

Ballard Link Extension

NEPA Scoping

System Expansion Committee

10/10/2024



Why we're here today

- National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)
Scoping for Ballard Link Extension

No action today

Ballard Link – Upcoming Milestones

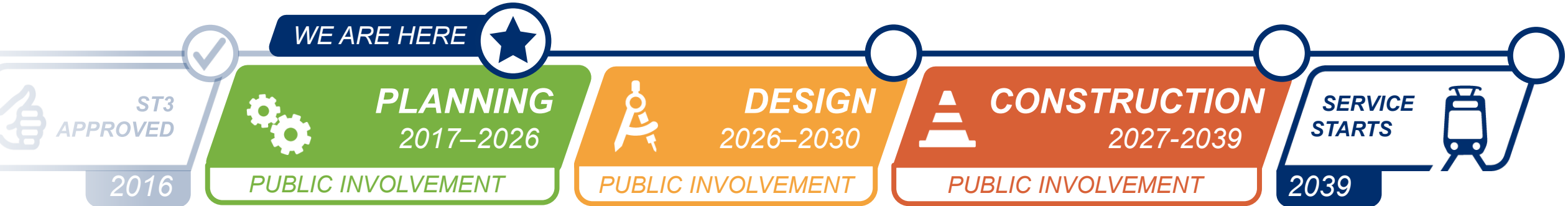
- Mid-Oct to late Nov (dates TBD): NEPA Scoping / Public comment period
- Oct 10 (SEC): Briefing on NEPA Scoping
- Dec 12 (SEC): NEPA Scoping community feedback
- Dec 19 (Board): NEPA Scoping community feedback
- 2025: Draft EIS Publication / Public comment period; Board action to confirm or modify the Preferred Alternatives
- 2026: Final EIS; Selection of Project to be Built; and Record of Decision



Ballard Link Extension

- ✓ Included in Sound Transit 3 (ST3) voter approved plan.
- ✓ Adds nearly eight miles of light rail service, including a new light rail-only downtown tunnel.
- ✓ Includes nine new stations from Chinatown-International District to Ballard.

Ballard Link Extension project timeline





ST3
APPROVED

2016



PLANNING



DESIGN

2017–2023

Alternatives development

- ✓ 2018: Early scoping
- ✓ 2019: Scoping
- ✓ 2019: Board identifies preferred alternatives and other alternatives

Environmental review

- ✓ 2022: Publish WSBLE Draft EIS
- ✓ 2023: Board confirms or modifies preferred alternatives



2024–2026

Environmental review

Fall 2024: NEPA Scoping

2025: Publish BLE Draft EIS

Public comment period

Board confirms or modifies preferred alternatives

2026: Publish BLE Final EIS

Board selects project to be built

Federal Record of Decision

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

2018: Stakeholder Advisory Group meetings



2019: Scoping meetings



2019-2020: Station planning neighborhood forums



Planning phase

Alternatives development

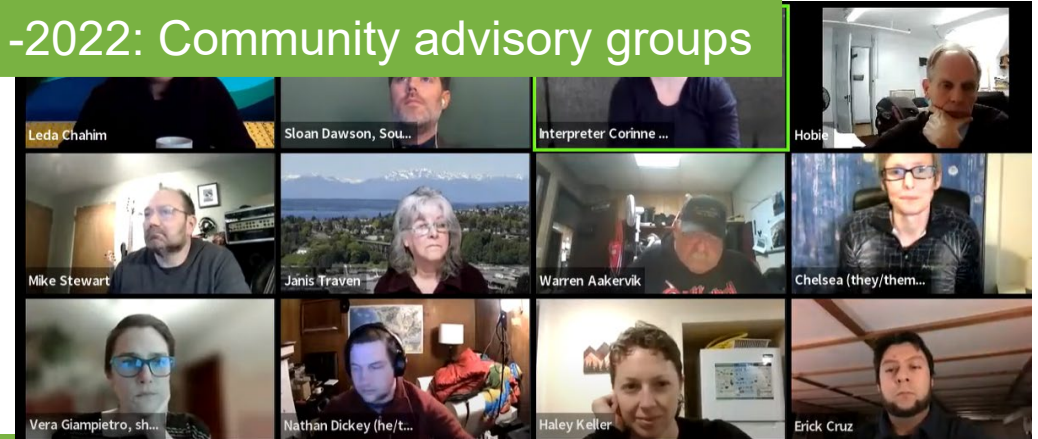
- **2018:** Early scoping
- **2018-2019:** Neighborhood forums, Stakeholder Advisory Group, Elected Leadership Group
- **2019:** Scoping and public comment period
- **2019:** Board identifies preferred alternatives and other alternatives to study in an environmental impact statement (EIS)

2021-2022: Community advisory groups

Planning phase

Environmental review

- **2022:** Publish West Seattle and Ballard Link Extensions Draft EIS and public comment period
- **2022-2023:** Further studies and community engagement
- **2023:** Board confirms or modifies preferred alternatives for the BLE project



2022: Draft EIS open house



2022-2023: Further studies open houses and workshops



Why we are we scoping (again)?

Next year, Sound Transit will publish a new NEPA BLE Draft EIS that builds upon the 2022 WSBLE Draft EIS with analysis of new alternatives and project refinements.

The first stage in this process is a Scoping comment period to collect public feedback. However, we are not starting over.

We have been collecting public input on the project since planning began in 2017, and all past comments will be carried forward in the new BLE Draft EIS.



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PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

So, what's an Environmental Impact Statement?

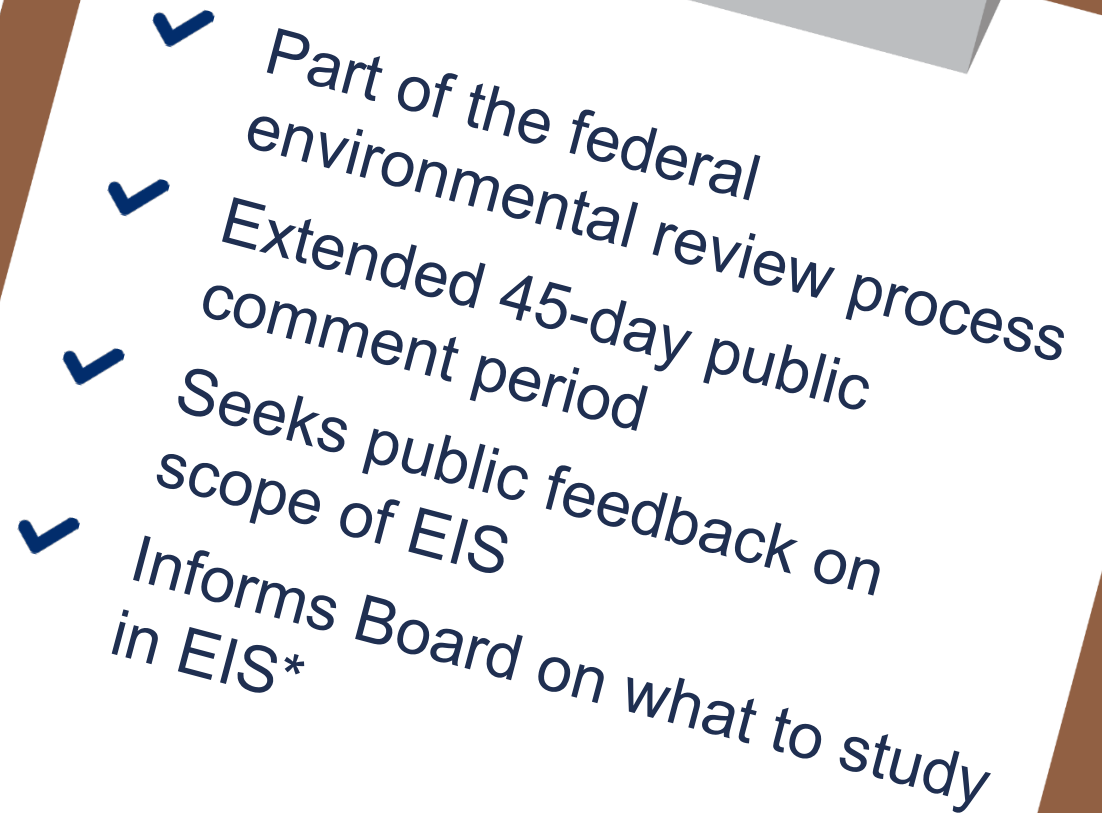
Or, "EIS" for short.

Provides agencies and the public an understanding of environmental consequences and assists in decision-making.

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- ✓ Starts with scoping
 - ✓ Range of alternatives
 - ✓ Potential impacts
 - ✓ Potential mitigation

What is scoping?

The Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) scoping period is an opportunity for the public, Tribes and agencies to **provide input on the scope** of the EIS, including the project's purpose and need, topics or issues to study in the EIS, and light rail route alternatives.

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- ✓ Part of the federal environmental review process
 - ✓ Extended 45-day public comment period
 - ✓ Seeks public feedback on scope of EIS
 - ✓ Informs Board on what to study in EIS*

What is typically studied in an EIS?



Transportation

- Regional transportation
- Transit services
- Arterial and local street systems
- Parking
- Non-motorized facilities
- Navigation
- Freight



Natural environment

- Air quality and greenhouse gas emissions
- Ecosystems
- Water resources
- Geology and soils



Built environment

- Acquisitions, displacements and relocations
- Noise and vibration
- Economic effect
- Visual resources
- Parks and recreation
- Land use
- Energy
- Hazardous materials
- Public services
- Historic and archaeological resources
- Social resources, community facilities and neighborhoods
- Electromagnetic fields
- Utilities

Ballard Link Extension alternatives

- Preferred alternative
- Other EIS alternatives



How to provide scoping comments

- *Join us at a BLE scoping meeting (stay tuned for confirmed dates, times and locations)*
- *Comment online: ballardlink.participate.online*
- *Email us: blescoping@soundtransit.org*
- *Leave a voicemail: 206-903-7223*
- *Mail us:*
Ballard Link Extensions, c/o Lauren Swift, Sound Transit,
401 S. Jackson St., Seattle, WA 98104

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Thank you.



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