



Everett Link Extension

Participate Online Site #5 Outreach Summary

June 27– Aug. 31, 2024*

* The Participate.Online engagement website will remain live until Spring 2025. This summary focuses on feedback collected as of Aug. 31, 2024.

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1 OVERVIEW

The Everett Link Extension will provide fast, reliable connections to residential and job centers by connecting Snohomish County residents to the regional light rail network. The project also includes adding an operations and maintenance facility to receive, store, and service a larger train fleet to support the light rail extension as well as overall system operation. In June 2023, the Sound Transit Board identified [alternatives](#), including some preferred alternatives, for stations, routes, and OMF North locations to be studied in the EIS. This was the final step in the alternatives development phase of the project, and the project transitioned into the environmental review phase, which will last for several years.

In summer 2024, Sound Transit hosted a Participate.Online online open house (P.O site #5), also known as an engagement website, to share updates with the community since the previous engagement period during SEPA scoping in early 2023. The P.O site provided updated maps of each station area, potential station design layouts for each station, and updated OMF maps. Although this was not an official comment period, site viewers were able to leave feedback via a comment box at the bottom of the site.

This report summarizes the community engagement strategies Sound Transit used for the Everett Link Extension P.O site #5, which launched on June 27, 2024. It also summarizes the public participation and key findings from public feedback received via the online comment form, emails, and phone calls received as of Aug. 31, 2024. Note: the engagement website and comment form will remain live until at least spring 2025.

1.1 Goals

The project team identified the following goals and objectives for the P.O Site #5 outreach campaign:

- Provide a project update for what has changed since SEPA scoping engagement conducted in early 2023.
- Help prepare residents and property owners for publication of the Draft EIS.
- Be transparent as the project progresses.
- Develop an accessible and inclusive engagement website to support outreach to populations that may have higher barriers to engagement.
- Offer community members an opportunity to comment on updated station, route, and OMF North alternatives outside of a comment period.

This outreach summary addresses how the project team approached these goals.

2 AUDIENCES

This was an opportunity to continue to engage all community members with access to web platforms along the corridor. The project team identified several audience groups to prioritize during this outreach effort:

- The general public, residents and businesses in the project area, and neighborhood associations.
- Elected officials, jurisdictional partners, and relevant interest groups.
- Reaching populations that may have higher barriers to engagement, including people who speak Spanish, Korean, and Russian.

2.1 Equity

Sound Transit recognizes major infrastructure projects have the power to transform communities in significant ways and may disproportionately affect historically excluded communities, including Black, Indigenous, and people of color; the LGBTQ+ community; people with disabilities; immigrants and refugees; youth; and seniors.

Sound Transit prioritizes equity and inclusivity, which is foundational for the engagement team's work. Ensuring the P.O site was accessible to screen readers and mobile phones, as well as transcreation of site content into Spanish, Korean, and Russian underlines this priority.

During this outreach period, Korean and Russian language audiences were identified as a priority in outreach efforts such as the digital ad media campaign and project workshops. Within the digital ad media campaign, the project team led multifaceted efforts to reach these communities such as publishing digital ads in local newspapers such as NW Asian Weekly, The Korea Times, and Russian Town Seattle. Additionally, the project team held briefings in Spanish, Vietnamese, Ukrainian, Marshallese, and Chuukese in partnership with the Refugee & Immigrant Services Northwest (RISNW) in early July. Additionally, some of the summer fairs and festivals the project team attended focused on specific communities and interpreters were present as appropriate.

Participation by the Numbers

- **5,493 people visited the online engagement website.** The English site had the most visitors (3,291), followed by the Russian site (782), Spanish site (727), and the Korean site (558).
- **20 survey responses.**
- **9 emails and 4 phone calls.**

3 OUTREACH METHODS AND TOOLS

3.1 Notifications

3.1.1 GovDelivery email update

One project email update was sent on July 1, 2024, to announce project updates and the P.O site (**Appendix A**).

- July 1, 2024, project email update:
 - 5,609 recipients
 - 41% open rate
 - 12% click-through rate

Engagement for this GovDelivery was up slightly from the Jan. 25, 2023 project email update sent out at the start of SEPA scoping, which had a 39% open rate and 4% click-through rate. The project team saw higher engagement for this GovDelivery compared to the previous GovDelivery despite the P.O site #5 engagement period prioritizing information sharing rather than a direct call-to-action to leave feedback.

The project team anticipates the subscriber count will continue to grow as the project advances. From the previous project email update sent during SEPA scoping Feb. 28, 2023, the subscriber count rose from 4,486 to the current count of 5,609. Email updates will be a consistent notification tool that Sound Transit uses throughout the life of the project to inform the community about key project updates and public involvement activities.

3.1.2 Community partner outreach

The project team sent emails to 129 community organizations and businesses and nine Interagency Group and jurisdictional partners (review **Appendix B** for detailed list of recipient organizations). In general, the email (**Appendix C**) from the project team expressed gratitude for the stakeholders’ continued involvement in the project, notified them about updated project information on the P.O site, invited them to request a briefing, and provided them with an Outreach Toolkit (**Appendix D**) to share this information with their communities.

3.1.3 Mailer

The project team developed a printed mailer (**Appendix E**) that was sent to 43,591 addresses on July 16, 2024. The purpose of the mailer was to let the general public know that updated project information was available on the website and invite them to visit the site. The mailer also included some high-level information about how to reach the project team and stay informed about project activities.

3.1.4 Social media

Sound Transit notified the community about the P.O site through Facebook and X (**Appendix F**). Posts shared project team appearances at community fairs and festivals and linked to the P.O site. More details on these posts can be found below.

3.1.4.1 Facebook posts

Sound Transit shared two organic Facebook posts on June 9 and June 27, with an additional post scheduled on September 27, that encouraged viewers to learn more and engage with Sound Transit staff tabling at local events. The posts received:

- June 9
 - Post Impressions: 21,021
 - Post Reach: 20,185
 - Engagement: 2,329

- Reactions: 271
- Comments: 35
- Photo views: 52
- Link clicks: 176
- June 27
 - Post Impressions: 8,328
 - Post Reach: 8,000
 - Engagement: 222
 - Reactions: 47
 - Comments: 2
 - Photo views: 8
 - Link clicks: 16

3.1.4.2 X

Sound Transit shared two posts on June 9 and June 27, with an additional post scheduled for September 27. The posts received:

- June 9
 - Engagements: 283
 - Impressions: 3,303
 - Reactions: 58
 - Reposts: 8
 - Comments: 4
- June 27
 - Engagements: 61
 - Impressions: 1,794
 - Reactions: 20
 - Reposts: 3
 - Comments: 0

3.1.5 Digital ad media campaign

The project engagement website received a total of 1,957,401 impressions and 942 total clicks during the campaign period from July 23 to August 20 (review **Appendix G**). This campaign’s primary goal was to “provide community member with a general information update regarding station footprints and new names for routes.” These display ads were placed in four languages: English, Korean, Russian, and Spanish, and were targeted throughout the project area by zip code.

The click-through rate for this campaign showed lower numbers due to three reasons. Firstly, the project team made the early decision to prioritize audiences which historically may have had higher barriers to engagement such as Korean and Russian language audiences. Secondly, the informational nature of this campaign led the project team to limit the budget since the campaign is not as high of a priority as future campaigns aligned with official comment periods. Lastly, the

messaging for this campaign did not have specific asks or incentives such as “take our survey,” which tend to result in lower click-through rates.

3.1.6 Earned media

The project received attention from 10 earned media articles (review **Appendix H**).

My Edmonds News and partner publication MLTnews.com published an article on July 17, 2024 titled, [“Church leaders relieved as Sound Transit changes ‘preferred option’ for light rail along Alderwood Mall Blvd.”](#)

- The article details the perspective of the Alderwood Community Church and its communities advocating for an alternative that avoids their campus.
- The article mentions the work that the church and the Sound Transit teams engaged in to voice their concerns.
- The article notes the importance of engagement in the early stages of a project to be able to lead to significant impact on the outcome.

Several articles about the Lynnwood Link Extension opening on Aug. 30 mentioned extending light rail further north to Everett in the future, and shared general project and timeline details. Earned media includes:

- My Edmonds News, Aug. 9, 2024: [“What will light rail bring to Snohomish County? Part 2 — Nearly 60 years of history behind Lynnwood Link launch”](#)
- My Edmonds News, Aug. 13, 2024: [“What will light rail bring to South Snohomish County? Part 6 — Business impacts and gentrification”](#)
- My Edmonds News, Aug. 17, 2024: [“What will light rail bring to Snohomish County: Part 8 — Beyond Lynnwood, there’s Everett and Sound Transit 3”](#)
- Snohomish County Tribune, Aug. 28, 2024: [“Link Light Rail service opens from Lynnwood”](#)
- Lynnwood Times, Aug. 28, 2024: [“A behind-the-scenes look at overcoming project challenges of Lynnwood’s new light rail”](#)
- Seattle Times, Aug. 30, 2024: [“New Sound Transit light rail stations draw big crowds for first trips”](#)
- KIRO 7, Aug. 30, 2024: [“Lynnwood light rail opens Friday to hundreds of waiting riders”](#)
- Lynnwood Times, Aug. 31, 2024: [“Upward, onward, forward, together, Lynnwood Link is now open”](#)

3.2 Materials

The following materials were shared via P.O site #5 as linked PDFs.

3.2.1 Frequently asked questions

The project team has continued to update the [Frequently Asked Questions](#) document to address common themes and questions. The information was organized into four categories: 1) process and schedule, 2) engagement, 3) route, stations, and OMF North, and 4) effects on the

community. The FAQ document, last updated in March 2024, was available in English, Spanish, Russian, and Korean (review **Appendix I**).

3.2.2 Project Fact Sheet

The [Project Fact Sheet](#), updated in fall 2023, was available in English, Spanish, Russian, and Korean (review **Appendix J**).

3.2.3 Community Engagement Guide

The project team updated the [Community Engagement Guide](#) in January 2024. The 25-page document is a visual guide for community members to engage with the Everett Link project. It explains Sound Transit's goals for the project, guiding principles for engaging with the public, how community members can get involved in the project, the decision-making process, and plan for accountability. The guide was available in English (review **Appendix K**).

3.2.4 Community Engagement Fact Sheet

The project team created a summarized version of the Community Engagement Guide via the [Community Engagement Fact Sheet](#), updated in February 2024. The document was available in English, Spanish, Russian, and Korean (review **Appendix L**).

3.2.5 Fieldwork Fact Sheet

The project team developed the [Fieldwork Fact Sheet](#) in September 2023 to explain fieldwork activities taking place during the environmental review process and was available in English (review **Appendix M**).

3.2.6 Property owner guide

The project team updated the [Property Owner Guide](#) in September 2023 for the community to reference during the environmental review phase. The document addresses common questions and concerns related to potential property impacts and was available in English, Spanish, Russian, and Korean (review **Appendix N**).

3.3 Public Involvement

3.3.1 Participate.Online online open house

The Everett Link Extension engagement website (review **Appendix O**), or P.O site, was updated on June 27. It will remain live and continue to collect feedback until spring 2025. The site provides updates for the community to learn more about the project, explore recent updates to project alternatives, and share feedback on potential stations, routes, and OMF North locations.

The P.O site provided information about the project's background and how we got to this point of the project, an overview of the previous scoping outreach phase, and shared the list of

station, route, and OMF North alternatives as well as early station design layouts. The primary goal of the site was to share more detailed Sound Transit station, route, and OMF North alternatives, including updates on what has changed since our scoping outreach. Although this was not an official public comment period, the team always welcomes community feedback. P.O site visitors had an opportunity to share their thoughts on the station and route alternatives through a comment form included in the site, by sending an email, or making a phone call. Project staff frequently directed summer fair and festival attendees to the English and translated P.O site to learn more and leave a comment if they choose.

The P.O site was available in English (everettlink.participate.online) and transcreated to Korean, (everettlink.participate.online/ko), Russian (everettlink.participate.online/ru), and Spanish (everettlink.participate.online/sp) and available in additional languages via Google Translate. The site was accessible with screen readers, including descriptions of all maps, figures, and images available in the four languages. This ties back to one of the project team's goals: develop an accessible and inclusive engagement website. The project team intended to meet this goal by designing a platform to facilitate engagement that is accessible to a variety of audiences.

A total of 5,493 users visited the P.O site between June 27 and Aug. 31, 2024. 3,519 users visited the English site, 558 users visited the Korean site, 727 users visited the Spanish site, and 782 users visited the Russian site (review **Appendix P**).

Users were directed to the P.O site primarily through the following sources:

- Mailer (3,431)
- Direct (1,045)
- GovDelivery (897)
- NW Asian Weekly (37)
- Facebook (19)
- Sound Transit.org (9)
- Korea Times Seattle (8)

Engagement data for the various language sites broke down as follows.

English:

- Users: 3,519
- Bounce rate: 54.7%*
- Traffic source: 43% of visitors were directed to the English website from the mailer, 28.4% searched for the English site directly, and 25.5% were directed from the GovDelivery.

Spanish:

- Users: 702
- Bounce rate: 87.3%*
- Traffic source: 97.2% of visitors were directed to the Spanish website from the mailer.

Korean:

- Users: 521

- Bounce rate: 85.4%*
- Traffic source: 96.2% of visitors were directed to the Korean website from the mailer.

Russian:

- Users: 751
- Bounce rate: 91.5%*
- Traffic source: 97.7% of visitors were directed to the Russian website from the mailer.

*The bounce rate is the rate at which people visit one page of the website and then leave without looking at any other pages. A “bounce” is one instance. The bounce rate is calculated as bounces\sessions.

3.3.2 Online comment form

Although this was not a formal comment period, the P.O site included an open-ended comment box to encourage feedback on the updated alternatives and alignments. Respondents were able to provide feedback to the project team and request a response using the open-ended comment box. Twenty comments were submitted through the online comment form; refer to section 4.1.1 for more details.

3.3.3 Fairs and festivals

The project team staffed nine outreach and tabling events between June 27 and Aug. 31, 2024 to engage directly with the community and reach people where they naturally gather. Throughout these events, staff answered questions, collected concerns and feedback, and provided updates on the project. These events occurred in various communities and at various events to reach a wide array of the community. The project team utilized existing relationships that have been developed over the life of the project to continue to strengthen those relationships and build trust. Tabling and outreach events included:

- Everett Farmers Market, June 30
- Salty Sea Days, July 12
- Nubian Jam, July 27
- Latino Expo, July 27 (staffed with Spanish interpreter)
- Connect Casino Road Carnival, Aug. 3 (staffed with Spanish interpreter)
- Mariner Fest, Aug. 17 (staffed with Spanish, Russian, and Ukrainian interpreters)
- Lynnwood Luau, Aug. 17
- Everett Farmer’s Market, Aug. 25
- Lynnwood Link, Aug. 30

3.3.4 Briefings

The project team held a briefing on July 31, 2024 for non-profit and community organizations whose work focuses on transportation. The briefing covered information shared on the P.O site, including station design elements and station alternatives, and discussion included questions

about bicycle and pedestrian access to future stations and transit integration. Sixteen organizations were invited, and four organizations attended.

4 WHAT WE HEARD

4.1 Comments received

4.1.1 Feedback themes

During the June 27 – Aug. 31, 2024 reporting period, the project team received 33 questions and comments from community members through the following channels:

- 20 comments submitted through the P.O site comment form.
- Nine emails were submitted to our project inbox at everettlink@soundtransit.org.
- Four phone calls were received through our project voicemail at 206-370-5533.

All of these comments were evaluated through a comment coding process, and each comment was tagged with one or more themes based on the content and context of the communication. A diverse range of topics were present throughout the comments that were received during this observation period. A summary of the most frequent themes is included below. A complete list of each comment received is included in the Verbatim Comments Report (review **Appendix Q**).

Access, Connectivity, Destinations, Aviation - these were the most common code themes and were often used in the same comment. Comments were frequently discussing access to Paine Field, connectivity along and across I-5, access to other transit routes in the area, and connections to specific communities. Across these four common themes, the number of comments per theme were as follows:

- 13 comments mentioning Access
- 13 comments mentioning Connectivity
- 10 comments mentioning Aviation
- 10 comments mentioning Destinations

Most comments about Paine Field supported access to the airport. Some comments expressed concern that routing to Paine Field would unnecessarily increase travel times on light rail between Everett and Seattle.

Several comments stated that if there isn't a Southwest Everett Industrial (SWI) station at Paine Field, there needs to be direct access to the airport from the nearest station location.

Business and property – Ten comments referenced property impacts and seven comments referenced business impacts. Many of these comments were received via email and phone during a period of fieldwork and came from community members who asked for details regarding impacts to specific addresses along the project corridor.

Purpose – Ten comments expressed concerns around the project timeline or costs, and referenced a priority regarding a specific element of the project such as airport access, I-5 transit, improvements to neighborhoods, etc.

Transit – Ten comments encouraged prioritizing transit access and connectivity, including connecting various transit modes, understanding ridership demand, and making transit more accessible to adjacent communities.

Southwest Everett Industrial station area – Ten comments mentioned the SW Everett Industrial Station specifically. Many talked about the importance of Paine Field access, adding or moving the station to directly serve the airport, or removing the loop entirely in order to reduce travel time between Everett and Seattle.

Broadway/I-5 route alternatives – Ten comments mentioned the Broadway/I-5 route alternatives specifically. A few of these comments requested additional information about potential effects to homes and businesses in the area, primarily if the BI-1 route is selected, with one asking about potential effects from the BI-2 route. One comment asked why there wasn't a station in this area.

Land Use and Housing – Eight comments were placed in the land use category and five comments referenced housing. Several of these comments brought up concerns about land use priorities (referencing residential or business priority, upzoning, etc.), the removal of housing or business, and connections to new developments or existing residential communities.

Engagement – Six comments were included under the engagement theme. Some of these comments expressed the value and importance of the engagement process while evaluating alternatives. Some of the comments were asking questions about how to engage with the project.

Traffic – There were five comments referencing the project's potential impacts on traffic. Most of these comments mentioned the positive benefits that transit could have on reducing traffic, reducing car trips.

5 NEXT STEPS

5.1 Updates to the Participate.Online site

The project's next focused engagement phase is slated for spring 2025, when the project team will share information about the station access allowance program. This will be accompanied by a comment period to collect public feedback on ways to improve access to and from potential future stations via improvements to bike, pedestrian, accessibility, and bus infrastructure. There may be additional minor updates to the engagement website provided at that time.

Looking further ahead, the project team expects to coordinate with the Federal Transit Administration to conduct NEPA scoping in mid-2025, which will be an official public comment period as part of the environmental review process.

5.2 Publishing the Draft EIS

Sound Transit expects to publish the Everett Link Extension Draft EIS in early 2026 for public review and comment. The P.O site will be updated to share information about the Draft EIS, and

outreach will include a formal comment period. Based on the findings of the Draft EIS and input during the public review and comment period, the Sound Transit Board will identify, confirm, or modify the preferred alternatives for the Final EIS. The next step would be the preparation and publication of the Final EIS, likely in 2027.

soundtransit.org/everettlink

everettlink@soundtransit.org
206-398-5070

