comment CC4.1d, which identifies difficult to relocate businesses, including displacement of water-dependent businesses. These impacts are also described in Section 6.5, Significant and Unavoidable Adverse Impacts. As described in Section 4.3.7, Mitigation Measures, of this West Seattle Link Extension Final EIS, Sound Transit would explore ways to maintain water-dependent business operations where feasible or work with them to find a suitable relocation site.</p> |



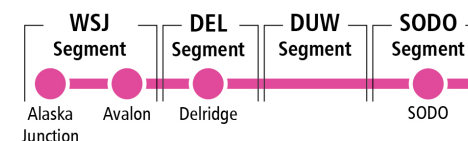
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| Section 4.3, Economics | CC4.3d | Industrial lands are limited and should not be lost for use by this project. | Lands that the project would convert to transportation use, including industrial lands, are described in Section 4.2, Land Use, of this West Seattle Link Extension Final EIS identifies. Industrial land uses would be converted to transportation uses in the SODO, Duwamish, and Delridge segments. Section 4.3, Economics, of this Final EIS describes the economic impacts from associated business displacements. Section 5.4.3, Land Use, of this Final EIS describes cumulative impacts to industrial lands in Seattle from the West Seattle Link Extension in combination with other reasonably foreseeable future actions. While the project would convert industrial lands, the cumulative effect on the industrial land base is expected to be negligible. Indirect impacts of TOD development would only occur in station areas and would not occur in the Duwamish Segment where there are not any stations. Any future development on Sound Transit surplus property or private development near stations would need to be consistent with zoning set by the City of Seattle. Please see the response to common comment CC4.2a regarding TOD development. |
| Section 4.4, Social Resources, Community Facilities, and Neighborhoods | CC4.4a | The project results in impacts on the neighborhoods in the project corridor. | Construction and Operation of the West Seattle Link Extension would create changes to neighborhoods in the project corridor. Section 4.4.4, Environmental Impacts of the Build Alternatives during Operation, and Section 4.4.5 Environmental Impacts of the Build Alternatives during Construction, of this West Seattle Link Extension Final EIS describe impacts to neighborhoods and the surrounding communities from these project changes. Mitigation for these impacts is described in Section 4.4.7, Mitigation Measures. |
| Section 4.4, Social Resources, Community Facilities, and Neighborhoods | CC4.4b | The project should avoid displacing affordable housing. | Seattle has many organizations that provide income-restricted, transitional, or supportive housing, and some have housing in the project corridor. Some of the alternatives in the West Seattle Junction Segment would displace income-restricted housing, as described in Section 4.4.4, Environmental Impacts of the Build Alternatives during Operation, of this West Seattle Link Extension Final EIS. Please see the response to common comment CC4.1a for a description of relocation assistance. Redevelopment of surplus property would be required to be consistent with the Sound Transit's Equitable Transit Oriented Development Policy and would result in new affordable housing. Please see the response to common comment CC4.2a. |
| Section 4.4, Social Resources, Community Facilities, and Neighborhoods | CC4.4c | Concern about displacing social services, such as daycares. | Impacts to social services are described in Section 4.4.4, Environmental Impacts of the Build Alternatives during Operation, and Section 4.4.5, Environmental Impacts of the Build Alternatives during Construction, of this West Seattle Link Extension Final EIS. Please see the response to common comment CC4.1a for a description of relocation assistance. Sound Transit would work with businesses and service providers to strive to find a suitable relocation site to continue providing this service to the same community. Please see the response to comment CC4.4d regarding displacement of Transitional Resources. |



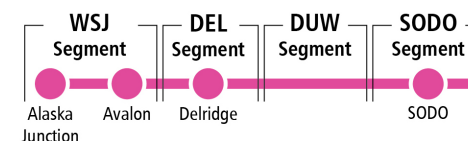
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| Section 4.4, Social Resources, Community Facilities, and Neighborhoods | CC4.4d | Avoid displacing Transitional Resources, a non-profit organization that provides behavioral health services and supportive housing to help people make a transition to stable living in the community. | <p>As described in Section 4.4.4, Environmental Impacts of the Build Alternatives during Operation, of this West Seattle Link Extension Final EIS, Preferred Option DEL-6b and Alternative DEL-7 would affect one single-family residence owned by Transitional Resources; Alternative DEL-5 would displace a duplex owned by Transitional Resources; and Alternative DEL-6a would displace the Transitional Resources main office, onsite supportive housing, and adjacent apartment building.</p> <p>In 2022, after publication of the WSBLE Draft EIS and review of comments on the WSBLE Draft EIS, including those that suggested new or modified alternatives, the Sound Transit Board confirmed or modified the Preferred Alternative to be studied in this Final EIS and directed staff to study refinements (Motion M2022-57). Preferred Option DEL-6b was added as a refinement to WSBLE Draft EIS Alternative DEL-6 (now Alternative DEL-6a) in part to minimize displacements at Transitional Resources.</p> |
| Section 4.5, Visual and Aesthetic Resources | CC4.5a | The elevated structures and bridges will cause visual impacts that would be hard to mitigate. | <p>Elevated structures and bridges are identified as some of the most visible project components in Section 4.5, Visual and Aesthetic Resources, of this West Seattle Link Extension Final EIS. Attachment N.2A, Key Observation Point Analysis, to Appendix N.2, Visual and Aesthetics Technical Report, of this Final EIS includes visual simulations of these structures. Elevated light rail structures and bridges associated with some of the alternatives would be seen to varying degrees and existing views would change and there would be impacts to some nearby sensitive viewers. To minimize visual impacts elevated structures are designed with the lowest height practical, or as allowed by required vertical clearances. Please see the response to common comment CC2e for additional information. Sound Transit has also incorporated design measures to minimize the potential for visual impacts as described in Section 4.5.4, Environmental Impacts of the Build Alternatives during Operation.</p> <p>Specific potential mitigation measures for visual impacts are outlined in Section 4.5.7, Mitigation Measures. Section 6.5, Significant and Unavoidable Adverse Impacts, notes where impacts, including some visual impacts, may not be able to be mitigated.</p> |
| Section 4.5, Visual and Aesthetic Resources | CC4.5b | Retain vegetation and mature trees to improve aesthetics and to provide a visual separation for land uses adjacent to the stations. More information on mitigation for lost trees is needed. | <p>As design advances, Sound Transit will continue to work to minimize tree removal. Visual impacts from project changes, including tree removal, are described in Section 4.5.4, Environmental Impacts of the Build Alternatives during Operation, of this West Seattle Link Extension Final EIS. Please see the response to common comment CC4.9a regarding tree removal in relation to ecosystem functions.</p> <p>Sound Transit has incorporated design measures to minimize the potential for visual impacts as described in Section 4.5.4 of this Final EIS. These measures include preserving existing vegetation where possible and planting appropriate vegetation to replace existing street trees and other vegetation removed for the project. Section 4.5.7, Mitigation Measures, identifies where additional plantings are needed to screen project elements.</p> <p>Sound Transit would complete tree surveys and identify impacted trees for the project to be built prior to construction. Specific details of replacement landscaping would be developed during the permitting phases and process.</p> |



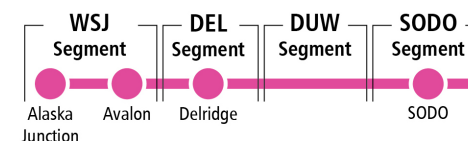
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| Section 4.6, Air Quality | CC4.6a | Does the greenhouse gas emission analysis account for embodied carbon? How long will it take to offset construction emissions? | The greenhouse gas analysis accounts for embodied carbon emissions during construction and operation of the project. As detailed in Section 4.6, Air Quality, of this West Seattle Link Extension Final EIS, embodied carbon emissions associated with producing fuel (e.g., extraction, refining, and transportation) used by vehicles traveling in the study area were taken into account in calculating regional greenhouse gas emissions estimates with and without the project. Embodied carbon emissions associated with the extraction, transport, and production of the materials (e.g., asphalt, concrete, base stone, and steel) that would be used to construct the project were taken into account in the greenhouse gas emissions calculations. Section 4.6 of this Final EIS, contains updated information on the time required for greenhouse gas emissions from construction to be offset by the emission reduction during project operation and also discusses sustainability measures that will be implemented to reduce emissions during construction. |
| Section 4.7, Noise and Vibration | CC4.7a | What are the noise impacts during construction and operation of light rail in the study area? How will impacts be mitigated? | <p>The noise impacts of the project are described in Section 4.7, Noise and Vibration, and Appendix N.3, Noise and Vibration Technical Report, of this West Seattle Link Extension Final EIS. The methodology for impact analysis is from the <i>Transit Noise and Vibration Impact Assessment Manual</i> (FTA 2018) which contains noise and vibration criteria by which transit-related impacts are identified. These criteria are used for all federally funded high-capacity transit projects. For additional information on methodology used please see Chapter 4, Noise and Vibration Impact Analysis Assumptions and Methods, in Appendix N.3.</p> <p>Sound Transit is committed to minimizing project noise levels at their source for all of its light rail corridors. Mitigation for operational noise is described in Section 4.7.7, Mitigation Measures, of this Final EIS and shown in Table 4.7-10. Attachment N.3D, Maps of Noise Impact Assessment, to Appendix N.3 of this Final EIS shows detailed maps of noise impacts with proposed mitigation, and Attachment N.3F, Tables of Noise Predictions, shows tables of noise predictions and includes predicted levels with mitigation.</p> <p>Construction noise would be required to meet the City of Seattle noise regulations, including variance provisions. Construction noise mitigation is described in Section 4.7.7 of this Final EIS.</p> |
| Section 4.9, Ecosystems | CC4.9a | How will Sound Transit preserve trees and/or mitigate the loss of trees? | <p>Impacts on natural resources, including wetlands, riparian habitat, and deciduous forested habitat with trees, are described in Section 4.9, Ecosystems, of this West Seattle Link Extension Final EIS. The section also describes impacts to street trees. While Sound Transit would protect mature/established trees to the extent practical, trees and other vegetation would need to be cleared for the project to be built and where there might be interference with the guideway. A zone about 15 feet wide would be required to be free of overhanging vegetation on both sides of the guideway tracks. Depending on the profile type and site conditions, the width of this zone might vary. Sound Transit would allow shrubs and groundcover within this zone. Sound Transit will complete tree surveys to identify impacted trees for the project to be built prior to construction.</p> <p>Section 4.9.7, Mitigation Measures, of this Final EIS describes avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures for the project. Sound Transit is developing a holistic tree and vegetation management plan to make sure that the project will meet the City of Seattle Environmentally Critical Area, street tree, and exceptional tree mitigation requirements. Native vegetation will be restored in Environmentally Critical Areas. Please also see the response to common comment CC4.5b on the use of vegetation to mitigate visual impacts.</p> |



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| Section 4.9, Ecosystems | CC4.9b | The West Duwamish Greenbelt provides valuable habitat and impacts to the greenbelt should be avoided. | Impacts to the West Duwamish Greenbelt are described in Section 4.9, Ecosystems, of this West Seattle Link Extension Final EIS. As discussed in Section 4.9.4, Environmental Impacts of the Build Alternatives during Operation, impacts to habitat in the West Duwamish Greenbelt would occur with Preferred Alternative DUW-1a and Option DUW-1b but would be avoided with Alternative DUW-2. Since publication of the WSBLE Draft EIS, Sound Transit revised the design of the Preferred Alternative DUW-1a guideway on Pigeon Point to minimize the footprint in the West Duwamish Greenbelt. Some of the trees that would be removed in the West Duwamish Greenbelt are within the year-round buffer of a management area for a great blue heron colony. Section 4.9.5, Environmental Impacts of the Build Alternatives during Construction, of this Final EIS identifies that construction noise could disturb wildlife, including herons in the Great Blue Heron Management Area. Section 4.9.7, Mitigation Measures, of this Final EIS describes avoidance and minimization measures and compensatory mitigation in the West Duwamish Greenbelt. Additional information can be found in Appendix N.4, Ecosystems Technical Report. |
| Section 4.11, Geology and Soils | CC4.11a | Concern about impacts to steep slopes on Pigeon Point. | Geologic risks and impacts of erosion and slope failure are discussed in Section 4.11, Geology and Soils, of this West Seattle Link Extension Final EIS, which identifies the steep slopes along Pigeon Point. As design advanced for Preferred Alternative DUW-1a, permanent slope stabilization measures have been refined to include retaining walls, soil nails, and erosion mats. Option DUW-1b would have ground improvements that could include stone guideway columns, jet grouting, or deep soil mixing around guideway column foundations or other methods as determined during final design. Alternative DUW-2 would avoid these steep slopes. Sound Transit would conduct detailed slope stability evaluations during design and, where appropriate, develop and use slope stabilization methods during construction. Earthworks would be designed, and specifications prepared, to avoid creating unstable conditions that could cause slope instability. |
| Section 4.14, Public Services, Safety, and Security | CC4.14a | Concern that the project will increase crime in neighborhoods. | As described in Section 4.14, Public Services, Safety and Security, of this West Seattle Link Extension Final EIS, crime is not expected to increase as a result of operation of the stations. Several studies have concluded that crime around stations generally mirrors crime rates in the surrounding area. However, as detailed in Appendix L4.14, Public Services, Safety, and Security, data collected in 2022 by Seattle Police Department on criminal activity near existing Link light rail stations in the study area shows that crimes at existing stations is very low compared to crime in the surrounding neighborhood. Sound Transit would design the stations to prevent crime such as with abundant light and also implement measures to minimize crime including the use of equipment (e.g., closed-circuit TV, sealed fare boxes, and automatically sealed exits), the use of anti-crime programs such as anti-graffiti programs, and the use of security personnel. |
| Section 4.14, Public Services, Safety, and Security | CC4.14b | Concern that construction areas will attract crime. | As described in Section 4.14, Public Services, Safety, and Security, of this West Seattle Link Extension Final EIS Sound Transit requires contractors to fence off construction sites and to provide site security. |



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| Section 4.17, Parks and Recreational Resources | CC4.17a | Concern about impacts to the West Duwamish Greenbelt. | <p>Impacts to parks, including the West Duwamish Greenbelt, are described in Section 4.17, Parks and Recreational Resources, of this West Seattle Link Extension Final EIS. As described in Section 4.17.5, Environmental Impacts of the Build Alternatives during Construction, Preferred Alternative DUW-1a and Option DUW-1b would have temporary and permanent impacts on the north end of the West Duwamish Greenbelt. Alternative DUW-2 would avoid these impacts. Since publication of the WSBLE Draft EIS, Sound Transit revised the Preferred Alternative DUW-1a guideway on Pigeon Point to minimize the footprint in the West Duwamish Greenbelt. Mitigation for park impacts is described in Section 4.17.7, Mitigation Measures, of this Final EIS. Please refer to common comment CC4.9b regarding ecosystem related impacts to the West Duwamish Greenbelt.</p> <p>Sound Transit would also coordinate with the Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office regarding mitigation for parks and recreation resources they have funded. Up to two parcels in the West Duwamish Greenbelt that could be affected received funding from this office.</p> |
| Section 4.17, Parks and Recreational Resources | CC4.17b | Concern about impacts to the West Seattle Golf Course. | <p>Impacts to parks, including the West Seattle Golf Course, are described in Section 4.17, Parks and Recreational Resources, of this West Seattle Link Extension Final EIS. As described in Section 4.17.5, Environmental Impacts of the Build Alternatives during Construction, all Delridge Segment alternatives except Preferred Option DEL-6b, Alternative DEL-5, Alternative DEL-6a, and Alternative DEL-7 would have a permanent or temporary impact to the West Seattle Golf Course. Mitigation for park impacts is described in Section 4.17.7, Mitigation Measures, of this Final EIS.</p> |
| Chapter 5, Cumulative Impacts | CC5a | More analysis of cumulative impacts with future development is needed and the list of current and future development and transportation projects needs to be updated. | <p>In this West Seattle Link Extension Final EIS, Sound Transit has updated the cumulative impact analysis and the list of current and future development and transportation projects. Chapter 5, Cumulative Impacts, of this Final EIS describes potential cumulative long-term and short-term impacts of the project in conjunction with past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions. The analysis is consistent with the NEPA (40 Code of Federal Regulations 1500-1508) and other cumulative impact assessment guidance documents. As part of the cumulative impacts analysis, Sound Transit reviewed numerous plans, proposals, developments, and NEPA documentation from the City of Seattle, Port of Seattle, Seattle Department of Transportation, Washington State Department of Transportation, Puget Sound Regional Council, Sound Transit, private developers, and other entities. Actions identified in these plans were used to identify impacts of past and present development actions and reasonably foreseeable future actions that could interact with the project alternatives. A list of the present and future actions considered in the cumulative impact analysis is included in Appendix K, Present and Future Development, Transportation, and Public Works Projects in the study area, along with a description of the criteria for including actions on the list. As noted, Sound Transit has updated the list of actions included in Appendix K since preparation of the WSBLE Draft EIS and also updated the cumulative impact analysis presented in Chapter 5 of this Final EIS.</p> |
| Chapter 5, Cumulative Impacts | CC5b | The cumulative business and traffic impacts to businesses and the community from the West Seattle Bridge closure and the COVID-19 pandemic need to be evaluated. | <p>The project's likely contribution to cumulative impacts, including the potential for cumulative effects due to the pandemic and closure of the West Seattle Bridge, is described in Chapter 5, Cumulative Impacts, of this West Seattle Link Extension Final EIS. As described in Section 1.5.4, The Coronavirus Pandemic and the Continuing Importance of Transit, in Chapter 1, Purpose and Need, of this Final EIS, FTA and Sound Transit acknowledge the impacts of the social response to the COVID-19 pandemic.</p> |



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| Appendix G, Environmental Justice | CCEJ1 | How will communities to the south of Delridge, such as White Center, High Point, and South Delridge, access the project? | Transit riders headed to Downtown Seattle from south of the study area would transfer from bus transit to light rail. Metro's RapidRide H Line would provide a transfer to light rail at the Delridge Station for residents in Highland Park and White Center, and residents in High Point would likely transfer from multiple Metro bus routes to light rail at the Avalon Station or Alaska Junction Station. Please see the response to common comment CC3a for a discussion of multi-modal access and how Sound Transit has improved multi-modal access for Preferred Option DEL-6b since publication of the WSBLE Draft EIS. Appendix G, Environmental Justice, of this West Seattle Link Extension Final EIS describes potential disproportionate impacts to low-income communities and people of color. Section 3.1.4, Environmental Justice Populations Outside of the Study Area, describes how the Racial Equity Toolkit process considered communities south in South Delridge, Highpoint, Highland Park, Westwood, and White Center during alternative development and preparation of the WSBLE Draft EIS. |
| Appendix G, Environmental Justice | CCEJ2 | How will the transfer at Delridge from bus to light rail affect travel time for riders going to/from communities to the south? | Appendix G, Environmental Justice, of this West Seattle Link Extension Final EIS describes impacts to low-income communities and people of color, which includes communities south of the study area. The distance between these bus transfer areas and the station entrance would be similar for all alternatives. Transit riders that transfer from RapidRide H Line to light rail at Delridge Station would experience an estimated 12- to 15-minute, or 17 to 24 percent, travel times savings compared to staying on the H line into Downtown Seattle; this includes the time to transfer. Reliability of transit service would also increase. |

^a Source: Sound Transit 2022.

