



Resolution No. R2024-22

Selecting the Project to be Built for the West Seattle Link Extension Project

Meeting:	Date:	Type of action:	Staff contact:
System Expansion Committee Board	10/10/2024 10/24/2024	Recommend to Board Final action	Terri Mestas, Deputy CEO, Capital Delivery Brad Owen, Executive Director, Capital Delivery Sandra Fann, Acting Executive Corridor Director, Capital Delivery Jason Hampton, HCT Development Manager, Capital Delivery

Proposed action

Selects the route, profile, and stations to be built for the West Seattle Link Extension project.

Key features summary

- This action defines and selects the West Seattle Link Extension alignment, profile, stations, and associated infrastructure to be built between SODO and the West Seattle Junction and establishes the project definition for the NEPA Record of Decision, which completes the project's federal environmental review. It also authorizes the project to advance to final design for the selected alternative.
- In July 2022, through Motion No. M2022-57, the Sound Transit Board identified the preferred alternative for the West Seattle Link Extension and requested further studies of potential refinements as options to enhance station access, prioritize an integrated and well-designed transfer experience from buses to light rail, and address concerns over potential displacements of organizations serving low-income and communities of color. Additionally, the Board directed staff to further study a potential cost savings concept in the West Seattle Junction that would eliminate the Avalon Station. Refinements from the further studies were incorporated into the Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) preferred alternative for the West Seattle Link Extension route, profile and stations.
- The WSLE Final EIS was published on September 20, 2024. The Final EIS evaluates the Preferred Alternative, all alternatives evaluated in the Draft EIS, and a new No Avalon alternative. The Board may select the Project to be Built from the range of alternatives evaluated in the Final EIS.

Equity considerations

The project team collaborated with the City of Seattle to conduct a Racial Equity Toolkit (RET) process for the WSLE project. The Delridge Station area was identified as a focus area for the RET and the following outcomes were developed in coordination with the community:

- An excellent transfer experience including bus and rail integration and options for RET community-desired amenities provided at the station; and,
- Equitable transit-oriented development serving the community.

After the Board confirmed/modified the Preferred Alternative in July 2022, the project team worked collaboratively with the City of Seattle and King County Metro to incorporate improvements to the transfer experience at the Delridge Station for the Preferred Alternative based on community feedback received after publication of the Draft EIS.

Sound Transit engaged community members and agency partners on preferences for programming and amenities around station areas. Many shared interest in redevelopment occurring in the station area that includes affordable housing at stations where housing is allowed by City Code, and community-centered amenities, such as a grocery store, food and drink options, childcare and grab-and-go shopping near the station. These uses at the station would serve the local community and passengers, as well as support safety at the station with increased activity throughout the day. All stations on the preferred alternative provide opportunities for community centered Transit Oriented Development.

The RET process, analysis, and equitable engagement efforts are documented in the *West Seattle Link Extension Racial Equity Toolkit Report: Environmental Review Phase*.

Alternatives for consideration

The alternatives below were evaluated in the West Seattle Link Extension Final EIS and can be considered by the Board for the selection of the project to be built.

SODO

Final EIS Preferred Alternative

At-Grade Lander Access Station Option (SODO-1c) – The West Seattle Link Extension would begin just north of the existing SODO Station and travel at-grade west of and parallel to the existing Link light rail line replacing the SODO Busway. It would continue south at-grade under South Lander Street, which would be reconstructed as an overpass over the new and existing light rail. It would transition to an elevated guideway south of South Lander Street.

Preferred Option SODO-1c is a refinement of the Draft EIS Preferred Alternative SODO-1a staggered configuration. It reflects Sound Transit Board direction in Motion No. M2022-57 identifying the Preferred Alternative and directing staff to explore opportunities to enhance access from the station platform to South Lander Street. Staff presented the outcomes of the refinements and community feedback to the Board in February 2023.

The new SODO Station would be at-grade, immediately west of the existing SODO Station. The existing at-grade pedestrian crossing of the light rail tracks at SODO Station would be closed, and a new pedestrian grade-separated crossing of both existing and new tracks would be used to access both stations. There would be a station access from the new South Lander Street bridge. Access to 4th Avenue South would occur via South Lander Street.

Other Final EIS alternatives

- At-Grade Alternative (SODO-1a) – Same as Preferred Option SODO-1c except for station access. South Stacy Street would be extended from 4th Avenue South to a cul-de-sac on the west side of the station instead of access from the new South Lander Street bridge with the Preferred Alternative.
The new SODO Station would be at-grade, immediately west of the existing SODO Station.
- At-Grade South Station Option (SODO-1b) – Same as Preferred Option SODO-1a.
The new SODO Station would be at-grade, immediately west of the existing SODO Station.
This alternative is not available for selection because of its impact on parks or historic resources that are protected under federal law.

- Mixed Profile Alternative (SODO-2) – The West Seattle Link Extension would begin just north of the existing SODO Station and travel at-grade west of and parallel to the existing Link light rail line in the SODO Busway. The guideway would transition to an elevated profile at South Walker Street and continue south over South Lander Street. The SODO Busway would be relocated to the west of the new rail line.

The new SODO Station would be Elevated north of South Lander Street, west of and 200 feet south of the existing SODO Station. The existing SODO Station would be relocated 200 feet south of its current location, adjacent to the new SODO Station.

This alternative is not available for selection because of its impact on parks or historic resources that are protected under federal law.

Duwamish

Final EIS Preferred Alternative

South Crossing Alternative (DUW-1a) – Elevated along the west side of the existing light rail line, south from South Forest Street; continuing southwest to cross over to the south side of the Spokane Street Bridge and the West Seattle Bridge. The guideway would continue west and to the south side of the West Seattle Bridge, crossing over the Duwamish Waterway and Harbor Island on a new high-level fixed bridge. The height of the bridge could be adjusted through coordination with the United States Coast Guard. The guideway would then cross the northern edge of Pigeon Point in a combination of elevated guideway and retained cut-and-fill; turning southwest on an elevated structure that follows Delridge Way Southwest.

Other Final EIS alternatives

- South Crossing South Edge Crossing Alignment Option (DUW-1b) – Same as the South Crossing Alternative except it would cross the Duwamish Waterway at a location farther south, over the southern edge of Harbor Island. The height of the bridge could be adjusted through coordination with the United States Coast Guard.
- North Crossing Alignment Option (DUW-2) – Elevated along the west side of the existing light rail line south from South Forest Street; continuing west on a new high-level fixed bridge north of the existing West Seattle Bridge, crossing the West Waterway. The height of the bridge could be adjusted through coordination with the United States Coast Guard. The guideway would cross over the West Seattle Bridge and associated ramps, continuing south on the west side of Delridge Way Southwest.

This alternative is not available for selection because of its impact on parks or historic resources that are protected under federal law.

Delridge

Final EIS Preferred Alternative

Andover Street Station Lower Height South Alignment Option (DEL-6b) – Elevated along the west side of Delridge Way Southwest, north of Southwest Andover Street. The elevated guideway would travel west along the north side of Southwest Yancy Street then cross Southwest Avalon Way, transitioning from elevated to at-grade in the vicinity of 32nd Avenue Southwest. The guideway would turn south to travel south along the east side of the West Seattle Bridge connection to Fautleroy Way Southwest and transition into a retained cut. elevated structure that follows Delridge Way Southwest.

The Delridge Station would be elevated north of Southwest Andover Street and west of Delridge Way Southwest in a northeast-southwest orientation.

Preferred Option DEL-6b is a refinement of Alternative DEL-6 (now known as Alternative DEL-6a) developed in response to public and agency comments and Sound Transit Board direction in Motion No. M2022-57 to study refinement options to enhance station access, prioritize an integrated and well-designed transfer experience from buses to light rail, and address concerns over potential displacements of organizations serving low-income populations and communities of color.

Other Final EIS alternatives

- Dakota Street Station Alternative (DEL-1a) – Elevated along the west side Delridge Way Southwest (except at Southwest Andover Street); continuing south to an elevated station; turning to the west and crossing to the south side of the Southwest Genesee Street right-of-way, north of the West Seattle Golf Course.

The Delridge Station would be elevated south of Southwest Dakota Street, oriented southwest-northeast.

This alternative is not available for selection because of its impact on parks or historic resources that are protected under federal law.

- Dakota Street Station North Alignment Option (DEL-1b) – Similar to Alternative DEL-1a, except it would shift to the north side of Southwest Genesee Street west of 28th Avenue Southwest.

The Delridge Station would be elevated south of Southwest Dakota Street, oriented southwest-northeast.

This alternative is not available for selection because of its impact on parks or historic resources that are protected under federal law.

Dakota Street Station Lower Height Alternative (DEL-2a) – Elevated along the west side Delridge Way Southwest (except at Southwest Andover Street); continuing south to an elevated station; turning to the west and crossing to the south side of the Southwest Genesee Street right-of-way, north of the West Seattle Golf Course, with a tunnel portal for connecting to tunnel alternatives in the West Seattle Junction Segment in the northwest corner of the West Seattle Golf Course, south of Southwest Genesee Street and east of 31st Avenue Southwest.

The Delridge Station would be elevated south of Southwest Dakota Street, oriented southwest-northeast.

This alternative is not available for selection because of its impact on parks or historic resources that are protected under federal law.

- Dakota Street Station Lower Height North Alignment Option (DEL-2b) – Similar to Alternative DEL-2a, except it would shift to the north side of Southwest Genesee Street west of 28th Avenue Southwest, with a tunnel portal north of Southwest Genesee Street, between Southwest Avalon Way and 30th Avenue Southwest.

The Delridge Station would be elevated south of Southwest Dakota Street, oriented southwest-northeast.

This alternative is not available for selection because of its impact on parks or historic resources that are protected under federal law.

- Delridge Way Station Alternative (DEL-3) – Elevated along Delridge Way Southwest to the station, turning west and crossing to the south side of the Southwest Genesee Street right-of-way, north of the West Seattle Golf Course and continuing west along the south edge of Southwest Genesee

Street.

The Delridge Station would be elevated station in the middle of Delridge Way Southwest, north of Southwest Dakota Street.

This alternative is not available for selection because of its impact on parks or historic resources that are protected under federal law.

- Delridge Way Station Lower Height Alternative (DEL-4) – Elevated along Delridge Way Southwest to the station, turning west and crossing to the south side of the Southwest Genesee Street right-of-way, north of the West Seattle Golf Course and continuing west along the south edge of Southwest Genesee Street.

The Delridge Station would be elevated station in the middle of Delridge Way Southwest, north of Southwest Dakota Street.

This alternative is not available for selection because of its impact on parks or historic resources that are protected under federal law.

- Andover Street Station Alternative (DEL-5) – Elevated along the west side of Delridge Way Southwest, north of Southwest Andover Street; continuing west along Southwest Andover Street, then south along Southwest Avalon Way. The elevated guideway would continue south along Southwest Avalon Way, turning west on the north side of Southwest Genesee Street.

The Delridge Station would be elevated station north of Southwest Andover Street and west of Delridge Way Southwest in a northeast-southwest orientation.

This alternative is not available for selection because of its impact on parks or historic resources that are protected under federal law.

- Andover Street Station Lower Height Alternative (DEL-6a) – Elevated along Delridge Way Southwest to the station, turning west and crossing to the south side of the Southwest Genesee Street right-of-way, north of the West Seattle Golf Course and continuing west along the south edge of Southwest Genesee Street.

The Delridge Station would be elevated station north of Southwest Andover Street and west of Delridge Way Southwest in a northeast-southwest orientation.

- Andover Street Station Lower Height Alternative No Avalon Station Tunnel Connection Alternative (DEL-7) – Elevated along the west side of Delridge Way Southwest, north of Southwest Andover Street. The elevated guideway would travel west along the north side of Southwest Yancy Street, then cross to the south side of Southwest Andover Street on an elevated guideway. A tunnel portal would be in the vicinity of 32nd Avenue Southwest, east of the West Seattle Bridge.

The Delridge Station would be elevated station north of Southwest Andover Street and west of Delridge Way Southwest in a northeast-southwest orientation.

To select this alternative the Board would need to amend the ST 3 Plan to remove the Avalon Station based on the criteria in Resolutions R2016-16 and R2016-17

West Seattle Junction

Final EIS Preferred Alternative

Medium Tunnel 41st Avenue Station West Entrance Station Option (WSJ-5b) – Tunnel begins in a retained cut south of Southwest Yancy Street and follows the east side of the West Seattle Bridge/Fauntleroy Way Southwest to Southwest Genesee Street, entering into a tunnel at Southwest Genesee Street and 37th Avenue Southwest and curving southwest west of 37th Avenue Southwest to

41st Avenue Southwest to terminate at Southwest Hudson Street, with tail track in a north-south orientation under 41st Avenue Southwest. Preferred Option WSJ-5b is a refinement of Alternative WSJ-5 analyzed in the Draft EIS, and it was refined based on the Sound Transit Board's direction to explore an option to shift a station entrance to 42nd Avenue Southwest at the Alaska Junction Station to improve access to the Alaska Junction.

The Avalon Station would be in a lidded retained cut south of Southwest Genesee Street, beneath 35th Avenue Southwest.

The Alaska Junction Station would be in a tunnel beneath 41st Avenue Southwest and Southwest Alaska Street. Station entrances would be on either side of Southwest Alaska Street. The entrance south of Southwest Alaska Street would be on the west side of 41st Avenue Southwest. The entrance north of Southwest Alaska Street would be on the east side of 41st Avenue Southwest.

Other Final EIS alternatives

- Elevated 41st/42nd Avenue Station Alternative (WSJ-1) – Elevated along the south side of Southwest Genesee Street between 31st Avenue Southwest and Fauntleroy Way Southwest; turning southwest on the west side of Fauntleroy Way Southwest, turning south in the vicinity of 41st Avenue Southwest and Southwest Alaska Street and continues south to Southwest Hudson Street; ends on the west side of 42nd Avenue Southwest with tail track south of the Alaska Junction Station. A hi-rail access road would be provided for maintenance access.

The Avalon Station would be elevated along the south side of Southwest Genesee Street, east of 35th Avenue Southwest.

The Alaska Junction Station would be elevated between 41st Avenue Southwest and 42nd Avenue Southwest, south of Southwest Alaska Street.

This alternative is not available for selection because of its impact on parks or historic resources that are protected under federal law.

- Elevated Fauntleroy Way Station Alternative (WSJ-2) – Elevated along the south side of Southwest Genesee Street between 31st Avenue Southwest and Fauntleroy Way Southwest. The alignment would head southwest on Fauntleroy Way Southwest and continue along the west side of Fauntleroy Way Southwest. The guideway would cross to the east side of Fauntleroy Way Southwest north of Southwest Oregon Street. This alternative would also include a hi-rail access road for maintenance of the guideway. Elevated tail tracks would begin south of the Alaska Junction Station and end within the Fauntleroy Way Southwest right-of-way just past Southwest Edmunds Street.

The Avalon Station would be elevated along the south side of Southwest Genesee Street and east of 35th Avenue Southwest.

The Alaska Junction Station would be elevated southeast of Fauntleroy Way Southwest straddling Southwest Alaska Street.

This alternative is not available for selection because of its impact on parks or historic resources that are protected under federal law.

- Tunnel 41st Avenue Station Alternative (WSJ-3a) – Tunnel under Southwest Genesee Street heading west from 31st Avenue Southwest, then curving to the southwest between 37th Avenue Southwest and 41st Avenue Southwest, ending in the vicinity of Southwest Hudson Street, with the tail track in a north-south orientation under 41st Avenue Southwest.

The Avalon Station would be in a tunnel beneath Southwest Genesee Street and Fauntleroy Way Southwest.

The Alaska Junction Station would be in a tunnel beneath 41st Avenue Southwest and Southwest Alaska Street.

This alternative is not available for selection because of its impact on parks or historic resources that are protected under federal law.

- Tunnel 41st Avenue Station Alternative (WSJ-3b) – Tunnel under Southwest Genesee Street heading west from 31st Avenue Southwest, then curving to the southwest between 37th Avenue Southwest and 42nd Avenue Southwest, ending in the vicinity of Southwest Hudson Street, with the tail track in a north-south orientation under 42nd Avenue Southwest.

The Avalon Station would be in a tunnel beneath Southwest Genesee Street and Fauntleroy Way Southwest.

The Alaska Junction Station would be in a tunnel beneath 42nd Avenue Southwest and Southwest Alaska Street.

This alternative is not available for selection because of its impact on parks or historic resources that are protected under federal law.

- Short Tunnel 41st Avenue Station Alternative (WSJ-4) – Elevated along the south side of Southwest Genesee Street from 31st Avenue Southwest to the west side of Fauntleroy Way Southwest, continuing along the west side of Fauntleroy Way Southwest on elevated guideway before transitioning to at-grade near 37th Avenue Southwest. This alternative would include a hi-rail access road for maintenance, which would start at-grade and transition to an elevated structure to reach the height of the guideway. The guideway would turn west near Southwest Oregon Street and transition into a tunnel with a portal in the vicinity of Southwest Oregon Street and 38th Avenue Southwest. The tunnel would turn south and end south of Southwest Hudson Street, with a tail track in a north-south orientation along and under 41st Avenue Southwest.

The Avalon Station would be elevated along the south side of Southwest Genesee Street and east of 35th Avenue Southwest.

The Alaska Junction Station would be in a tunnel beneath 41st Avenue Southwest, south of Southwest Alaska Street.

This alternative is not available for selection because of its impact on parks or historic resources that are protected under federal law.

- Medium Tunnel 41st Avenue Station Alternative (WSJ-5a) – Tunnel begins in a retained cut south of Southwest Yancy Street and follows the east side of the West Seattle Bridge connection to Southwest Genesee Street, entering into a tunnel at Southwest Genesee Street and 37th Avenue Southwest and curving southwest west of 37th Avenue Southwest to 41st Avenue Southwest to terminate at Southwest Hudson Street, with tail track in a north-south orientation under 41st Avenue Southwest.

The Avalon Station would be in a lidded retained cut south of Southwest Genesee Street, beneath 35th Avenue Southwest.

The Alaska Junction Station would be in a tunnel beneath 41st Avenue Southwest and Southwest Alaska Street. Station entrances would be on either side of Southwest Alaska Street along the east side of 41st Avenue Southwest.

- No Avalon Station Tunnel Alternative (WSJ-6) – The guideway would be entirely in a tunnel. Tunnel continues from where it would connect to Alternative DEL-7 in the Delridge Segment. The tunnel would curve southwest to 41st Avenue Southwest and terminate at Southwest Hudson Street, with

tail tracks in a north-south orientation under 41st Avenue Southwest. Alternative WSJ-6 is included at the direction of the Sound Transit Board (Motion 2022-57) to study elimination of the Avalon Station as a cost-savings measure.

The Alaska Junction Station would be in a tunnel beneath 41st Avenue Southwest and Southwest Alaska Street. Station entrances would be on either side of Southwest Alaska Street along the east side of 41st Avenue Southwest.

To select this alternative the Board would need to amend the ST 3 Plan to remove the Avalon Station based on the criteria in Resolutions Nos. R2016-16 and R2016-17.

Staff Recommendation

Sound Transit staff recommend that the Board select the following alternatives as the project to be built for the West Seattle Link Extension:

- SODO: At-Grade Lander Access Station Option (SODO-1c)
- Duwamish: South Crossing Alternative (DUW-1a)
- Delridge: Andover Street Station Lower Height South Alignment Option (DEL-6b)
- West Seattle Junction: Medium Tunnel 41st Avenue Station West Entrance Station Option (WSJ-5b)

The staff recommendation minimizes many community impacts while enhancing mobility and access, improving passenger experience and offering substantial equitable transit-oriented development opportunities.

Compared to other alternatives, the preferred alternative has fewer residential displacements, minimizes effects to parks and historic resources and includes a lower height guideway through Delridge, a shallow retained cut Avalon Station and a tunnel alignment and station in the Alaska Junction neighborhood that provides more convenient access to California Avenue

Background

The West Seattle Link Extension and Ballard Link Extension projects are part of the Sound Transit 3 Plan (ST3) of regional transit system investments, approved for funding by voters in the region in 2016. The projects will provide fast, reliable light rail connections to dense residential and job centers throughout the region. The Ballard Link Extension will add a new downtown Seattle light rail tunnel to provide efficient operating capacity for the entire regional system. The extension to West Seattle will operate from downtown Seattle to West Seattle's Alaska Junction neighborhood with four stations and will eventually connect through downtown Seattle north to Everett.

The project development process has three phases. Phase 1 included alternatives development, environmental scoping and identification of a preferred alternative(s) and other alternatives. Phase 2 included the preparation of a Draft EIS covering both extensions and conceptual engineering of a preferred alternative(s) and other alternatives as identified through alternatives development. While both extensions were initially on the same environmental review timeline, additional environmental review is needed for project refinements for the Ballard Link Extension resulting from the March 2023 Board action (M2023-18). Environmental review for the two extensions is now proceeding on different timelines. Phase 3 included preparation of a Final EIS for the West Seattle Link Extension, including responses to public and agency comments on the Draft EIS, and additional design and Preliminary Engineering. The Ballard Link Extension will require preparation of a SEPA Supplemental Draft EIS/NEPA Draft EIS before preparation of a Final EIS.

To maintain eligibility for potential federal funding and obtain required federal approvals, the projects will comply with the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). As the public agency

proposing the project, Sound Transit is required to comply with the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA). The FTA, as the federal lead agency under NEPA, and Sound Transit, as the state lead agency under SEPA, have determined that the proposed projects may have probable significant adverse environmental impacts. To satisfy both NEPA and SEPA requirements, the agencies prepared a combined NEPA/SEPA Final EIS for the West Seattle Link Extension.

Sound Transit and the FTA published the Final EIS for the West Seattle Link Extensions on September 20, 2024. Hard copies of the Final EIS are available for public viewing at public libraries and community-based organizations in the project area. Digital copies of the Final EIS are also available on Sound Transit's website. Three in-person drop-in sessions were held after publication of the Final EIS to share information about the project and answer questions from the public. Numerous community briefings and property owner meetings have also been held to encourage public engagement.

NEPA requires that Sound Transit identify a preferred alternative in the Final EIS (and SEPA also requires the same if the agency has one). In May 2019 (Motion No. M2019-51), the Board identified preferred alternatives and other alternatives for detailed study in the Draft EIS. In July 2022 (Motion No. M2022-57), the Board modified the preferred alternative for the West Seattle Link Extension and directed staff to conduct further studies on refinements to the preferred alternative. Staff completed those further studies, reported to the Board on February 9, 2023 and based on potential funding identified in collaboration with King County and City of Seattle incorporated the results into the modified preferred alternative.

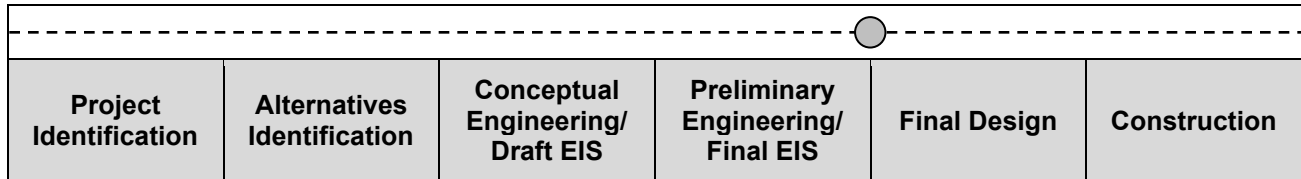
This Resolution to select the West Seattle Link Extension alignment, profile, stations, and associated infrastructure to be built between SODO and the West Seattle Junction establishes the project definition for the NEPA Record of Decision, which completes the project's federal environmental review. It also authorizes the project to advance to final design for the selected alternative.

Consistent with the System Expansion Implementation Plan (SEIP), at the beginning of the project development process in 2017, Sound Transit and the City of Seattle finalized a partnering agreement specific to the project, which the Seattle City Council and the Sound Transit Board later adopted. The Partnering Agreement notes that "the parties acknowledge the importance of meeting Project schedule milestones and objectives in order to begin light rail operations on time. The Partnering Agreement further notes that "In cases where the City or other parties have an interest in changing Project scope beyond that allowed under Sound Transit's financial plan, the City will collaborate with Sound Transit to identify reductions in scope or risk elsewhere on the project or provide increased funding through local contributions to finance the requested change." This requirement for local contributions for substantial scope expansions is mirrored in the partnering agreements Sound Transit has executed with several other municipalities in the region.

As noted in Motions Nos. M2022-57 (July 2022) and M2023-18 (March 2023) and based on comparative cost estimates and revenue projections at the time of these motions, the preferred alternatives for the West Seattle and the Ballard Link extensions were anticipated to exceed the assumptions in the realigned financial plan. Sound Transit, City of Seattle, and King County acknowledged there may be shared responsibility to address the additional cost of certain Board directed scope elements through either additional funding or cost savings opportunities. Together, they identified up to \$400 million in additional potential funding for the West Seattle and Ballard Link extensions through various sources including publicly-owned property, value capture from increased development, and in-kind contributions. The City of Seattle and King County provided letters on March 23, 2023, indicating their intent to work with Sound Transit to further analyze costs and funding sources and develop a funding agreement in advance of the Board actions to select projects to be built for the West Seattle and Ballard Link Extensions. As design has advanced through the Draft and Final EIS processes, estimates have been updated and have changed. Recent preliminary cost estimates for the West Seattle Link Extension (WSLE) project substantially exceed the estimate currently in the agency's long-range financial plan. To

address rising project costs and inform future baselining decisions on the West Seattle Link Extension project, as well as other capital projects in development, the Board on September 26, 2024 directed the agency in Motion No. M2024-59 to develop a workplan on programmatic, financial, and project level measures and opportunities the agency will pursue to improve the agency’s financial situation and move WSLE through design to inform a financially sound project to be baselined, including timelines and scale of potential benefits for each measure, and whether each measure is WSLE-specific or also applies more broadly to future projects. While implementing the broader work plan, Sound Transit will advance discussions with the City of Seattle and King County to further analyze costs, funding sources and develop a funding agreement related to certain Board directed scope elements.

Project status



Projected completion date for Final Design: Q4 2027

Project scope, schedule and budget summary are located on page 110 of the June 2024 Agency Progress Report.

Fiscal information

The project to be built decision defines the base scope of the project. There is no direct fiscal impact associated with the proposed action, but the scope of the project has direct impact on the overall affordability of the project within the Financial Plan, as the board will establish the baseline budget based on this scope. Staff will return prior to the baseline action with options to ensure affordability of the Financial Plan.

Additionally, staff will return for a budget amendment to request an increase in the project authorized allocation to advance final design.

Disadvantaged and small business participation

Not applicable.

Public involvement

Sound Transit has engaged stakeholders, the public and various agencies at the local, regional, state and federal levels to solicit early and continued feedback since project development was initiated in 2017. The main focus during the Draft EIS phase was on engagement activities leading up to and during the formal Draft EIS public comment period, which was held for 90 days from January 28 to April 28, 2022. In July 2022, the Board in Motion No. M2022-57 identified a preferred alternative for the West Seattle Link Extension and directed further studies and public engagement to inform a future action to confirm or modify the preferred alternative for the Ballard Link Extension.

Between July 2022 and October 2024, engagement activities have included hosting open houses, providing community briefings, meeting with business, residents and property owners and participating in events and tours. Sound Transit partnered with City of Seattle community liaisons to provide in-language engagement including focus groups and offered translated materials and interpretation. In the fall of 2023 Sound Transit, in partnership with City of Seattle and King County Metro, held in-person and online station planning open houses where we gathered feedback on access, urban design and transit-

oriented development (TOD) topics. Following the fall engagement, in the spring of 2024 Sound Transit shared station design progress at an in-person open house and through the project website. Sound Transit complemented station planning engagement events with community briefings, an online survey and in-language focus groups to gather additional feedback.

Time constraints

The Board has identified a target in-service date of 2032. A delay in selecting the project to be built for the West Seattle Link Extension would delay issuance of the Federal Transit Administration's Record of Decision, the start of Final Design, procurement of a design contractor, property acquisition, and certain permitting activities.

Prior Board/Committee actions

Motion No. M2024-59: Directed the chief executive office to develop a workplan on measures the agency will pursue to address rising project costs and inform future baselining decisions on the West Seattle Link Extension Project.

Motion No. M2023-57: Confirmed or modified the preferred station location for the Denny Station for the Ballard Link Extension Final Environmental Impact Statement.

Motion No. M2023-18: Confirmed or modified the preferred light rail route and station locations for the Ballard Link Extension Final Environmental Impact Statement.

Motion No. M2022-57: Confirmed or modified the preferred light rail route and station locations for the West Seattle Link Extension Final Environmental Impact Statement and requested further studies in some areas to inform potential additional future Board action to confirm or modify the Preferred Alternative

Motion No. M2019-104: Recommended additional alternatives for study in the West Seattle and Ballard Link Extensions Draft Environmental Impact Statement.

Motion No. M2019-51: Identified the preferred alternative(s) and other alternatives for study in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the West Seattle and Ballard Link Extensions project.

Motion No. M2017-161: Authorized the chief executive officer to execute a Partnering Agreement with the City of Seattle for the West Seattle and Ballard Link Extensions Project.

Resolution No. R2017-32: Amended the Adopted 2017 Budget to create the West Seattle and Ballard Link Extensions Project by (a) establishing the Project Allocation to Date through the completion of the Preliminary Engineering Phase in the amount of \$285,896,000 and (b) establishing the 2017 Annual Budget in the amount of \$4,150,000; (2) authorized the project to advance through Gate 1 within Sound Transit's Phase Gate Process; and (3) established the name of the project as the West Seattle and Ballard Link Extensions Project.

Environmental review – KH 10/2/24

Legal review – DLB 10/4/24



Resolution No. R2024-22

A RESOLUTION of the Board of the Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority selecting the route, profile, and stations to be built for the West Seattle Link Extension project.

WHEREAS, the Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority, commonly known as Sound Transit, was formed under chapters 81.104 and 81.112 of the Revised Code of Washington (RCW) for the Pierce, King, and Snohomish Counties region by action of their respective county councils pursuant to RCW 81.112.030; and

WHEREAS, Sound Transit is authorized to plan, construct, and permanently operate a high-capacity system of transportation infrastructure and services to meet regional public transportation needs in the Central Puget Sound region; and

WHEREAS, in general elections held within the Sound Transit district on November 5, 1996, November 4, 2008, and November 8, 2016, voters approved local funding to implement a regional high-capacity transportation system for the Central Puget Sound region; and

WHEREAS, in November 2016, the voter-approved ST3 Plan including funding to extend Link Light Rail from downtown Seattle to West Seattle's Alaska Junction neighborhood and connect through downtown Seattle north to Everett; and

WHEREAS, Resolution No. R2021-05 identified the West Seattle Link Extension as a Tier 1 project to proceed without funding delay; and

WHEREAS, in May 2019, the Board approved Motion No. M2019-51 and identified preferred alternatives and other alternatives for detailed study in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement; and,

WHEREAS, in May 2019, the Board established a process outlining that after publication of the Draft EIS and receipt of public comment, if the City of Seattle or other parties had an interest in expanding scope beyond that allowed under Sound Transit's financial plan, identification as the preferred alternative would be contingent on the identification of third-party funding to cover the additional cost of delivering the project; and,

WHEREAS, in July 2022, the Board, in Motion No. M2022-57, modified the preferred alternative for the West Seattle Link Extension and directed staff to conduct further studies on refinements to the preferred alternative. Staff completed those further studies, reported to the Board on February 9, 2023 and based on potential funding identified in collaboration with King County and City of Seattle incorporated the results into the modified preferred alternative in Motion No. M2023-18; and,

WHEREAS, as noted in Motions Nos. M2022-57 (July 2022) and M2023-18 (March 2023) and based on comparative cost estimates and revenue projections at the time of these motions, the preferred alternatives for the West Seattle and the Ballard Link extensions were anticipated to exceed the assumptions in the realigned financial plan; and,

WHEREAS, the City of Seattle and King County provided letters on March 23, 2023, indicating their intent to work with Sound Transit to further analyze costs and funding sources and develop a funding agreement in advance of the Board actions to select projects to be built for the West Seattle and Ballard Link Extensions; and,

WHEREAS, to satisfy both NEPA and SEPA requirements, the Federal Transit Administration and Sound Transit prepared a combined NEPA/SEPA Final EIS for the West Seattle Link Extension; and,

WHEREAS, the project team collaborated with the City of Seattle to conduct a Racial Equity Toolkit process for the West Seattle Link Extension project; and,

WHEREAS, the West Seattle Link Extension Final Environmental Impact Statement was published on September 20, 2024 and evaluates the Preferred Alternative, all alternatives evaluated in the Draft EIS, and a new No Avalon alternative; and,

WHEREAS, as design has advanced through the Draft and Final Environmental Impact Statements processes, estimates have been updated and have changed. Recent bottom-up preliminary engineering cost estimates (representing approximately 30% design) of the West Seattle Link Extension preferred alternative have indicated that project costs are trending upward; and,

WHEREAS, In September 2024, the Board approved Motion No. M2024-59 to direct the development of a workplan on measure the agency with pursue to address rising projects costs and inform future baselining decision on the West Seattle Link Extension project; and,

WHEREAS, after due consideration of the environmental, social, economic, and other relevant factors, including public and agency comment and environmental review, the Board finds that it is in the best interest of and will best serve the people in the Sound Transit district to select and implement the West Seattle Link Extension described below.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of the Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority that:

Section 1. The route, profile, and stations for the West Seattle Link Extension are identified in the following paragraphs (as generally described in the West Seattle Link Extension Final Environmental Impact Statement):

A. SODO Segment: The West Seattle Link Extension would begin just north of the existing SODO Station and travel at-grade west of and parallel to the existing Link light rail line replacing the SODO Busway. It would continue south at-grade under South Lander Street, which would be reconstructed as an overpass over the new and existing light rail. It would transition to an elevated guideway south of South Lander Street.

The new SODO Station would be at-grade, immediately west of the existing SODO Station. The existing at-grade pedestrian crossing of the light rail tracks at SODO Station would be closed, and a new pedestrian grade-separated crossing of both existing and new tracks would be used to access both stations. There would be a station access from the new South Lander Street bridge. Access to 4th Avenue South would occur via South Lander Street.

B. Duwamish Segment: Elevated route would continue along the west side of the existing light rail line, south from South Forest Street; continuing southwest to cross over to the south side of the Spokane Street Bridge and the West Seattle Bridge. The guideway would continue west and to the south side of the West Seattle Bridge, crossing over the Duwamish Waterway and Harbor Island on a new high-level fixed bridge. The height of the bridge could be adjusted through coordination with the United States Coast Guard. The guideway would then cross the northern edge of Pigeon Point in a combination of elevated guideway and retained cut-and-fill; turning southwest on an elevated structure that follows Delridge Way Southwest.

C. Delridge Segment: Elevated route would continue along the west side of Delridge Way Southwest, north of Southwest Andover Street. The elevated guideway would travel west along the north side of Southwest Yancy Street then cross Southwest Avalon Way, transitioning from elevated to at-grade

in the vicinity of 32nd Avenue Southwest. The guideway would turn south to travel south along the east side of the West Seattle Bridge connection to Fauntleroy Way Southwest and transition into a retained cut.

The Delridge Station would be elevated north of Southwest Andover Street and west of Delridge Way Southwest in a northeast-southwest orientation.

- D. West Seattle Junction Segment: Tunnel route would begin in a retained cut south of Southwest Yancy Street and follows the east side of the West Seattle Bridge/Fauntleroy Way Southwest to Southwest Genesee Street, entering into a tunnel at Southwest Genesee Street and 37th Avenue Southwest and curving southwest west of 37th Avenue Southwest to 41st Avenue Southwest to terminate at Southwest Hudson Street, with tail track in a north-south orientation under 41st Avenue Southwest. Preferred Option WSJ-5b is a refinement of Alternative WSJ-5 analyzed in the Draft EIS, and it was refined based on the Sound Transit Board's direction to explore an option to shift a station entrance to 42nd Avenue Southwest at the Alaska Junction Station to improve access to the Alaska Junction.

The Avalon Station would be in a lidded retained cut south of Southwest Genesee Street, beneath 35th Avenue Southwest.

The Alaska Junction Station would be in a tunnel beneath 41st Avenue Southwest and Southwest Alaska Street. Station entrances would be on either side of Southwest Alaska Street. The entrance south of Southwest Alaska Street would be on the west side of 41st Avenue Southwest. The entrance north of Southwest Alaska Street would be on the east side of 41st Avenue Southwest.

ADOPTED by the Board of the Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority at a regular meeting thereof held on _____.

Dow Constantine
Board Chair

Attest:

Kathryn Flores
Board Administrator