



West Seattle and Ballard Link Extensions

Q3 2020 EXTERNAL ENGAGEMENT REPORT

July/August/September 2020

Activities snapshot



87 comments and questions



12 community briefings



34 fieldwork activities and 6 property owner meetings



2 email updates engaging 10,524 subscribers

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Sound Transit conducted outreach with community groups, property owners and other stakeholders to virtual platforms during the reporting period. As a result of the global health crisis, many community briefings, meetings and events were postponed or cancelled. We are continuing to find creative ways to engage with the communities in which we work that support the recommendations to socially distance to enhance public safety.



The West Seattle and Ballard Link Extensions will provide fast, reliable light rail connections to dense residential and job centers throughout the region.



Emails and phone calls

During the reporting period, the project team received 87 comments and questions via emails and phone calls.

A few questions and comments

- Support for Sound Transit to continue to support virtual community events.
- Interest in reevaluating the efficacy of aerial transit (gondolas) to West Seattle.
- Interest in the study of an immersed tube tunnel under the Duwamish River for the West Seattle Link Extension and to replace the West Seattle High Bridge.
- Interest in extending the Draft EIS comment period in order for community to have the capacity and time to meaningfully engage.
- Interest in learning more about station areas, alignments and elevation profiles of the Ballard alternatives.
- Interest in learning more about how light rail can influence zoning in Ballard neighborhood.
- Concerns regarding solicitation letters from a private law firm.
- Questions and concerns about the project timeline including property acquisition and construction.
- Questions about the partnership between Sound Transit and the Seattle Department of Transportation to work together on the West Seattle High Bridge and whether a joint structure is possible.
- Questions about how the alternatives being studied in the Draft EIS were identified.
- Requests for property owner briefings and questions about what property owners can do to prepare for potential relocation.
- Questions about the National Historic Preservation Act Section 106 consultation process.
- Questions about whether a route from Ballard to Northgate or through Fremont was studied during the alternatives development process.
- Questions about whether any of the alternatives could potentially affect the Queen Anne Greenbelt and Kinneer Park.
- Questions about the length of the new downtown tunnels.
- Questions about north portal locations for Ballard alternatives.
- Questions about how Sound Transit and City of Seattle are collaborating on the Ballard-Interbay Regional Transportation (BIRT) system in Magnolia.
- Requests for further engagement with homeowners in Pigeon Point around the property acquisition process.



Community briefings

During the reporting period, the project team participated in 12 briefings, engaging the following groups or individuals:

- Coastal Transportation (7/1)
- General Construction Co./Kiewit (7/1)
- Inn at the WAC (7/2)
- Magnolia Community Council (7/21)
- West Seattle Transportation Coalition (7/23)
- Kiara Apartments (7/24)
- Jackson Hub (8/11)
- Amazon (9/10)
- Stadium District (9/15)
- Avalon Neighborhood ST3 Action Coalition (9/22)
- SODO BIA Transportation Committee (9/23)

Common questions and comments

Corridor wide

- Questions about the differences between preferred alternatives, preferred alternatives with third party funding and other alternatives being studied in the Draft EIS.
- Questions about collaboration between Sound Transit and the City of Seattle.
- Questions about how Sound Transit and the project is adapting to economic effects from COVID-19 and whether the project may have delays as a result.
- Questions about when property owners will be notified about potential acquisition and effects.
- Requests for current ridership numbers.
- Questions about how the realignment process could affect the environmental review process.

Interbay/Ballard

Stations: Ballard, Interbay and Smith Cove

- Questions about the moveable and fixed bridge options across Salmon Bay.
- Questions about how additional funding sources for the project are obtained for the preferred alternatives with third party funding.



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- Questions about the possibility of placing light rail on a future replacement of the Ballard Bridge.
- Questions about how Sound Transit is collaborating with King County Metro and how bus transit in Interbay will be altered once the Ballard Link Extension is operational.

Downtown

Stations: *Seattle Center, South Lake Union, Denny, Westlake and Midtown*

- Support for connecting communities of color and low-income populations, including essential workers who cannot afford to live in the city, with reliable transportation to employment centers.
- Questions about the differences between the alternatives in the downtown corridor.
- Interest in engaging around stations throughout Downtown, thinking beyond the station box and understanding the vision for future connections.
- Questions about how realignment may relate to the West Seattle and Ballard Link Extensions, and particularly the new downtown tunnel.
- Interest in transit-oriented development and opportunities to partner with the community.

Chinatown-International District/SODO

Stations: *Chinatown-International District and SODO*

- Interest in continued agency coordination and community engagement that is responsive to the current environment.
- Interest in an alternative that preserves the E3 busway.
- Questions about how to transfer from the West Seattle Extension to the Ballard Extension at the SODO station.
- Questions about the alternatives through SODO and the SODO station options included in the Draft EIS.
- Interest in relationship between Stadium Station and future of industrial lands in the City of Seattle.
- Questions about construction of the alternatives, including the amount of right-of-way needed to build tracks in SODO and potential traffic disruptions.

West Seattle

Stations: *Delridge, Avalon and Alaska Junction*

- Interest in expanding the light rail south of the Alaska Junction station to serve more communities of color and lower income neighborhoods.
- Interest in advancing the project timeline for light rail operations to West Seattle.
- Interest in adding more bus service throughout West Seattle.
- Questions about postponing the Avalon Station in the context of program realignment.



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- Questions about combining light rail with the new West Seattle High Bridge.
- Questions about the West Seattle High Bridge closure and if it will affect West Seattle light rail planning.
- Questions about potential refinements to alternatives and station locations
- Questions about whether residential effects studied in the Draft EIS include potential effects to multifamily buildings.



Sound Transit continues to virtually engage with property owners and other stakeholders as the project progresses.



Fieldwork activities and property owner meetings

During the reporting period, the project emailed or called residents and businesses about 34 fieldwork activities. The project team also attended 6 meetings with property owners during the reporting period.

Fieldwork activities

Activities

- Notified 118 stakeholders in Chinatown-International District, Downtown, Interbay and SODO about upcoming geotechnical borings, groundwater testing, civil and historical surveys, and heron observations.

A few questions and comments

- Support for continued adherence to COVID-19 safety measures for fieldwork crews.
- Support for continuing to prioritize safety during public demonstrations through Downtown.
- Questions about temporary impacts to parking and loading.
- Questions about if fieldwork analysis will be conducted for all alternatives.
- Questions about the fieldwork right-of-entry process in Chinatown-International District.
- Comments about noise effects of fieldwork.
- Requests for more information related to fieldwork activities in Downtown corridor.



Geotechnical drilling rig in Downtown Seattle.

Property owner meetings

A few questions and comments

- Questions about potential station options in Interbay and West Seattle.
- Questions about the appraisal process for property acquisitions.
- Questions about the timeline for property owner outreach.
- Concerns about elderly residents finding appropriate housing if they are displaced due to property acquisition.
- Questions about how the Draft EIS alternatives were identified.
- Questions about how the closure of the West Seattle High Bridge could potentially affect the project.
- Questions about when the Draft EIS will be released and the length of the comment period.
- Questions about how to get involved in the design for the Chinatown-International District station.
- Questions about potential property acquisition to build new stations.

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