

Appendix A

NEPA Scoping Public Involvement Summary

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Ballard Link Extension

NEPA Scoping Public Involvement Summary

December 2024

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NEPA Scoping Public Involvement Summary

NEPA SCOPING PERIOD: Oct. 24 – Dec. 9, 2024

PROJECT PHASE: PLANNING

Introduction

In partnership with the Federal Transit Administration, Sound Transit will publish a new National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and Supplemental State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Ballard Link Extension. This second environmental review process will build upon the 2022 West Seattle and Ballard Link Extensions (WSBLE) Draft EIS with analysis of new alternatives and project refinements identified by the Sound Transit Board in March and July of 2023. Given the additional environmental review needed for these project refinements, staff determined that the WSLE and BLE projects would advance on two different environmental review timelines. Sound Transit has been collecting feedback from Tribes, the public, and agencies to inform the study of the Ballard Link Extension (BLE) alternatives since 2017, with the first scoping phase for the WSBLE Draft EIS being carried out in 2019.

The first stage in this second EIS process is a scoping period, however Sound Transit is not starting over. All comments from the previous environmental review process (scoping, draft EIS, etc.) have been used to inform the current project status and will be carried forward into the new BLE Draft EIS.

Overview

Sound Transit conducted NEPA scoping for the Ballard Link Extension (BLE) project from Oct. 24 through Dec. 9, 2024. This second NEPA scoping phase provided an opportunity for partners and the community to learn about and comment on the project as it stands after six years of analysis, design and public engagement.

This report describes Sound Transit's public involvement efforts during NEPA scoping, which included in-person and online opportunities to review and provide input on the following:

- Current route and station alternatives.
- Topics to study in the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).
- Project Purpose and Need.

Participation by the numbers



Notifications

Sound Transit advertised the NEPA scoping comment period using various notification tools between October and December 2024. Notifications included the following and details are available in the appendix.

- Emails to subscriber lists.
- Social media (Facebook).
- Media advisory.
- Digital ads in local publications.
- Notice in the Federal Register.

Outreach opportunities: In-person and online

Public meetings:

Sound Transit held two in-person NEPA scoping meetings for two hours each. The meetings included displays with project information, display boards showing current station and route alternatives, and opportunities to submit scoping comments. Paper comment forms and laptops were available for attendees to use and submit their scoping comments. A court reporter was also in attendance to transcribe scoping comments from attendees (court reporters and interpreters worked together to provide in-language transcription of verbal comments).

Scoping meetings were held in ADA-accessible venues that were transit accessible.

Scoping Meeting #1 (99 attendees)

Thursday, Nov. 7, 2024: 5-7 p.m.
Union Station, 401 S Jackson St, Seattle, WA 98104
Interpretation was available in Mandarin, Cantonese, Vietnamese, and ASL.

Scoping Meeting #2 (80 attendees)

Wednesday, Nov. 13: 5-7 p.m.
National Nordic Museum, 2655 NW Market St, Seattle, WA 98107
Interpretation was available in ASL.

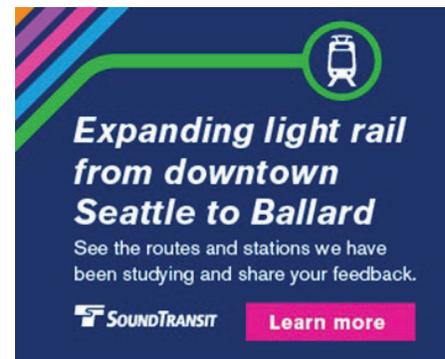


ASL Interpretation at Union Station scoping meeting

Online open house:

An online open house was available for approximately six weeks between Oct. 24 – Dec. 9, 2024. The online open house provided stakeholders the opportunity to review scoping information and provide scoping comments on current route and station alternatives, topics to study in the Draft EIS, and the project Purpose and Need. All materials from in-person events were available on the online open house. The online open house was fully translated into four languages: Traditional and Simplified Chinese, Vietnamese, and Spanish. Additional language translations were available by request and through an embedded Google Translate tool on the site.

The online open house received over 9,600 visitors during the NEPA scoping period.



Digital ad example

Materials:

The following materials were developed or made available for the in-person and online open houses. All materials (except where noted) were translated into four languages: Traditional and Simplified Chinese, Vietnamese, and Spanish.

NEPA scoping information handout: A two-page document providing an overview of the environmental review process thus far, the scoping period, a project timeline, and next steps, and highlighting the ways to submit a scoping comment.

Purpose and Need handout: A one-page handout outlining the project Purpose and Need statement (available in English; translated versions of the Purpose and Need statement were available on the online open house).

Presentation: The presentation included a project overview and timeline, information on the planning phase (2017-2023) and the need for a second NEPA scoping period, a map of the current route and station alternatives, an overview of the environmental review process, and information on ways to provide scoping comments.

Display boards: The display boards shared general information about the project and the upcoming environmental review process, including a project timeline, information about NEPA scoping and why it is happening again, how to comment during the scoping period, and maps of the current station and route alternatives by project segment.

Meeting guide: A handout for each meeting attendee that included the presentation slides and meeting display boards.

Project fact sheet: A general project fact sheet highlighting the project map, timeline, and key milestones.

Comment form: A one-page comment form providing space to write comments and a place sign up for BLE email updates.

Appendix M from the West Seattle and Ballard Link Extension Projects Draft EIS: An appendix from the project's previous Draft EIS with information about prior alternatives development processes, which informed current station and alignment alternatives (available in English upon request).

Further Studies Executive Summary: A summary of the further studies that followed the previous Draft EIS; study results that informed the refinement to current alternatives were highlighted. (available in English upon request).

Comment collection

Sound Transit collected NEPA scoping comments in a variety of ways, both in-person and online:

Online open house: Commenters could provide scoping comments online using the project website, available 24/7 during the scoping period.

Comment cards: Commenters could write their feedback on comment cards available at in-person open houses events held during the scoping period.

Speak with a court reporter: Commenters could share a verbal comment with a court reporter at an open house, which would then be transcribed.

Voicemail: Commenters could call the Ballard Link Extension project phone number to record a verbal comment, which would be transcribed.

Email: Commenters could email their scoping comments to blescoping@soundtransit.org

Mailed letter: Commenters could mail letters with their comments to Sound Transit.

Comments received

Nearly 170 scoping comments were received through various channels including comment forms and comments made at in-person events, the online open house, emails, and voicemails.

Overall Scoping Feedback:

- Support for regional transit and for building the BLE as quickly as possible and fulfilling the voter approved ST3 plan.
- Support for building the project right to effectively serve Seattle for generations.
- Support for tunnel alignments where possible.
- Interest in providing effective multimodal access at stations and prioritizing below ground station transfers.
- Concerns related to property acquisitions and construction effects on homes and businesses.
- Interest in an extended 90-day public comment period when the Draft EIS is released.

CID/SODO Segment Scoping Feedback:

- Interest in locating the CID Station on 4th Avenue S to create a transit hub in South Downtown and prioritizing an efficient passenger transfer experience.
- Some interest in locating the CID Station at S Dearborn Street.
- Some concerns that the CID Station at S Dearborn Street is not accessible to existing infrastructure, and that it could affect or displace the nearby artist community.
- Interest in removing the CID Station alternatives at 5th Avenue from consideration.
- Some interest in continued study of the social and economic impacts of CID Station alternatives on nearby communities.
- Concerns about displacement and neighborhood effects to the CID community and small businesses during construction.

Downtown Segment Scoping Feedback:

- Concerns about construction impacts, particularly road closures and construction of multiple stations concurrently, and noise and vibration.
- Some interest in preserving the building housing the Washington State Department of Corrections reentry center and not displacing the program.
- Some support for the Midtown Station location on 5th Ave.

South Interbay and Interbay/Ballard Segments Scoping Feedback:

- Some interest in the preferred Smith Cove station location for its proximity to the cruise ship

terminals.

- Some interest in a tunnel alignment along Elliott Avenue.
- Some concern about business displacements in Interbay.
- Interest in a tunnel under Salmon Bay instead of a bridge.
- Support for a Ballard station located at 15th Avenue NW.
- Some interest in a station farther west or exploring pedestrian tunnels to better connect the Ballard station to the Ballard core.



Community members providing scoping comments at the NEPA Scoping Meeting at Union Station

Next steps

Additional opportunities for public involvement related to the project design will occur throughout the project planning phase and following the release of the Draft EIS, expected in 2025. There are multiple ways for the public to stay informed about the project:

Email the project: ballardlink@soundtransit.org.

Call the Community Outreach Team: 206-903-7223.

Visit the project website: soundtransit.org/ballardlink-design.

Sign up for project updates by email: soundtransit.org/subscribe.

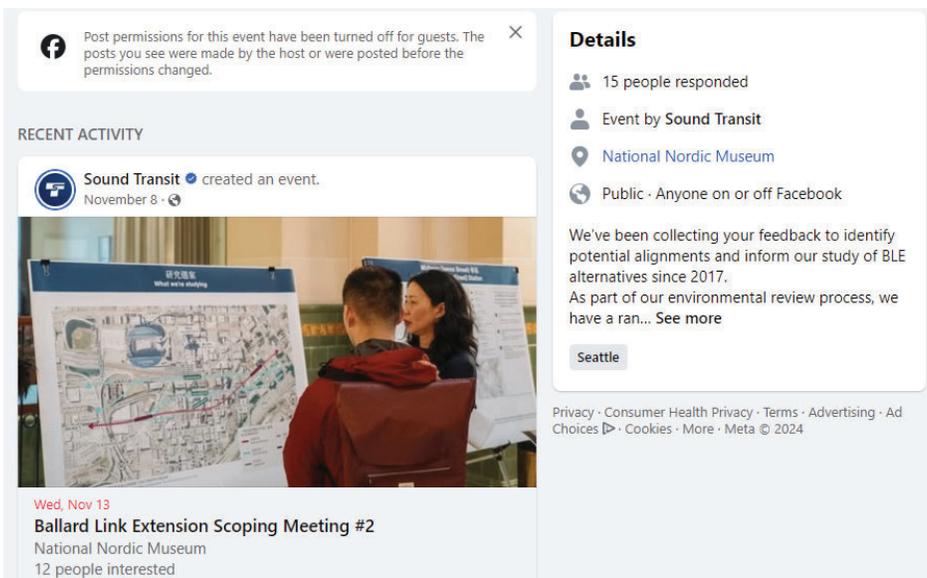
Appendix A: Notifications

Sound Transit advertised the scoping comment period between October and December 2024:

Social media

Sound Transit notified the community about in-person and online opportunities to participate in the scoping comment period through Facebook. An organic post was made to announce the start of the scoping period and share information on how to submit a comment. Following this announcement, two events were created for the Nov. 7 and Nov. 13 scoping meetings and advertised organically on the Sound Transit page.

Sound Transit Facebook event Post



Digital ads

The project team ran digital ads to five local publications (including two in-language Chinese publications) to advertise the scoping meetings. Ads linked to the project online open house with more information on how to make a public comment.

Publication	Run Dates	Impressions
International Examiner	10/24 - 11/7	33,130
NW Asian Weekly	10/24 - 11/7	17,948
Seattle Chinese Post	10/24 - 11/7	8,730
Seattle Chinese Times	10/24 - 11/7	6,400
The Seattle Times	10/24 - 11/7	73,370

Digital ad example

The screenshot shows the website nwasianweekly.com. The main content area features several articles:

- Diwali officially added to Pennsylvania's state holiday calendar**: Diwali is now officially a state holiday in Pennsylvania, following Governor Josh Shapiro's signing of Senate Bill 402 on Monday.
- Raman Arora: From immigrant dream to Entrepreneur of the Year**: Accompanied by a photo of Raman Arora holding a framed certificate.
- US President & Vice President**: A list of names including Bob Ferguson, Denny Heck, and Bob Hasegawa.

 On the right side, there are two prominent advertisements:

- Expanding light rail from downtown Seattle to Ballard**: A blue and green ad for Sound Transit with a 'Learn more' button.
- For everything you'd rather do than have the flu**: A teal ad with a 'Get Vaccinated' button.

In-language digital ad example

The screenshot shows the Seattle Chinese Times website. The top navigation bar includes 'SEATTLE CHINESE TIMES' and a search icon. Below the header, there are several sections:

- Local 本地**: Contains articles such as '分析2024年美国选举之政治动态与选民心态变化' and '用納稅人的錢去分發發專工員 而非廉價支持?'.
- Focus 焦點**: Features a large article titled '西雅圖在地釀製康普茶品牌' (Seattle local brewing kombucha brand) with a photo of a kombucha stand.
- Community 社區通知**: Includes a notice for 'SPL 是您的圖書館' (SPL is your library).
- World 世界**: Lists international news items like '人類預期壽命增長放緩 科技難以突破衰老障礙' and 'AI搶走飯碗 清潔工作更有效率'.

 There are also several promotional banners:

- A public health banner for King County: '请不要错过你喜欢的的事情: 接种疫苗! 更新款新冠疫苗 | 流感 | RSV!'.
- A yellow banner for 'SR 509 正在施工中!' (SR 509 under construction!).
- A blue banner for '將輕軌從西雅圖市中心擴展至Ballard' (Expanding light rail from downtown Seattle to Ballard).
- A green banner at the bottom right: '家人無流感 工作無流感 健身無流感 球賽日無流感 學校無流感 餐館無流感 朋友無流感 生活無流感'.

Media Advisory

Sound Transit posted a media advisory on the Ballard Link Extension project page on ST.org.



Project updates

Learn about where and when construction is happening throughout the ST district.

[Home](#) / [Get to know us](#) / [News and events](#) / [Project updates](#) / [Public comment period begins on Ballard Link Extension](#)

Ballard Link Extension

Public comment period begins on Ballard Link Extension

Opportunity for public to provide feedback on the project; comment period ends Dec. 9

October 28, 2024

Sound Transit has started the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) scoping process for the **Ballard Link Extension**. The extension will add 7.7 miles of light rail service with nine new stations from downtown Seattle to the Ballard neighborhood, including a new downtown Seattle rail-only tunnel.

Sound Transit previously conducted a scoping process and comment period in 2019 to inform the West Seattle and Ballard Link Extensions Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) that was published in 2022. Since then, the West Seattle and Ballard Link projects have separated, and Sound Transit is now developing a new NEPA Draft EIS and Supplemental State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) Draft EIS for the Ballard Link Extension.

The new Ballard Link Extension Draft EIS will carry forward the range of alternatives and all public feedback collected from the project's earlier combined WSBLE Scoping and Draft EIS comment periods.

Community members can learn more about the project and provide additional new feedback through the **Ballard Link Extension participate online site** and at two public scoping meetings:

- **Thursday, Nov. 7, 5 – 7 p.m.; short presentation at 5:30 p.m.**
 - Union Station, Joni Earl Great Hall
 - 401 S Jackson Street, Seattle, WA 98104
 - Cantonese, Mandarin, and Vietnamese interpretation and translated materials will be available. ASL interpretation will be provided.
 - Refreshments and activities for children will be provided.
- **Wednesday, Nov. 13, 5 – 7 p.m., short presentation at 5:30 p.m.**
 - National Nordic Museum
 - 2655 NW Market Street, Seattle, WA 98107
 - ASL interpretation will be provided.
 - Refreshments and activities for children will be provided.

Feedback can also be emailed to ballardlink@soundtransit.org or called in at 206-903-7223.

Written comments can be mailed to:

- Ballard Link Extension, c/o Lauren Swift
Sound Transit
401 S. Jackson St., Seattle, WA 98104.

Comments are due December 9.

Following the NEPA scoping process, Sound Transit will prepare the Ballard Link Extension Draft EIS in coordination with the Federal Transit Administration. Publication of the Draft EIS is expected in 2025. Start of service for the Ballard Link Extension is scheduled for 2039.

More information is available about the Ballard Link Extension can be accessed [here](#).

Email subscriber list

Sound Transit sent four emails to the project email subscriber list (over 12,200 subscribers) in preparation for the scoping period. The initial email announced the scoping period and in-person events and opportunities to provide comments. Subsequent emails provided updates to the scoping timeline and in-person meeting information.

One of the the four emails sent to email subscribers



BLE scoping begins today!

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) scoping comment period for the Ballard Link Extension (BLE) begins today! This extended comment period will last 45 days, ending on Dec. 9. We are collecting your feedback on the project's Purpose and Need, route and station alternatives, and potential topics for study in the BLE Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). We have collected public input on the project since planning began in 2017, and all your past comments will carry forward in the ongoing environmental review process. We invite you to share new and additional feedback with us.

Learn more at upcoming scoping meetings:

Drop by these open house scoping meetings at any time. Project staff will attend to answer questions and court reporters will be present to capture scoping comments. The scoping meeting content will cover information about the EIS process, project history, and current route and station alternatives.

Scoping Meeting #1

- Nov. 7, 5-7 p.m., short presentation at 5:30 p.m.
 - Union Station, [401 S Jackson Street, Seattle, WA 98104](#)
 - *Cantonese, Mandarin, and Vietnamese interpretation and translated materials will be available. ASL interpretation will be provided.*
 - *Refreshments and activities for children will be provided.*

Scoping Meeting #2

- Nov. 13, 5-7 p.m., short presentation at 5:30 p.m.
 - National Nordic Museum, [2655 NW Market Street, Seattle, WA 98107](#)
 - *ASL interpretation will be provided.*
 - *Refreshments and activities for children will be provided.*

To request accommodation, contact project staff in advance of a scoping meeting at ballardlink@soundtransit.org.

How to provide public comment:

- **Attend one of our scoping meetings:** We will have court reporters and computers available for submission of in-person and online comments.
- **Comment online:** soundtransit.org/ballardlink-design
- **Email us:** blescoping@soundtransit.org
- **Leave a voicemail:** 206-903-7223
- **Mail us:** Ballard Link Extension, c/o Lauren Swift, Sound Transit, 401 S. Jackson St., Seattle, WA 98104

[Review and comment now](#)

Stay up to date

- 2024年10月24日，Sound Transit開始進行Ballard Link擴展項目 (Ballard Link Extension, BLE) 的《國家環境政策法》(NEPA) 選址程序。我們正在徵求對於BLE《環境影響報告草案》(Draft Environmental Impact Statement, Draft EIS) 中的目的與需求、備選方案及潛在影響的意見回饋。45天的選址意見徵詢期將於12月9日結束。隨時掌握[Ballard Link擴展](#)項目的最新資訊。
- 2024年10月24日，Sound Transit开始了Ballard Link扩展项目 (BLE) 的《国家环境政策法》(NEPA) 范围界定流程。我们正在寻求有关Ballard Link扩展项目 (Ballard Link Extension, BLE) 《环境影响报告书 (EIS) 草案》中所研究的目的和需求、备选方案以及潜在影响的反馈。为期45天的范围界定评议期将于12月9日结束。获取有关[Ballard Link扩展](#)项目的最新消息。
- Vào ngày 24 tháng 10 năm 2024, Sound Transit đã bắt đầu quy trình xác định phạm vi theo Đạo Luật Chính Sách Môi Trường Quốc Gia (National Environmental Policy Act, NEPA) cho dự án Mở Rộng Tuyến Ballard Link (Ballard Link Extension, BLE) Chúng tôi đang thu thập ý kiến phản hồi về Mục Đích và Nhu Cầu, các lựa chọn thay thế và các tác động tiềm ẩn để đưa vào nghiên cứu trong Bản Thảo Báo Cáo Tác Động Môi Trường (EIS) cho dự án BLE. Giai đoạn đóng góp ý kiến về xác định phạm vi sẽ kéo dài 45 ngày và kết thúc vào ngày 9 tháng 12. Luôn cập nhật thông tin về dự án [Mở Rộng Tuyến Ballard Link](#).
- El 24 de octubre de 2024, Sound Transit inició el proceso de definición del alcance de la Ley de Política Ambiental Nacional (National Environmental Policy Act, NEPA) para la extensión de Link a Ballard (Ballard Link Extension, BLE). Queremos recibir comentarios sobre el propósito y la necesidad, las alternativas y los posibles impactos que se estudiarán en el borrador de la Declaración de Impacto Ambiental (Draft Environmental Impact Statement, EIS) de la BLE. El 9 de diciembre finaliza el plazo de 45 días para enviar comentarios. Manténgase al tanto del proyecto de [Extensión de Ballard Link](#).
- On Oct. 24, 2024, Sound Transit began the National Environmental Policy Act scoping process for the Ballard Link Extension (BLE). We are seeking feedback on the Purpose and Need, alternatives, and potential topics to be studied in the BLE Draft Environmental Impact Statement. The 45-day scoping comment period ends on Dec. 9. Stay current with [the Ballard Link Extension](#) project.

More project info: soundtransit.org/ballardlink

Get in touch: ballardlink@soundtransit.org or 206-903-7229

Notice in Federal Register

The Federal Register is the official daily publication for rules, proposed rules, and notices of Federal agencies and organizations. Sound Transit alongside the Federal Transit Administration issued a Notice of Intent to Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) on the Federal Register on Oct. 24, 2024. This notice contained project information like the Purpose and Need and description of proposed alternatives, background on the previously associated WSBLE environmental review process, notice of the 45-day NEPA scoping comment period, and contact information for the Sound Transit Environmental Team.



DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Transit Administration

Notice of Intent to Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement for the Ballard Link Extension Project, King County, Washington

AGENCY: Federal Transit Administration (FTA), Department of Transportation (DOT).

ACTION: Notice of intent to prepare an environmental impact statement (EIS).

SUMMARY: The Federal Transit Administration (FTA), as lead Federal agency, and the Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority (Sound Transit), as local project sponsor and joint lead agency, issue this notice to advise the public that they intend to prepare an environmental impact statement (EIS) pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) for the Ballard Link Extension Project (Project) located in the City of Seattle, King County, Washington.

DATES: Comments related to the NEPA review of this project must be received on or before [INSERT DATE 45 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER]. FTA will consider comments received after that date to the extent practicable. FTA will consider all comments received during this NEPA scoping period and those previously submitted during the Washington State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) scoping process. Commenters who previously provided SEPA scoping comments do not need to resubmit those same comments for consideration under NEPA, but may elect to do so.

ADDRESSES: Comments on the scope of the EIS should be directed to: Lauren Swift, Central Corridor Environmental Manager, 401 South Jackson Street, Seattle, WA, 98104, by email to: lauren.swift@soundtransit.org, or by phone at 206-398-5301.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: For FTA: Erin Littauer, erin.littauer@dot.gov, 206-220-7521. For Sound Transit: Lauren Swift, lauren.swift@soundtransit.org, 206-398-5301.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Project would extend existing light rail service along a 7.7-mile corridor through downtown Seattle, from SODO to Ballard, and include a new 3.3-mile light rail-only tunnel from south of the Chinatown-International District to South Lake Union and Seattle Center/Uptown. Stations would serve the following areas: Chinatown-International District, Midtown, Westlake, Denny, South Lake Union, Seattle Center, Smith Cove, Interbay, and Ballard. FTA has created the following “Unique Identification Number” that will be included on all environmental documents for this project: EISX-021-36-R10-1728553542.

FTA, as NEPA Federal lead agency, and Sound Transit, as joint lead agency for NEPA and lead agency under the Washington State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA), issued a Notice of Intent / Scoping Notice in February 2019 and later published a combined NEPA/SEPA Draft EIS in January 2022 that evaluated both the West Seattle Link Extension and the Ballard Link Extension together as a single project: the West Seattle and Ballard Link Extensions Project (WSBLE). The extensions were evaluated together in the WSBLE Draft EIS because of their location, schedule, and review efficiencies for partner agencies.

In July 2022, the Sound Transit Board directed Sound Transit staff to prepare further studies evaluating additional station options and other refinements for the Ballard Link Extension (BLE). Some of these project options and refinements required additional conceptual engineering and environmental review. Rather than delay completion of the environmental review process for the West Seattle Link Extension while additional review was conducted for BLE, Sound Transit and FTA decided to move forward under separate environmental reviews for each extension. As described in the WSBLE Draft EIS, the two extensions will operate as separate lines, and the extensions are stand-alone projects with independent utility.

Because the environmental review processes are now separated for the two extensions, Sound Transit is preparing a SEPA Supplemental Draft EIS that evaluates the new station options and refinements for the BLE. FTA has determined that a new NEPA Draft EIS be prepared for the BLE, because it is now being evaluated independently from the West Seattle extension. The NEPA process requires that project scoping be repeated with a 30-day public comment period. Scoping for BLE has been extended with a 45-day public comment period. The scoping process and Draft EIS for the BLE will build on the analysis completed for the WSBLE Draft EIS.

Comments made during the previous scoping process (February 19 through April 2, 2019) will be carried forward and considered, as will all of the relevant analysis of alternatives and environmental impacts included in the 2022 Draft EIS. At the conclusion of the NEPA scoping process, FTA and Sound Transit anticipate issuing the Draft NEPA EIS and SEPA Supplemental Draft EIS, including the new information and analysis.

FTA has determined that the project will not be evaluated as a major project as defined in 23 U.S.C. 139(a)(7).

I. Purpose and Need for the Project

The purpose of the project is to expand the Sound Transit Link light rail system from SODO to Ballard, to make appropriate community investments to improve mobility, and to increase capacity and connectivity for regional connections in order to achieve the following:

- Provide 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 regional transit system plan, Sound Transit 3 Plan (<https://www.soundtransit.org/get-to-know-us/documents-reports/sound-transit-3>).
- Improve regional mobility by increasing connectivity and capacity through Downtown Seattle to meet the projected transit demand.

- Connect regional centers as described in adopted regional and local land use, transportation, and economic development plans and Sound Transit’s *Regional Transit Long-Range Plan* (https://www.soundtransit.org/sites/default/files/documents/2015123_lrpupdate.pdf).
- Implement a system that is technically and financially feasible to build, operate, and maintain.
- Expand mobility for the corridor and the region’s residents, which include transit-dependent residents, low-income people, and communities of color.
- Encourage equitable and sustainable urban growth in station areas through support of transit-oriented development and multi-modal integration in a manner that is consistent with local land use plans and policies, including Sound Transit’s *Equitable Transit-Oriented Development Policy* (<https://www.soundtransit.org/system-expansion/creating-vibrant-stations/transit-oriented-development>) and *Sustainability Plan* (<https://www.soundtransit.org/get-to-know-us/documents-reports/2019-sustainability-plan>).
- Encourage convenient and safe non-motorized access to stations, such as bicycle and pedestrian connections, consistent with Sound Transit’s *System Access Policy* (<https://www.soundtransit.org/system-expansion/creating-vibrant-stations/connecting-to-stations>).
- Preserve and promote a healthy environment and economy by minimizing adverse impacts on the natural, built, and social environments through sustainable practices.

The need for the project is as follows:

- When measured using national standards, existing transit routes between SODO and Ballard currently operate with poor reliability. Roadway congestion in the project corridor will continue to degrade transit performance and reliability as the city is expected to add approximately 287,000 people and approximately 214,000 jobs between 2018 and 2050 (Puget Sound Regional Council 2023).

- Increased ridership from regional population and employment growth will increase operational frequency in the existing Downtown Seattle Transit Tunnel, requiring additional tunnel capacity.
- Puget Sound Regional Council (the regional metropolitan planning organization) and local plans call for high-capacity transit in the corridor consistent with VISION 2050 (<https://www.psrc.org/planning-2050/vision-2050>) and the Regional Transit Long-Range Plan (https://www.soundtransit.org/sites/default/files/documents/2015123_lrpupdate.pdf).
- The region's residents and communities, including transit-dependent people, low-income people, and communities of color, need long-term regional mobility and multi-modal connectivity as called for in the Washington State Growth Management Act (Revised Code of Washington 36.70A.108).
- Regional and local plans call for increased residential and/or employment density at and around high-capacity transit stations, and increased options for multi-modal access. VISION 2050 has a goal for 65 percent of the region's population and 75 percent of the region's employment to occur in regional growth centers and within walking distance of transit.
- Environmental and sustainability goals of the State and region, as established in Washington State law and embodied in Puget Sound Regional Council's VISION 2050 (2020) and 2022-2050 Regional Transportation Plan (2022), include reducing greenhouse gas emissions by prioritizing transportation investments that decrease vehicle miles traveled.

II. Description of Proposed Action and Alternatives

Each light rail extension build alternative is approximately 7.7 miles long and includes up to nine stations that serve the following areas: Chinatown-International District, Midtown, Westlake, Denny, South Lake Union, Seattle Center, Smith Cove, Interbay, and Ballard. FTA and Sound Transit may also examine several design options and potential minimal operable segments for the proposed alternatives. Information about the proposed project, the alternatives development process, scoping, and the EIS process are available on the project website:

<https://www.soundtransit.org/system-expansion/ballard-link-extension>, by contacting the project sponsor at ballardlink@soundtransit.org, or the project phone line at (206) 903-7223. For purposes of this notice, the proposed build alternatives can be generally described as follows:

A new downtown tunnel would begin in the vicinity of the Stadium station in SODO, head north with alignments between 4th Avenue S and 6th Avenue S through the Chinatown-International District, then travel northwest below 4th Avenue, 5th Avenue or 6th Avenue through Midtown and Westlake. The alternatives would continue in a tunnel configuration along Westlake Avenue N to South Lake Union with a station near Denny Way before turning northwest with a station near Aurora Avenue N between Harrison and Roy streets. The alternatives would continue in a tunnel towards Seattle Center with a station on either Republican or Mercer Streets. The alternatives then turn north and begin to transition to elevated or retained cut configurations to serve a Smith Cove station along Elliott Avenue W. From the Smith Cove station, the alternatives either continue in an elevated configuration along 15th Avenue W or transition to a retained cut along the east side of the Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) railway tracks to an elevated or retained cut station in Interbay near W Dravus Street. From the Interbay station, alternatives transition to the east of 15th Avenue W and cross Salmon Bay in a tunnel or on a high-level fixed bridge. One alternative would continue in an elevated alignment along 15th Avenue W and cross Salmon Bay on the west side of 15th Avenue W on a movable bridge. Station options in Ballard include elevated and tunnel stations near NW Market Street on 15th Avenue NW or 14th Avenue NW.

The build alternatives could also include transit-related roadway, bicycle, maritime, and pedestrian projects by Sound Transit or others. These improvements may be eligible for Federal funding and could be part of the transit project or constructed together with it as part of a joint effort with agency partners, thereby meriting joint environmental analysis. This could include access improvements around station areas and over waterway crossings. Sound Transit would

identify these improvements and could include them as part of the project as it works with partner agencies.

III. Summary of Expected Impacts

Consistent with NEPA, FTA and Sound Transit will evaluate, with input from the public, Tribes, and agencies, the potential impacts of the alternatives on the natural, built, and social environments. Likely areas of investigation include, transportation (including navigable waterways), land use and consistency with applicable plans, land acquisition and displacements, socioeconomics, park and recreation resources, historic and cultural resources, environmental justice, visual and aesthetic qualities, air quality, noise and vibration, energy use, safety and security, and ecosystems, including threatened and endangered species and marine mammals. The EIS will evaluate short-term construction impacts and long-term operational impacts. It will also consider indirect and cumulative impacts. The EIS will also propose measures to avoid, minimize, or mitigate significant adverse impacts.

FTA and Sound Transit will comply with all Federal environmental laws, regulations, and executive orders applicable to the proposed project during the environmental review process.

IV. Anticipated Federal Permits and Other Authorizations

Federal Transit Administration:

NEPA Final Environmental Impact Statement and Record of Decision

National Historic Preservation Act Section 106 Review

United States Department of Transportation Act of 1966, Section 4(f)

Land and Water Conservation Fund Act of 1965, Section 6(f) (if needed)

Federal Emergency Management Agency:

Conditional Letter of Map Revision (if needed)

Letter of Map Revision (if needed)

United States Army Corps of Engineers:

Clean Water Act, Section 404 (if needed) (including WA Department of Ecology Water Quality Certification: Clean Water Act Section 401)

Rivers and Harbors Act, Section 10 (if needed)

United States Code Title 33 Section 408 Review (if needed)

United States Coast Guard:

United States Coast Guard Bridge Permit (if needed)

United States Fish and Wildlife Service:
Federal Endangered Species Review

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Fisheries Service:
Federal Endangered Species Review
Essential Fish Habitat Review
Marine Mammal Take Incidental Harassment Authorization (if needed)

United States Department of the Interior:
National Historic Preservation Act Section 106 Review
United States Department of Transportation Act of 1966, Section 4(f)

V. Schedule for the Decision-Making Process

Below is a tentative schedule for the decision-making process, including environmental review milestones:

Draft EIS publication: April 2025
Confirmation or modification of the Preferred Alternative: July 2025
Final EIS publication: May 2026
Record of Decision: October 2026

As noted in the tentative schedule, the Agencies intend to complete the EIS for the Project within two years, measured from the date of the publication of this notice to the date the record of decision (ROD) is signed. The Agencies will accept public comments on the scope of the EIS (*i.e.*, the information presented in this notice and at <https://www.soundtransit.org/system-expansion/ballard-link-extension>) until [INSERT DATE 45 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER]. The Agencies will then consider those comments as they prepare the Draft EIS. The Agencies will announce the availability of the Draft EIS in the *Federal Register* and via local media outlets. Sound Transit expects the Draft EIS will be available for a minimum of 45 days for the public comment period in Spring 2025. The Draft EIS will be distributed and available for public and agency review and comment prior to a public hearing. The Agencies will consider substantive comments timely submitted during the public comment period and comments previously submitted for WSBLE and then anticipate preparing a Final EIS in Spring 2026 and ROD in Fall 2026. The Final EIS will identify a

preferred alternative and any necessary mitigation commitments. The Agencies expect that all Federal environmental authorization decisions for the construction of the Project will be completed within a reasonable period following issuance of the ROD.

Notices of public meetings, including hearings, have been, and will continue to be, given through a variety of media providing the time and place of the meeting along with other relevant information. Meeting date, time, and location information can be found on the Project website at <https://www.soundtransit.org/system-expansion/ballard-link-extension>.

Public meeting locations will comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act. People requesting special accommodations should contact Sound Transit via email at ballardlink@soundtransit.org.

Susan K. Fletcher,

Regional Administrator,

FTA Region 10.

[FR Doc. 2024-24585 Filed: 10/23/2024 8:45 am; Publication Date: 10/24/2024]

Appendix B: Materials

Scoping information handout (2 pages)

Purpose and Need (2 pages)

Presentation (13 pages)

Display boards (13 pages)

Open house meeting guides – See Presentation and Display Boards

Project fact sheet (2 pages)

Scoping comment form (2 pages)

Scoping information handout



Ballard Link Extension

NEPA Scoping Information

Sound Transit has been collecting feedback to identify potential alignments and inform our study of Ballard Link Extension (BLE) alternatives since 2017. Sound Transit is now developing a new National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and Supplemental State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) Draft EIS for the BLE. The NEPA EIS process includes a scoping comment period.

NEPA scoping comment period Oct. 24 – Dec. 9 2024

This scoping comment period is intended to collect feedback on the project Purpose and Need, project alternatives, and potential topics to be studied in the BLE Draft EIS. Based on public feedback, we are conducting an extended 45-day comment period.

You may have submitted comments during our previous comment period for NEPA/SEPA scoping in 2019 and/or in response to the West Seattle and Ballard Link Extensions (WSBLE) Draft EIS in 2022. We will carry forward public feedback and comments collected from the start of the project as part of the ongoing environmental review phase. We invite you to share additional and new feedback with us.

Visit our online open house to learn more about the BLE project, anticipated timeline, and route and station options (also known as alternatives)



soundtransit.org/ballardlink-design



How to comment



Online: soundtransit.org/ballardlink-design



Email: blescoping@soundtransit.org



Mail: Ballard Link Extension,
c/o Lauren Swift, Sound Transit,
401 S. Jackson St. Seattle, WA 98104



Phone: 206-903-7223

Attend a scoping meeting:

Scoping Meeting #1

Nov. 7, 5 – 7 p.m.

Union Station
401 S Jackson St.
Seattle, WA 98104

Cantonese, Mandarin, and Vietnamese interpretation and translated materials will be available. ASL interpretation will be provided. Refreshments and activities for children will be provided.

Scoping Meeting #2

Nov. 13, 5 – 7 p.m.

National Nordic Museum
2655 NW Market St.
Seattle, WA 98107

ASL interpretation will be provided. Refreshments and activities for children will be provided.

How did we get here?

2018-2019

Early scoping and scoping for the West Seattle and Ballard Link Extensions (WSBLE) projects.

2022

WSBLE Draft EIS publication and 90-day comment period.

March and July 2023

Following the Draft EIS comment period, the Sound Transit Board directed Further Studies of BLE alternatives which led to Board actions that added new alternatives and modified the preferred alternatives for BLE.

2025

Given additional environmental review needed for project refinements, Sound Transit will publish a new BLE NEPA Draft EIS/SEPA Supplemental Draft EIS, anticipated in 2025.

Project timeline and next steps

At the conclusion of the NEPA scoping process, Sound Transit will publish a new BLE NEPA Draft EIS/SEPA Supplemental Draft EIS in coordination with the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), with publication anticipated in 2025. There will be another comment period after the Draft EIS is published in which we will ask for feedback about the potential environmental impacts and benefits of each alternative as well as proposed actions that will help mitigate impacts.

After consideration of the Draft EIS and comments, including relevant comments from the 2022 West Seattle and Ballard Link Extensions Draft EIS, the Sound Transit Board will confirm or modify the previously identified preferred alternatives. FTA and Sound Transit will then publish a Final EIS, expected in 2026, that includes responses to the comments received on the Draft EIS. After the publication of the Final EIS, the Sound Transit Board is expected to select the project to build. FTA will then issue a Record of Decision for the project, concluding the environmental process and planning phase.



Questions?

Contact the Community Engagement team:
ballardlink@soundtransit.org or 206-903-7223.

401 S. Jackson St., Seattle, WA 98104 | main@soundtransit.org
soundtransit.org | 888-889-6368/TTY: 711 | To request information
in alternative formats call 800-201-4900/TTY: 711 or
email accessibility@soundtransit.org.



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 **SOUNDTRANSIT**

Scoping Purpose and Need



Ballard Link Extension



Project Purpose and Need

In an environmental process, the Purpose and Need statement establishes the basis for developing and evaluating a range of reasonable alternatives for environmental review and assists with the identification of a Preferred Alternative.

The purpose of the project is to expand the Sound Transit Link light rail system from SODO to Ballard, to make appropriate community investments to improve mobility, and to increase capacity and connectivity for regional connections to achieve the following:

- 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 (Sound Transit 2016).
- Improve regional mobility by increasing connectivity and capacity through Downtown Seattle to meet the projected transit demand.
- Connect regional centers as described in adopted regional and local land use, transportation, and economic development plans and Sound Transit's Regional Transit Long-Range Plan (Sound Transit 2014a).
- Implement a system that is technically and financially feasible to build, operate, and maintain.
- Expand mobility for the corridor and the region's residents, which include transit-dependent residents, low-income people, and communities of color.
- Encourage equitable and sustainable urban growth in station areas through support of transit-oriented development and multi-modal integration in a manner that is consistent with local land use plans and policies, including Sound Transit's Equitable Transit Oriented Development Policy (Sound Transit 2018) and Sustainability Plan (Sound Transit 2019).
- Encourage convenient and safe non-motorized access to stations, such as bicycle and pedestrian connections, consistent with Sound Transit's System Access Policy (Sound Transit 2013).
- Preserve and promote a healthy environment and economy by minimizing adverse impacts on the natural, built, and social environments through sustainable practices.

The project is needed because:

- When measured using national standards, existing transit routes between SODO and Ballard currently operate with poor reliability. Roadway congestion in the project corridor will continue to degrade transit performance and reliability as the city is expected to add about 287,000 people and about 214,000 jobs between 2018 and 2050 (Puget Sound Regional Council 2023).
- Increased ridership from regional population and employment growth will increase operational frequency in the existing Downtown Seattle Transit Tunnel, requiring additional tunnel capacity.
- Puget Sound Regional Council (the regional metropolitan planning organization) and local plans call for high-capacity transit in the corridor consistent with VISION 2050 (Puget Sound Regional Council 2020) and the Regional Transit Long-Range Plan (Sound Transit 2014a).
- The region's residents and communities, including transit-dependent people, low-income people, and communities of color, need long-term regional mobility and multi-modal connectivity as called for in the Washington State Growth Management Act (Revised Code of Washington 36.70A.108).
- Regional and local plans call for increased residential and/or employment density at and around high-capacity transit stations and increased options for multi-modal access. VISION 2050 has a goal for 65 percent of the region's population and 75 percent of the region's employment to occur in regional growth centers and within walking distance of transit.
- Environmental and sustainability goals of the state and region, as established in Washington state law and embodied in Puget Sound Regional Council's VISION 2050 (2020) and 2022-2050 Regional Transportation Plan (2022), include reducing greenhouse gas emissions by prioritizing transportation investments that decrease vehicle miles traveled.

Visit our online open house to learn more about the BLE project, anticipated timeline, and the route and station options (also known as alternatives) developed based on public and agency feedback since 2017. Traditional and Simplified Chinese, Vietnamese, and Spanish versions of the project Purpose and Need statement can be found on the project online open house as well.



Questions?

Contact the Community Engagement team:
ballardlink@soundtransit.org or 206-903-7223.

401 S. Jackson St., Seattle, WA 98104 | main@soundtransit.org
soundtransit.org | 888-889-6368/TTY: 711 | To request information
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 **SOUNDTRANSIT**

Presentation

Ballard Link Extension

*Scoping Meeting #1
11/7/2024*



Agenda

- Project overview
- Environmental review process
- Next steps

Tonight's event

- **Learn:** visit informational materials, ask staff questions
- **Share:** leave a scoping comment on:
 - Latest route and station alternatives
 - Topics to study in the Environmental Impact Statement
 - Project Purpose and Need



Project Overview



Voter-approved system

Link light rail 1 2 3 4 T

- Five lines
- 116 miles
- 83 stations

Sounder trains N S

- Two lines
- 91 miles
- 14 stations

Stride bus rapid transit S1 S2 S3

- Three lines
- 45 miles on I-405 and SR 522
- Serving 12 cities and connecting to light rail in Shoreline, Lynnwood, Bellevue, and Tukwila



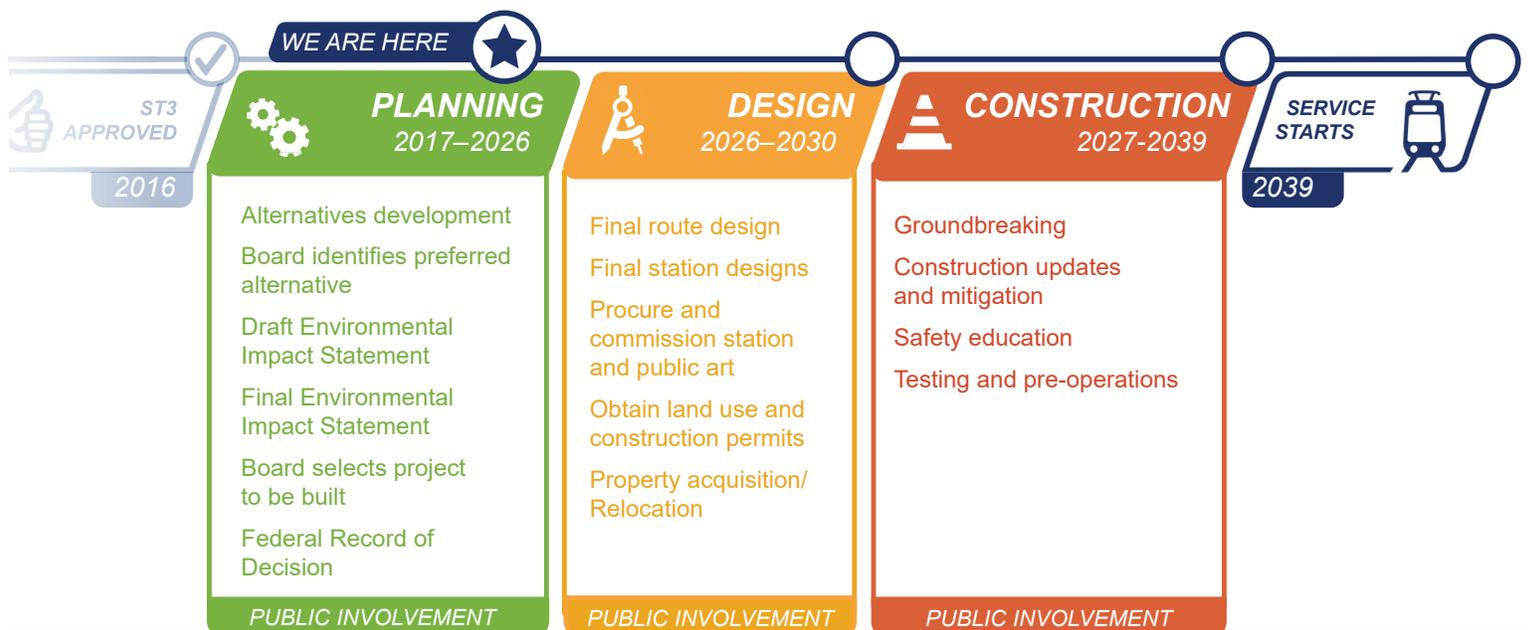
Ballard Link Extension

- ✓ 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



Ballard Link Extension project timeline



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)

2018: Stakeholder Advisory Group meetings



2019: Scoping meetings



2019-2020: Station planning neighborhood forums



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

2021-2022: Community advisory groups



2022: Draft EIS open house



2022-2023: Further studies open houses and workshops



Why we are scoping (again)?

Next year, Sound Transit will publish a new 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 your 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.



Environmental review process

So, what's an Environmental Impact Statement?

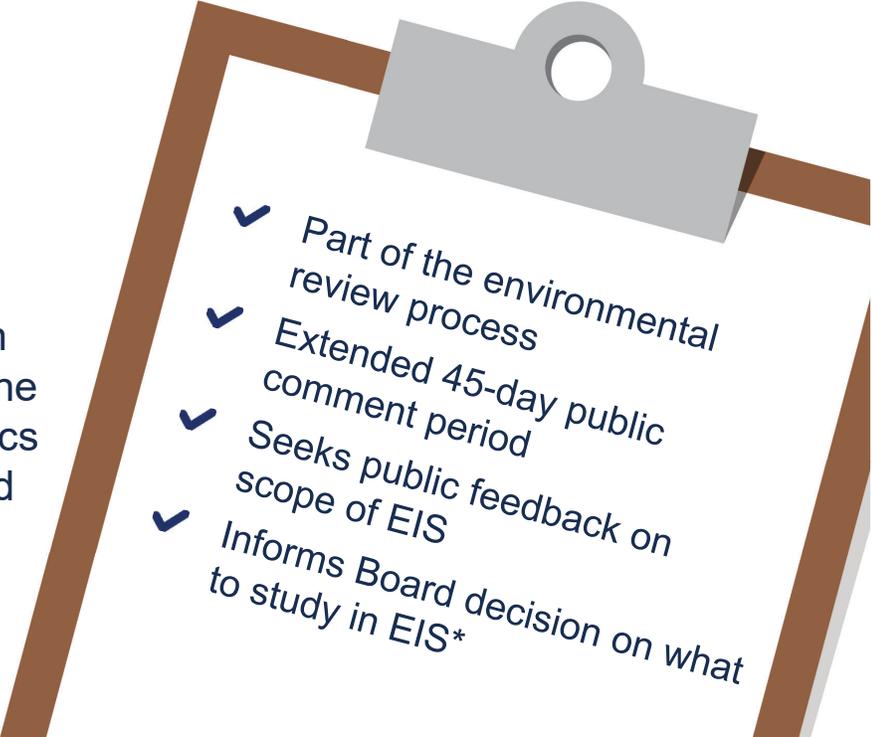
Or, "EIS" for short.

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

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

What is scoping?

The 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.

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

17 * Scope of EIS also subject to Federal Transit Administration (FTA) oversight 

What is typically studied in an EIS?

How a project affects...



What is typically studied in an EIS?



Transportation

- Regional transportation
- Transit services
- Arterial and local street systems
- Parking
- Non-motorized facilities
- Safety
- 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 effects
- Visual resources
- Parks and recreation
- Land use
- Energy
- Hazardous materials
- Public services, safety, and security
- Historic and archaeological resources
- Social resources, community facilities and neighborhoods
- Electromagnetic fields
- Utilities

Equity and inclusion

Environmental justice focus within each area of the EIS



EIS studies: Environmental justice

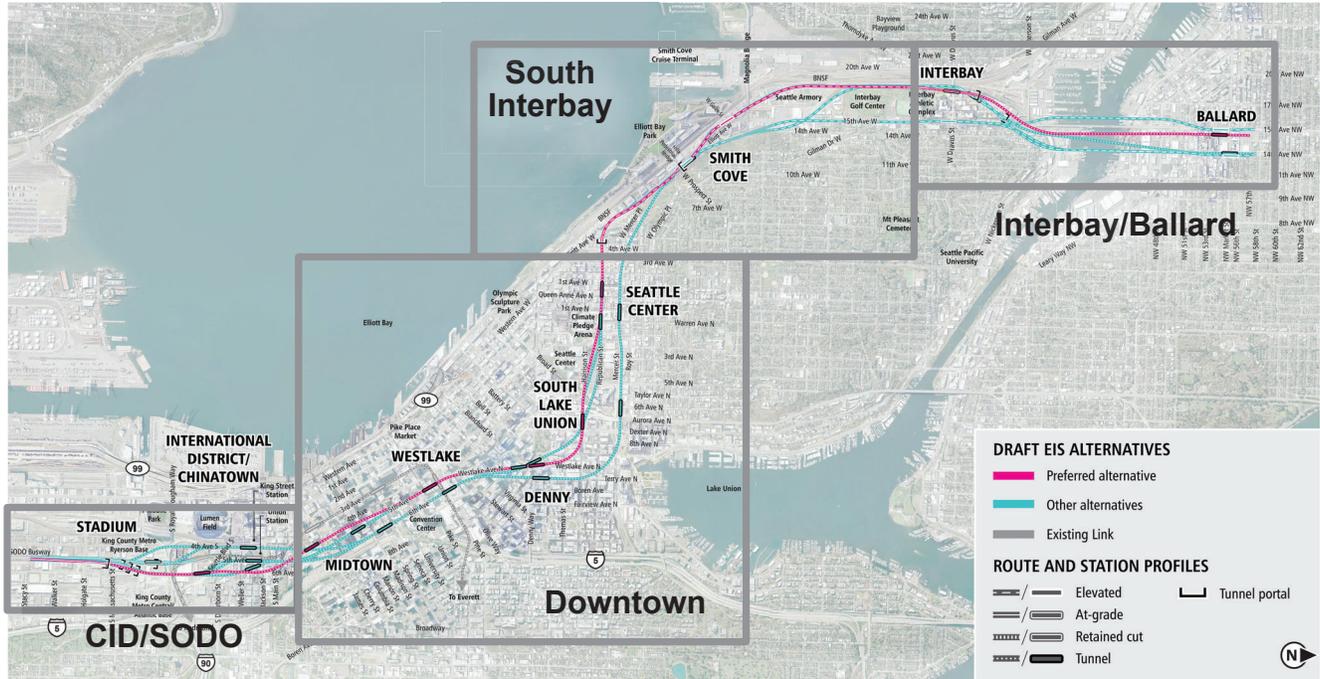
- ✓ Describes demographics
- ✓ Evaluates whether project disproportionately impacts low-income and communities of color
- ✓ Considers potential project benefits such as improved access to opportunity
- ✓ Documents what we hear from outreach efforts



Ballard Link Extension alternatives

- Preferred alternative
- Other EIS alternatives

Draft EIS alternatives – Ballard Link Extension



Next Steps

Tonight's event

- **Learn:** visit informational materials, ask staff questions
- **Share:** leave a scoping comment on:
 - Latest route and station alternatives
 - Topics to study in the Environmental Impact Statement
 - Project Purpose and Need



How to provide scoping comments

- **Comment online:** soundtransit.org/ballardlink-design
- **Email us:** blescoping@soundtransit.org
- **Leave a voicemail:** 206-903-7223
- **Mail us:** Ballard Link Extension, c/o Lauren Swift, Sound Transit, 401 S. Jackson St., Seattle, WA 98104
- **Join us at our second scoping meeting:**
Nov. 13, 5 – 7 p.m.
National Nordic Museum, 2655 NW Market St.

Thank you.



 soundtransit.org



Display Boards

Sound Transit future service

Link service plan: 2042



Ballard–Tacoma



Mariner–Redmond*



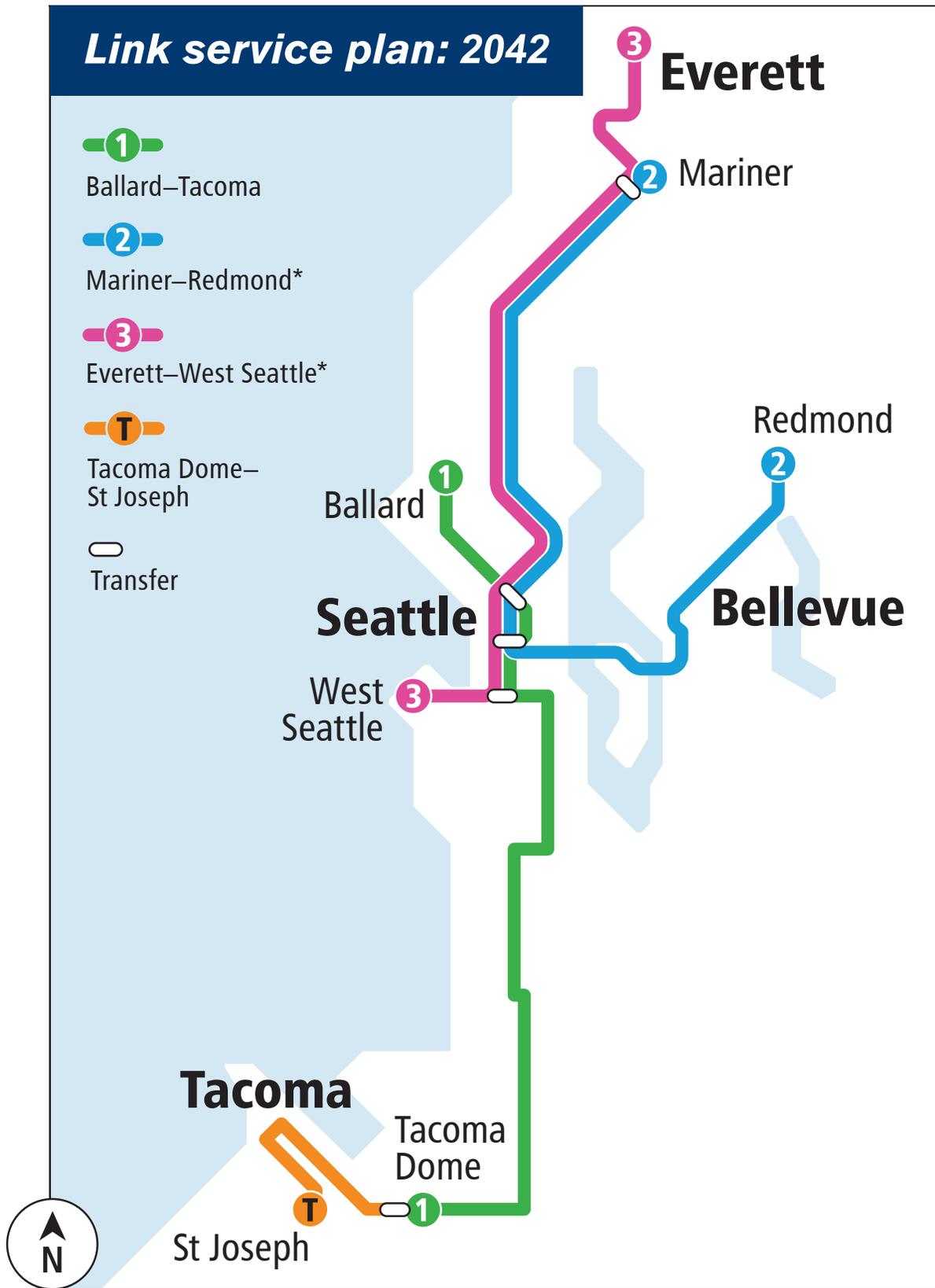
Everett–West Seattle*



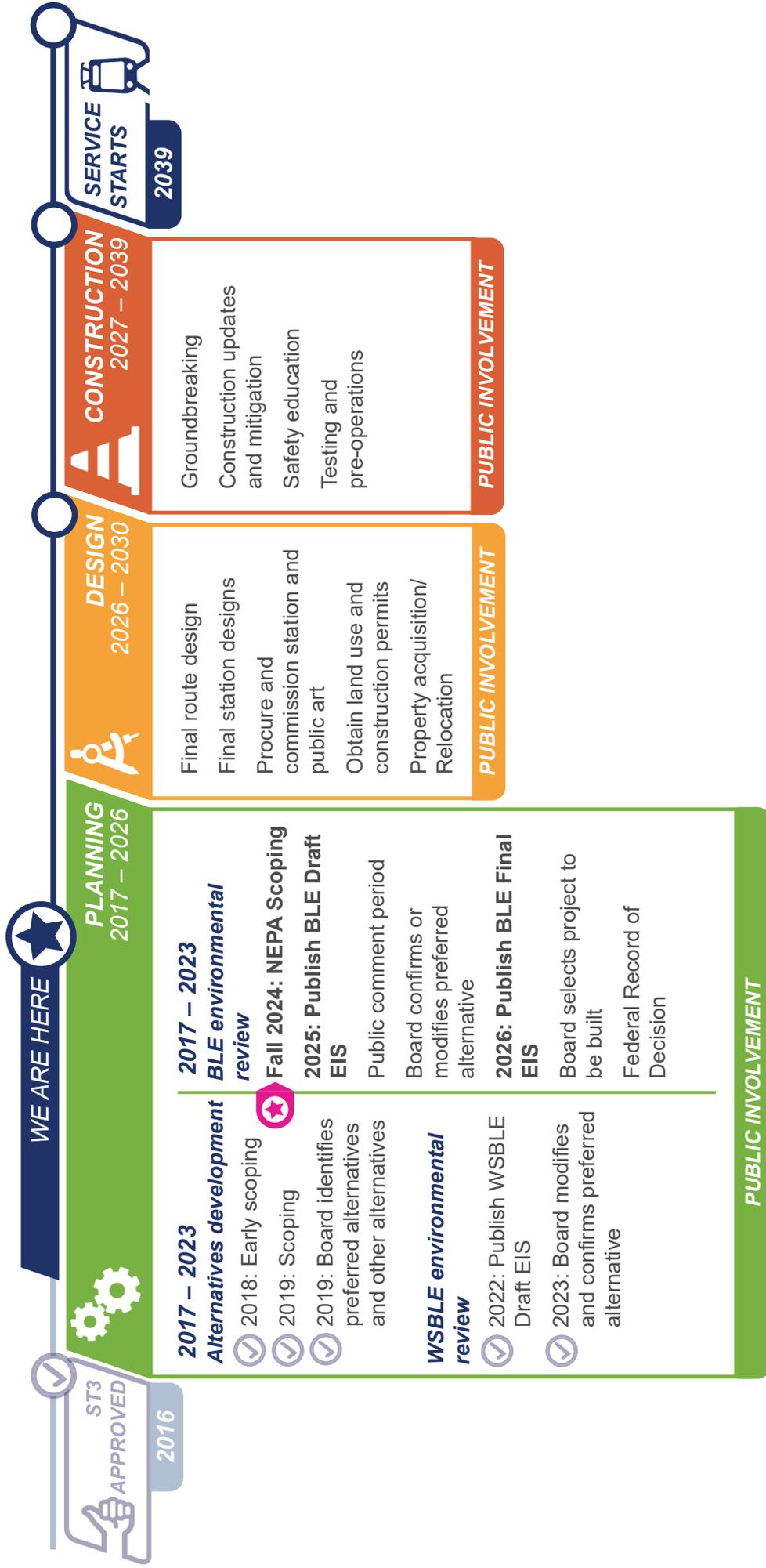
Tacoma Dome–
St Joseph



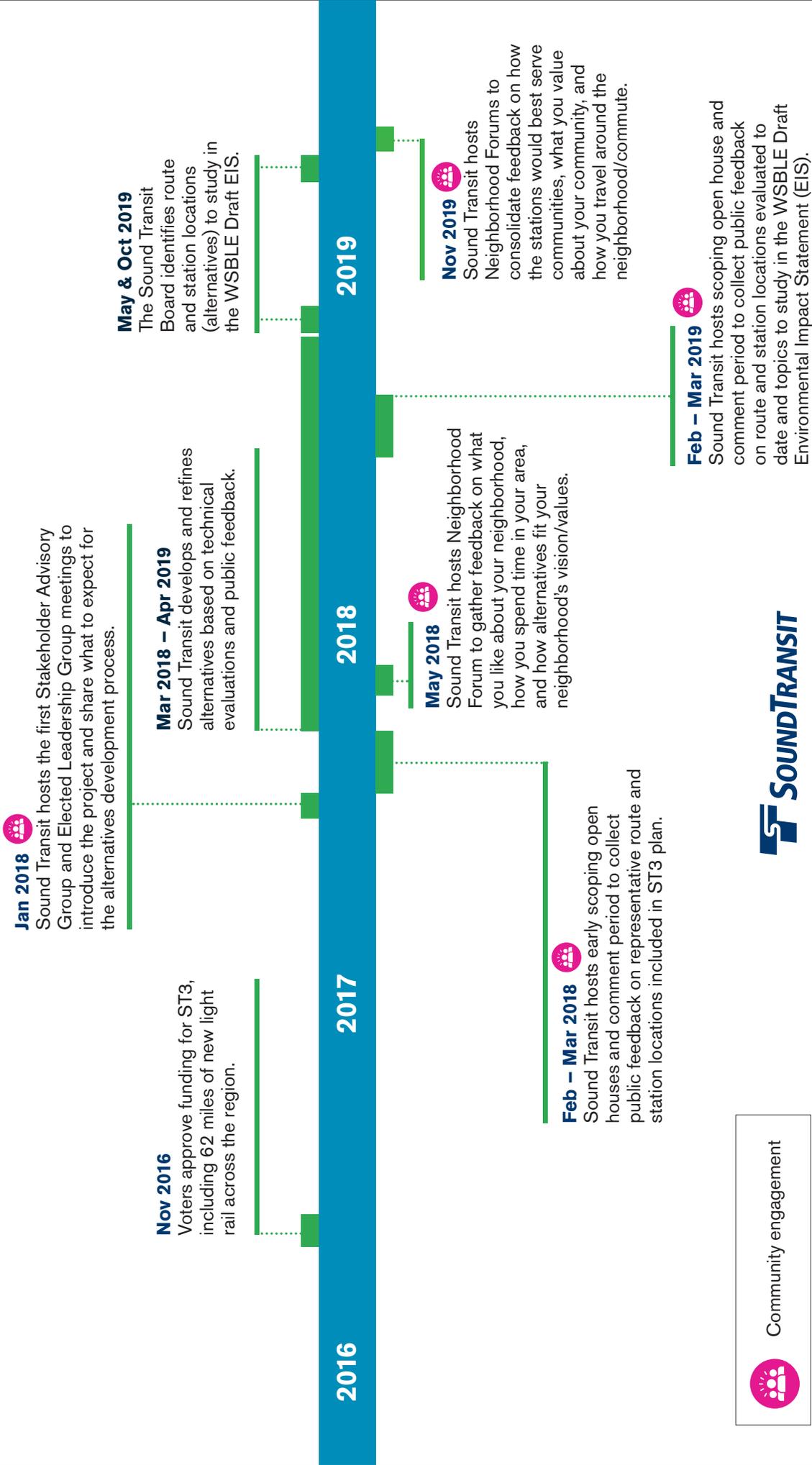
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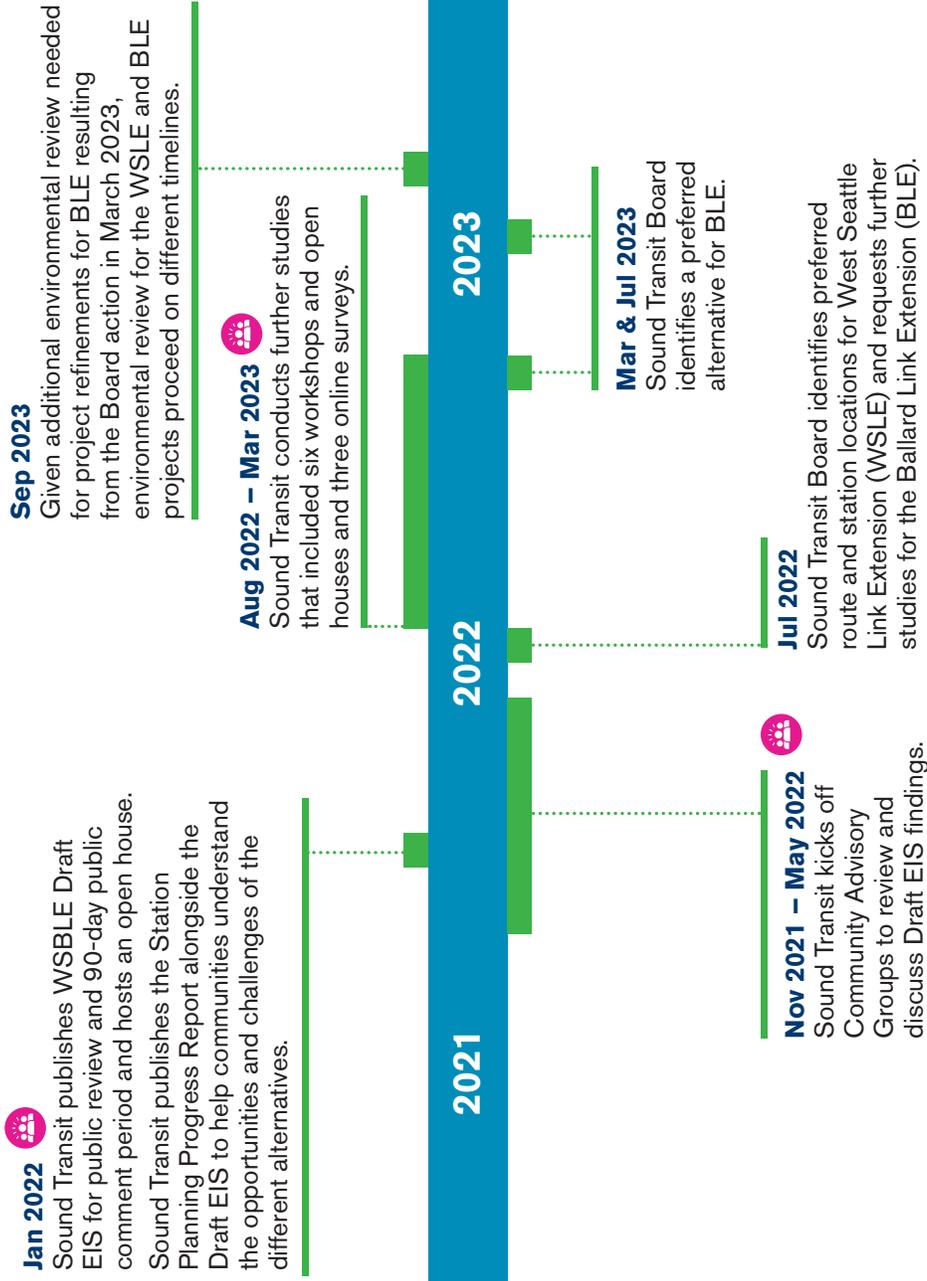
Ballard Link Extension project timeline



West Seattle and Ballard Link Extensions alternatives development



West Seattle and Ballard Link Extensions Draft EIS



Community engagement



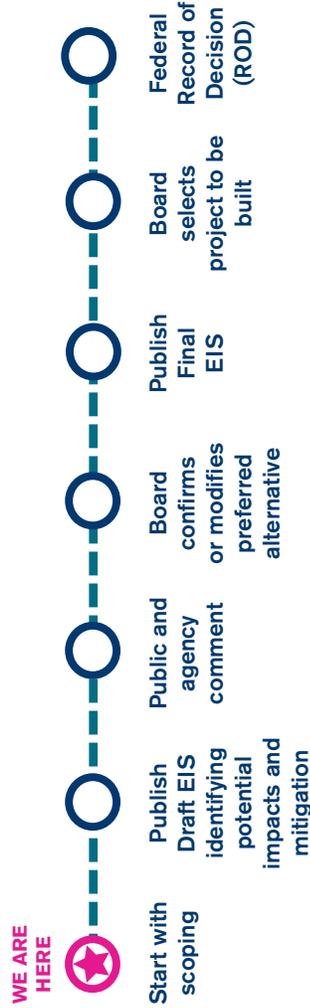
The EIS process

What is an EIS?

In partnership with the Federal Transit Administration, we will publish a new National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and Supplemental State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) Draft EIS for the Ballard Link Extension with analysis of new alternatives and project refinements.

The Draft EIS will provide agencies and the public with an understanding of environmental consequences and assist in decision making.

The EIS process:



What's 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



What is NEPA scoping?

Why are we scoping (again)?

Next year, Sound Transit will publish a new 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 your 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.

For the BLE, scoping is:

- ✓ A part of the federal environmental review process
- ✓ An extended 45-day public comment period
- ✓ A process that seeks public feedback on the scope of the EIS
- ✓ Something that informs Board decision on what to study in EIS*

* Scope of EIS also subject to Federal Transit Administration oversight



What feedback is collected during the scoping comment period?

The **scoping comment period** seeks feedback related to...

- Project Purpose and Need
- Alternatives to be studied in the EIS
- Potential topics to study in the EIS

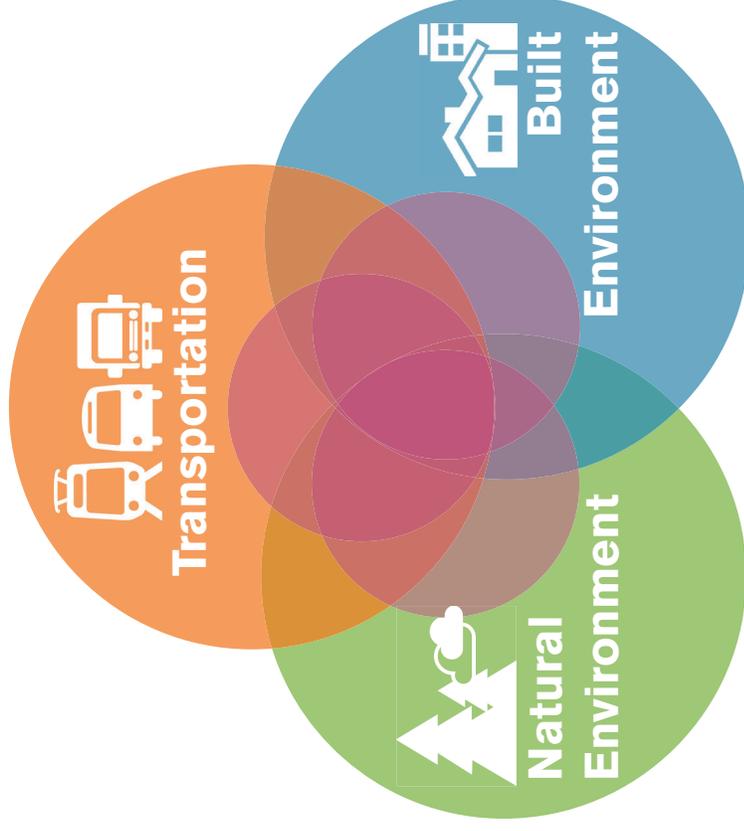
The **Draft EIS comment period**, anticipated in 2025, seeks feedback on:

- Potential environmental impacts and benefits of each alternative
- Proposed actions that will help mitigate impacts

Environmental Justice in the EIS

In an Environmental Impact Statement, the Environmental Justice chapter:

- ✓ Describes demographics
- ✓ Evaluates whether project disproportionately impacts low-income and communities of color
- ✓ Considers potential project benefits such as improved access to opportunity
- ✓ Documents what we hear from outreach efforts



There's an environmental justice focus within each area of the EIS

Comment here!

Share your NEPA scoping comments with a court reporter tonight!



What's a helpful comment during the scoping period?

- 1** Feedback related to the project Purpose and Need
- 2** Feedback related to the alternatives to be studied in the EIS
- 3** Feedback related to potential topics to study in the EIS

You can also provide scoping comments before Dec. 9 by:



Filling out a comment card



Commenting online: soundtransit.org/ballardlink-design



Emailing us: blescoping@soundtransit.org



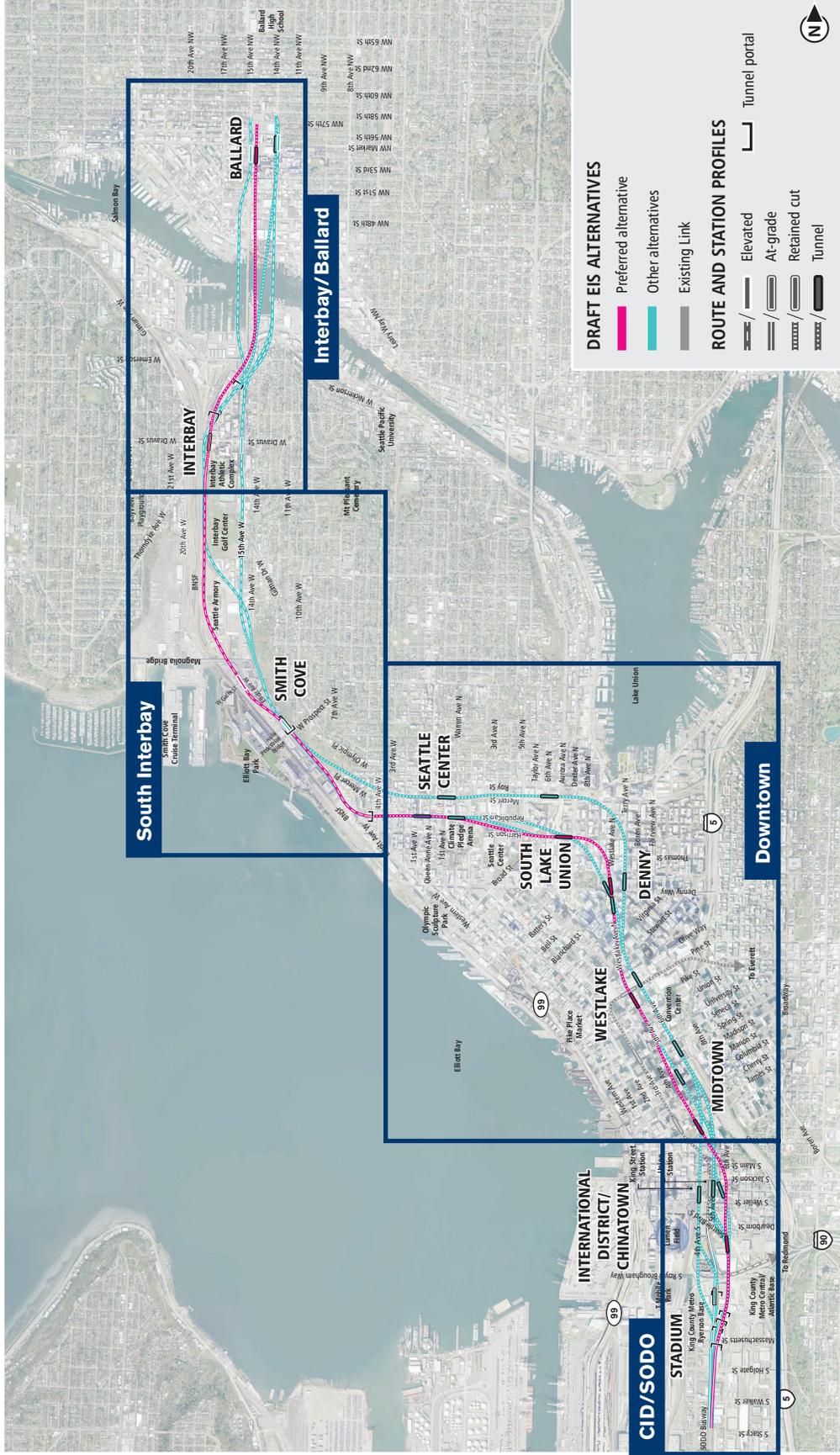
Leaving a voicemail: 206-903-7223



**Mailing us: Ballard Link Extension
c/o Lauren Swift
Sound Transit, 401 S. Jackson St.
Seattle, WA 98104**

Ballard Link Extension route and station alternatives

Your feedback helped get us here!



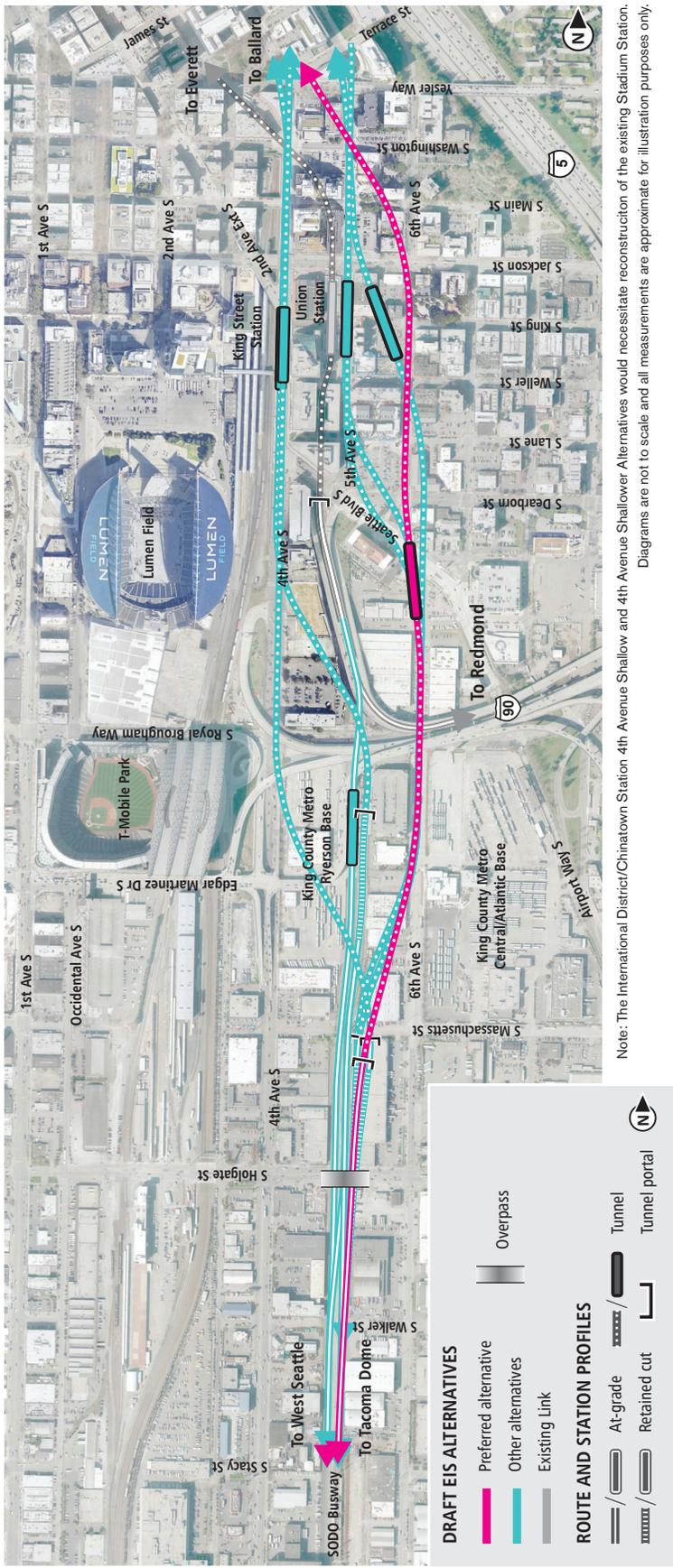
Diagrams are not to scale and all measurements are approximate for illustration purposes only.

10/2024



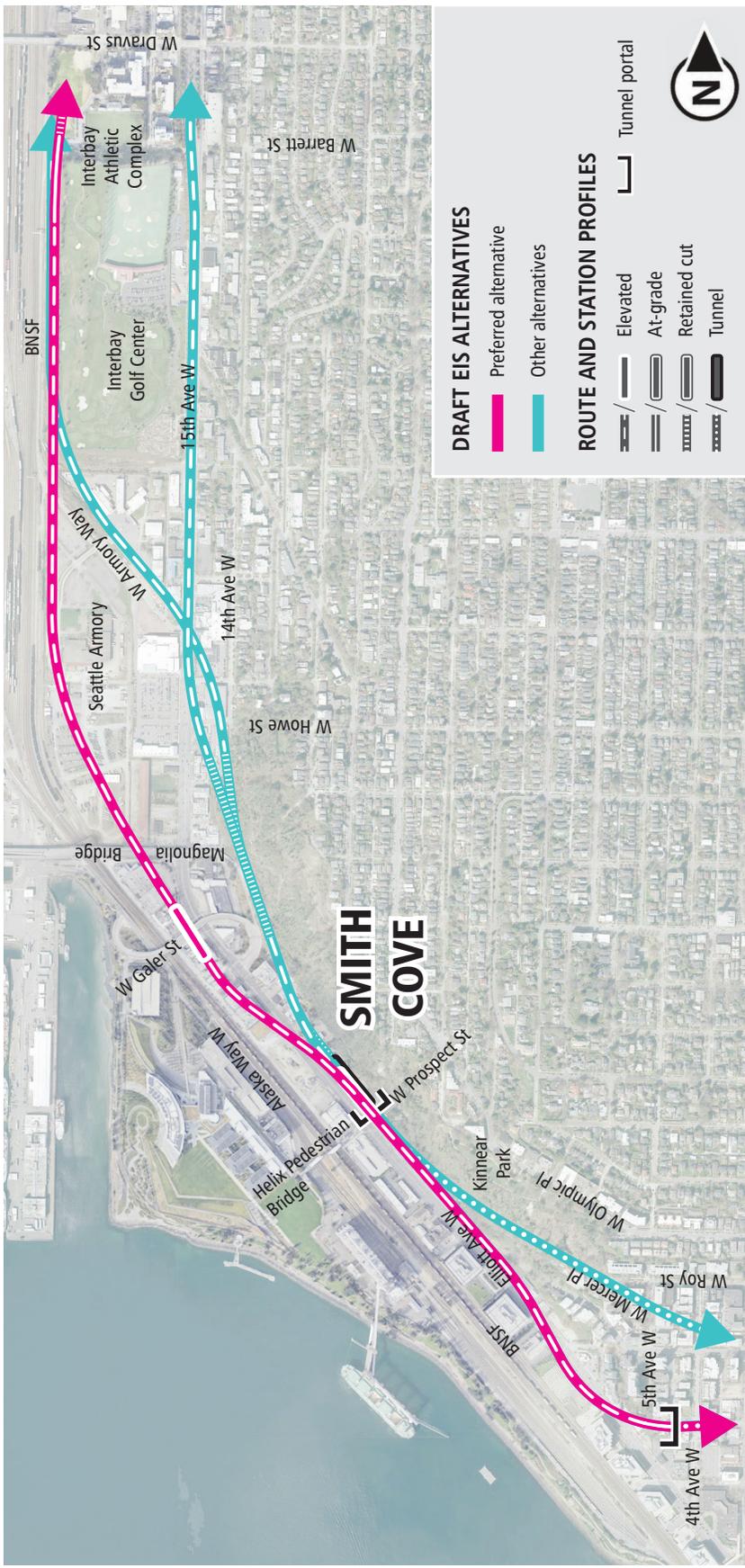
Ballard Link Extension alternatives in CID/SODO

Your feedback helped get us here!



Ballard Link Extension alternatives in South Interbay

Your feedback helped get us here!

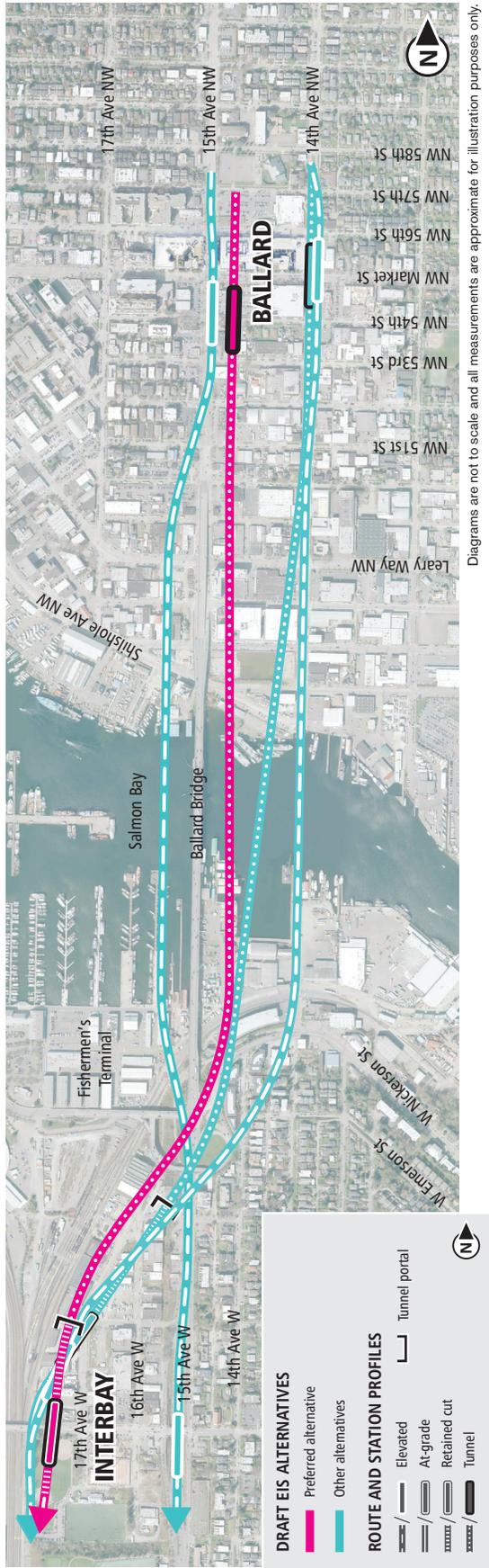


Diagrams are not to scale and all measurements are approximate for illustration purposes only.



Ballard Link Extension alternatives in Interbay/Ballard

Your feedback helped get us here!



Project fact sheet

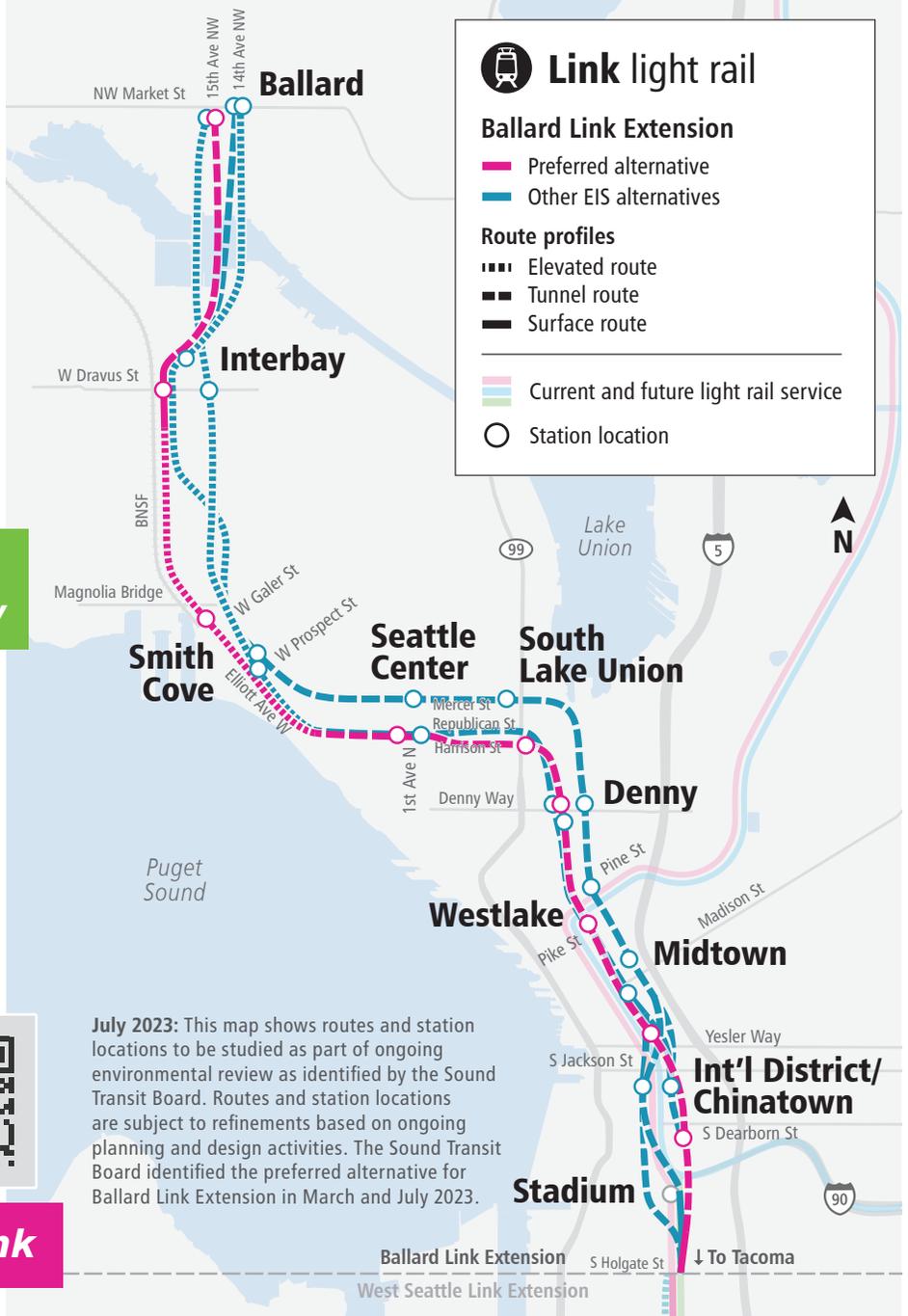


Ballard Link Extension

Expanding light rail in Seattle

About the project

The Ballard Link Extension will provide fast, reliable light rail connections to dense residential and job centers between Chinatown-International District and Ballard. In addition, a new downtown Seattle light-rail only tunnel will increase capacity and improve efficiency for the entire regional system.



CURRENT PHASE
Planning: Environmental review

Project benefits

- Adds 7.7 miles of light rail service from downtown Seattle to the Ballard neighborhood, including a new downtown Seattle rail-only tunnel.
- Includes nine new stations from Chinatown-International District to Ballard.



Learn more, subscribe for email updates, and find out how to get involved:

soundtransit.org/ballardlink

Project timeline





Link passengers board and disembark a train at Roosevelt Station.

What's next for Ballard Link?

A new Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) will be completed for Ballard Link. Service is scheduled to start in 2039.

Stay involved

Sound Transit is committed to meaningful public participation. We offer both in-person and virtual engagement opportunities to accommodate the community's needs. Reach out with questions, thoughts, or to request a briefing for your community group.

Equity and inclusion

We are also committed to inclusively engaging historically-underrepresented communities. If you are interested in learning more about this project and how it may affect your community, please contact us and we will work with you to find an appropriate medium for providing project information.

Questions?

Contact the Community Engagement team:
ballardlink@soundtransit.org or 206-903-7223.

401 S. Jackson St., Seattle, WA 98104 | main@soundtransit.org
[soundtransit.org](https://www.soundtransit.org) | 888-889-6368/TTY: 711 | To request information in alternative formats call 800-201-4900/TTY: 711 or email accessibility@soundtransit.org.

How did we get here?

From 2017-2019, project staff conducted an extensive alternatives development process that resulted in the Sound Transit Board identifying preferred alternatives and other alternatives to study in a Draft EIS.

The West Seattle and Ballard Link Extensions were evaluated together in a Draft EIS published in January 2022. The public comment period lasted for 90 days between January and April 2022.

The Sound Transit Board requested further studies for the Ballard Link Extension (BLE) in July 2022. Sound Transit staff held community workshops, open houses, stakeholder meetings, and surveys between September 2022 and January 2023. The Sound Transit Board identified a preferred alternative for the Ballard Link Extension in March and July 2023. Given additional environmental review needed for project refinements for BLE, environmental review for the West Seattle Link Extension and BLE projects are proceeding on different timelines.



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 **SOUNDTRANSIT**

Scoping comment form



Ballard Link Extension

Share your scoping comments by Dec. 9, 2024

在12月9日前分享您對範圍界定的意見

在12月9日前分享您对范围界定的意见

Hãy chia sẻ ý kiến của quý vị về việc xác định phạm vi chậm nhất vào ngày 9 tháng 12

Comparta sus comentarios sobre el alcance antes del 9 de dec. de 2024

Optional/選修的/选修的/Không bắt buộc/Opcional

Please provide your contact information and check the box below if you would like to receive project updates.

如果您想要獲取項目的更新資訊, 請提供您的聯絡資訊, 並勾選下列方塊。

如果您想收到項目的更新信息, 請提供您的联系信息并勾选下面的方框。

Vui lòng cung cấp thông tin liên lạc của quý vị và đánh dấu vào hộp bên dưới nếu quý vị muốn nhận thông tin cập nhật về dự án.

Proporcione su información de contacto y marque la siguiente casilla si le gustaría recibir las últimas noticias del proyecto.

Name/姓名/姓名/Tên/Nombre _____

Organization/ 機構/组织/Tổ chức/Organización _____

Address/地址/地址 /Địa chỉ/Dirección _____

Email/電子郵件/电子邮箱 /Email/Correo electrónico _____

Phone/電話/电话 /Điện thoại/Teléfono _____

- Sign me up for Ballard Link Extension email updates
- 注册以接收Ballard Link擴展項目的最新消息電子郵件。
- 注册以接收Ballard Link扩展项目的最新消息电子邮件。
- Đăng ký nhận thông tin cập nhật qua email về Dự Án Mở Rộng Tuyến Ballard Link.
- Regístrenme para recibir por correo electrónico las últimas noticias de la Extensión de Link a Ballard

Thank you for taking the time to comment! Cảm ơn quý vị đã dành thời gian đóng góp ý kiến!

感謝您撥冗發表意見! 感谢您拨冗发表意见! ¡Gracias por tomarse el tiempo para hacer comentarios!



Appendix C: Online Open House

About the Ballard Link Extension

The Ballard Link Extension (BLE) will provide an additional 1.5 miles of transit service...



Key features

- 1.5 miles of transit service
New station at 15th Avenue NW
New station at 16th Avenue NW

Ballard Link Extension project timeline

2017-2018 NEPA of Planning

- 1. Environmental Assessment of BLE
2. Public Review and Comment Period
3. Final EIS

2019-2020 BLE Planning

- 1. BLE NEPA EIS
2. Public Review and Comment Period
3. Final EIS

2020-2021 Design

- 1. Final design
2. Construction of station and track
3. Construction of station and track

2021-2022 Construction

- 1. Construction of station and track
2. Construction of station and track

2023 Start of Service



NEPA scoping

The NEPA scoping process is the first step in the NEPA process...

What feedback is collected during the scoping comment period?

- 1. Project description
2. Project location
3. Project impacts

Project purpose and need

The purpose of the project is to provide transit service...

- 1. Provide transit service
2. Provide transit service
3. Provide transit service

How did we get here?

2017-2018 NEPA of Planning

- 1. Environmental Assessment of BLE
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3. Final EIS

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- 1. Final design
2. Construction of station and track
3. Construction of station and track

2021-2022 Construction

- 1. Construction of station and track
2. Construction of station and track

2023 Start of Service

2024-2025 Ballard Link Extension (BLE) Drive and Fluid Environment

- 1. Drive and Fluid Environment
2. Drive and Fluid Environment
3. Drive and Fluid Environment

Alternatives

Options compared include the BLE, Drive and Fluid Environment...

- 1. BLE
2. Drive and Fluid Environment
3. Drive and Fluid Environment

Comment

We are collecting your feedback to help guide project decisions...

Ballard Link Extension Scoping Comment Form

Form fields for Name, Email, Phone, Address, and Comments.

Ballard Link Extension, 15th Avenue NW, Station 15, Seattle, WA 98107

Project Manager: [Name], [Phone]

Contact: [Name], [Phone]

Thank you for your comment...

Additional Studies

BLE Further Studies (2017 - 2019)

- 1. Environmental Assessment of BLE
2. Public Review and Comment Period
3. Final EIS

South Lake Union Additional Studies

- 1. Environmental Assessment of BLE
2. Public Review and Comment Period
3. Final EIS

Contact Us

Sound Transit logo and contact information.

participate logo

Chinatown-International District/SODO (CID/SODO)

Preferred Alternative: Dearborn Street

The Dearborn Street Alternative would begin north of the SODO station and continue east of the existing Link light rail line and extend south. The alternative would then enter a tunnel heading south beneath 4th Avenue. The tunnel alignment would continue north beneath 4th Avenue South to South Jackson Street and then transition to continue northward passing under 5th Avenue South.

Station location: The station would be located beneath 4th Avenue South, west of Seattle Boulevard South.



Diagrams are not to scale and all measurements are approximate for illustration purposes only. (Click on image to enlarge)

Chinatown-International District/SODO - other alternatives

4th Avenue Shallow

The 4th Avenue Shallow Alternative would begin north of the SODO station and continue east of the existing Link light rail line and extend south. The alternative would then enter a tunnel and continue northward and then north under 4th Avenue. This alternative would necessitate reconstruction of the existing Dearborn Station.

Station location: The station would be located beneath 4th Avenue South, west of and with underground pedestrian connection to the existing International District/Chinatown Station.



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4th Avenue Shallow

The 4th Avenue Shallow Alternative would be the same as the 4th Avenue Shallow Alternative, except it would be located in the station area and north of the station. This alternative would necessitate reconstruction of the existing Dearborn Station.

Station location: The station would be located beneath 4th Avenue South, west of and with underground pedestrian connection to the existing International District/Chinatown Station.



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4th Avenue Deep

The 4th Avenue Deep Alternative would begin north of the SODO station and continue east of the existing Link light rail line and extend south. The alternative would then enter a tunnel heading northward to continue north beneath 4th Avenue South with a deep tunnel and station.

Station location: The station would be located beneath 4th Avenue South, west of and with underground pedestrian connection to the existing International District/Chinatown Station.



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5th Avenue Shallow

The 5th Avenue Shallow Alternative would begin north of the SODO station and continue east of the existing Link light rail line and extend south. The alternative would then enter a tunnel heading south beneath 5th Avenue and then transition to under 5th Avenue South.

Station location: The station would be located beneath 5th Avenue South, east of and with underground pedestrian connection to the existing International District/Chinatown Station.



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5th Avenue Deep

The 5th Avenue Deep Alternative would generally follow the same route as the 5th Avenue Shallow Alternative, except that the tunnel and the station would be deeper.

Station location: The station would be located beneath 5th Avenue South, east of and with underground pedestrian connection to the existing International District/Chinatown Station.



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5th Avenue Shallow Diagonal

The 5th Avenue Shallow Diagonal Alternative would be the same as the 5th Avenue Shallow Alternative except that it would transition towards 5th Avenue South further north of Seattle Boulevard South.

Station location: The station would be located beneath the area between 5th Avenue South and 4th Avenue South, east of and with underground pedestrian connection to the existing International District/Chinatown Station.



Diagrams are not to scale and all measurements are approximate for illustration purposes only. (Click on image to enlarge)

The alternatives presented were developed through years of planning and community engagement. To learn more about the alternatives listed but not shown here or to see the full RPA, see the Future Station Community Development Services (CDS) and Reports from the previous WLE Draft EIS.

General questions? Contact us:
 Sound Transit Community Outreach
 Phone: 206.461.3222
 Email: ball@soundtransit.org
 Web: www.soundtransit.org
 Subscribe to email updates: bit.ly/2936026

Need accessibility/substance online or an in-person event?
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 Email: ball@soundtransit.org

Additional services:
 Community Meetings
 Phone: 1.800.888.6888, TTY: 206.461.3222
 Email: info@soundtransit.org
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South Interbay

Preferred Alternative: Galer Street Station/Central Interbay

The Galer Street Station/Central Interbay Alternative would exit a tunnel portal at West Republican Street and Elliott Avenue West and transition to an elevated guideway. The guideway would continue northwest along Elliott Avenue West to an elevated Smith Cove Station at the West Galer Street Flyover. The elevated track would continue north over the Magnolia Bridge, through the Interbay Armory, and along the west side of the Interbay Athletic Complex.

Station location: The station at Smith Cove would be located above and straddling the West Galer Street Flyover.



Diagrams are not to scale and all measurements are approximate for illustration purposes only. | Click on image to enlarge

South Interbay - Other alternatives

Prospect Street Station/15th Avenue

The Prospect Street Station/15th Avenue Alternative would exit a tunnel portal at West Republican Street and Elliott Avenue West and transition to an elevated guideway. The guideway would continue northwest along Elliott Avenue West and enter the Smith Cove Station just north of West Prospect Street. From the Smith Cove Station, the elevated guideway would transition into a retained cut before again becoming an elevated guideway in the center of 15th Avenue West.

Station location: The elevated station at Smith Cove would be located north of Kinnear Park on the east side of Elliott Avenue West.



Diagrams are not to scale and all measurements are approximate for illustration purposes only. | Click on image to enlarge

Prospect Street Station/Central Interbay

The Prospect Street/Central Interbay Alternative would continue as a tunnel from downtown to a tunnel portal on the east side of Elliott Avenue West near West Prospect Street. The alternative would continue north from the tunnel portal in a retained cut to the Smith Cove Station just north of West Prospect Street. From the station, the alternative would transition to an elevated guideway and continue north along West Armory Way and west of the Interbay Athletic Complex to connect to the Elevated 14th Avenue Alternative in the Interbay/Ballard segment.

Station location: The retained cut station in Smith Cove would be located north of West Prospect Street on the east side of Elliott Avenue West.



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The alternatives presented were developed through years of planning and community engagement. To learn more about the alternatives raised but not carried forward for study in the Draft EIS, see [Further Studies: Community Engagement Summary \(2023\)](#), and [Appendix M](#) from the previous WSLE Draft EIS.

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Interbay / Ballard

Preferred Alternative: Tunnel 15th Avenue

The alternative would begin at Interbay station straddling below West Dravus Street and continue in a retained cut to a tunnel portal traveling northeast under Salmon Bay (east of the Ballard Bridge), and then continue north in a tunnel east of 15th Avenue Northwest to the Ballard Station.

Station locations:

Interbay: The retained cut station at Interbay would be located through the Interbay Athletic Complex, below and straddling the existing West Dravus Street roadway bridge.

Ballard: The Ballard tunnel station would be east of 15th Avenue Northwest and south of Northwest Market Street.



Diagrams are not to scale and all measurements are approximate for illustration purposes only. | Click on image to enlarge

Interbay/Ballard - other alternatives

Tunnel 14th Avenue

The Tunnel 14th Avenue Alternative would enter a retained cut parallel to the BNSF tracks west of West Dravus Street and then curve northeast to the Interbay Station. The alternative would continue in a retained cut from Interbay Station to a tunnel portal. The tunnel would travel northeast, under Salmon Bay (east of the Ballard Bridge), and then curve north beneath 14th Avenue Northwest to the Ballard Station.

Station locations:

Interbay: The retained cut Interbay station would be located north of West Dravus Street, between 17th Avenue West and Thornholme Avenue West.

Ballard: The Ballard station would be located under 14th Avenue Northwest and Northwest Market Street.



Diagrams are not to scale and all measurements are approximate for illustration purposes only. | Click on image to enlarge

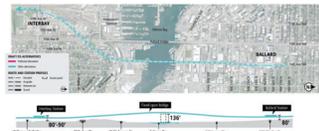
Elevated 14th Avenue

The Elevated 14th Avenue Alternative would travel parallel to the BNSF tracks over West Dravus Street and continue northeast to the Interbay Station. The alternative would continue elevated to a fixed-span bridge on the east side of the Ballard Bridge (15th Avenue Bridge). The alternative would continue north under 14th Avenue Northwest to the Ballard Station.

Station locations:

Interbay: The elevated Interbay Station would be located north of West Dravus Street between the railroad tracks and 17th Avenue West.

Ballard: The elevated Ballard station would be located on the east side of 14th Avenue Northwest, straddling Northwest Market Street.



Diagrams are not to scale and all measurements are approximate for illustration purposes only. | Click on image to enlarge

Elevated 14th Avenue (From Prospect Street Station/15th Avenue)

The Elevated 14th Avenue (From Prospect Street Station/15th Avenue) Alternative is a design option for connecting the Prospect Street Station/15th Avenue Alternative in the South Interbay segment to the Elevated 14th Avenue Alternative bridge over Salmon Bay. The alignment would start south of the Interbay Station on 15th Avenue West. From the Interbay Station, the alternative would connect to the 14th Avenue alignment bridge over Salmon Bay. The bridge over Salmon Bay, the elevated guideway to the north, and the Ballard Station would be the same as for the Elevated 14th Avenue Alternative.

Station locations:

Interbay: The elevated Interbay Station would be located north of West Dravus Street between the railroad tracks and 17th Avenue West.

Ballard: The elevated Ballard station would be located on the east side of 14th Avenue Northwest, straddling Northwest Market Street.



Diagrams are not to scale and all measurements are approximate for illustration purposes only. | Click on image to enlarge

Elevated 15th Avenue

The Elevated 15th Avenue Alternative would be in the median of 15th Avenue West approaching the Interbay Station. From the station, the alternative would continue on an elevated guideway and cross Salmon Bay on a movable bridge west of the Ballard Bridge. The alternative would continue north from the bridge on an elevated guideway to the Ballard Station.

Station locations:

Interbay: The elevated Interbay Station would be located above 15th Avenue West, straddling West Dravus Street.

Ballard: The elevated Ballard station would be located above the east edge of 15th Avenue Northwest, south of Northwest Market Street.



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Property Owners

To build the Ballard Link Extension project, Sound Transit will need to purchase and use private property. In some cases, this means moving people from their homes or businesses.

Sound Transit's property acquisition process treats affected property owners and tenants fairly, provides appropriate Just Compensation and relocation benefits and minimizes hardships with all parties involved. We realize the possibility of being relocated from your home or business may be difficult, and we are here to answer questions and provide support throughout the process.

Sound Transit has specific policies and procedures that describe how the agency will work with property owners and tenants throughout the acquisition process. We follow federal, state and local laws in our property acquisition process, specifically the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act, and state law.

Property owners and tenants that were contacted as part of the WBLE Draft EIS process, will be contacted again as part of the BLE Draft EIS process. The property acquisition milestones will apply to the BLE Draft EIS publication.

Property acquisition milestones

Pre-Draft EIS publication

- Sound Transit contacts potentially affected property owners

Draft EIS publication

- Draft EIS available for public review and comments
- Sound Transit Board reviews or modifies the preferred alternative based on comments from the public, agency partners and Tribes

Final EIS publication

- Sound Transit Board selects projects to be built

Final Design

- Sound Transit identifies property rights needed to construct, operate and maintain the system
- Sound Transit Board authorizes property purchases
- Sound Transit will prepare an appraisal to determine fair market value of property needed for the projects
- Sound Transit will provide relocation assistance to people and businesses displaced by the projects, including referrals to comparable properties and payment of moving costs
- Sound Transit staff are available to support property owners and tenants through this process

Without concrete decisions until the release of Final EIS, we know this period of uncertainty can be stressful and we here to help. If you have additional questions or would like to set up a virtual meeting, contact our outreach team at ballardlink@soundtransit.org or 206-903-7223.

Frequently Asked Questions

When will I be notified if my property may be affected?

Potentially affected property owners are notified prior to the release of a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). Being a potentially affected property owner means that your property is close to one or more alternatives we are currently studying. This notification of potential impact does not mean a decision has been made to purchase your property.

What happens if Sound Transit identifies my property as potentially affected?

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If I am required to move, what types of relocation assistance can I expect?

Residential relocation

For residential property owners and tenants, Sound Transit provides three primary types of relocation assistance: advisory assistance, moving expenses and replacement housing payments. A qualified relocation specialist will work with displaced residents to determine needs, explain benefits, and provide referrals to current housing inventories as well as assistance and advice with filing claims.

Business relocation

Sound Transit provides three primary types of relocation assistance: advisory assistance, moving expenses and business reestablishment expenses. The level of benefits and advisory services may be different for each displaced business depending on complexity of the business operation.

What does the acquisition process look like?

After the Sound Transit Board has selected the projects to be built and the Federal Transit Administration has issued a Record of Decision, the Board will authorize property purchases along the final project corridors. Several steps will take place before this authorization can occur, including:

- Preparing property information to inform the Sound Transit Board's authorization.
- Identifying the type of acquisition (i.e., full or partial acquisition, temporary or permanent easement).
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1. Appraisal is conducted by an independent appraiser to determine fair market value.
2. Appraisal is reviewed by a second appraiser for compliance with proper methodology and appropriate value conclusions.
3. Sound Transit prepares an offer package and delivers it to the property owner to review and negotiate. Property owners are also provided a copy of the appraisal.
4. Sound Transit negotiates to purchase the property.
5. Sound Transit may also reimburse for some or all of the following:
 - a. Owner's utility reconnection
 - b. Legal review of offer
 - c. Accounting review for tax purposes
6. For people and businesses displaced by the projects, a relocation agent will meet with the property owner to explain relocation assistance, eligibility and settlements.

Other Frequently Asked Questions

- Q:** What is the average timeframe from the offer to closure of sale?
A: While each acquisition is unique, most processes can take anywhere between 12-18 months to complete.
- Q:** Does Sound Transit pay closing costs?
A: Sound Transit will pay for all normal sale expenses including escrow fees, title insurance, pre-payment penalties, mortgage release fee, recording fees and all typical costs related to conveying title. The sale will be exempt from real estate excise tax.
- Q:** If my house does have to be acquired and I have to relocate, am I able to stay in the same school district or buy a similar home?
A: Sound Transit will make every effort to find comparable properties within the desired market.
- Q:** Is there a geographical boundary limit for relocation?
A: No, there is no geographical limit on where you can move. Sound Transit will pay moving expenses within a 50-mile range.
- Q:** If there is a long delay between acquisition and when construction starts, will there be empty houses in neighborhoods for several years?
A: While acquisitions are tied to the project schedule, it is possible that homes could be vacated prior to construction starting. If that occurs, Sound Transit will take appropriate measures to secure the properties until demolition can take place.



The alternatives reviewed within the WBLE Draft EIS included both underground and elevated tracks like the one shown.

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