



SEATTLE CITY COUNCIL | DISTRICT 1
COUNCILMEMBER LISA HERBOLD

April 28, 2022

WSBLE Draft Environmental Impact Statement Comments
c/o Lauren Swift
Sound Transit
401 South Jackson Street
Seattle, WA 98104

sent by electronic mail

Dear Ms. Swift,

I am writing to comment on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Sound Transit West Seattle and Ballard Link Extensions project.

I am submitting these comments as District 1 Seattle City Councilmember, to let Sound Transit know what I've been hearing from constituents in West Seattle about the ST3 proposal and to assist the Sound Transit Board's identification of a Preferred Alternative and other alternatives to study in the Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

Locating light rail stations and alignment will be a 100-year decision, with long-term impacts to the West Seattle Community.

While I continue to hear support for light rail to West Seattle, there is continuing concern about potential impacts for some options. I am requesting additional visual representations be included for the Final EIS, to clearly demonstrate what alignments will look like and demonstrate their impacts.

Below are comments regarding the segments in District 1:

West Seattle Junction Segment

There is very strong community support for a tunnel option. A tunnel would minimize impacts to the neighborhood and businesses and provide the best approach for long-term success and the health of the West Seattle Junction community.

An elevated alignment into the heart of the West Seattle Junction Urban Village, and on Fautleroy Way SW would be unique to this project and unprecedented for light rail in Seattle. It would include impacts that could not be mitigated.

In addition, an elevated line on Fautleroy would make completion of the [Fautleroy Boulevard Project](#) infeasible. Funding for this project was included in the Move Seattle Levy approved by Seattle voters in 2015.

The Medium Tunnel 41st Avenue Station (WSJ-5) offers an option that is estimated to cost \$200 million less than the elevated Preferred Alternative 41st/42nd Avenue Station Alternative (WSJ-1) that goes into the heart of the West Seattle Junction. The Medium Tunnel has significantly fewer residential, business, and employee impacts.

There is also significant support for the Preferred Tunnel 41st Avenue Station Alternative (WSJ-3a) and the Preferred Tunnel 42nd Avenue Station Option (WSJ-3b).

Delridge Segment

Most riders will access the Delridge station via transfers. Consequently, transfer times are very important. A key point of the Racial Equity Toolkit is the importance of ensuring access from lower-income BIPOC communities to the south, including South Delridge and White Center. Consideration of transit-oriented development is also important to consider.

The Andover Street Station Lower Height (DEL-6) has the lowest overall displacement impacts and does not directly cross the Youngstown community. I encourage study to improve the transit integration for commuters from communities to the south. I appreciate the pedestrian overpass refinement proposal for accessing this station. How this station would operate with truck access to Nucor is important to consider.

The potential height of an elevated guideway on Genesee (150' in one option) is a significant concern. Should the Board consider an option on Genesee, I strongly encourage selection of one of the lower height options that connects to a tunnel.

It may be worth examining the ability of options to connect between segments. For example, WSJ-5 and DEL-6 do not connect with any other options.

Avalon

While the realignment process initiated by the Sound Transit Board is separate from the Draft EIS, given that Sound Transit staff have recently released potential refinements, and they are a subject of public discussion, I'd like to address the potential elimination of the Avalon station. I offer the following comments in the event the board opts to consider eliminating this station.

I've heard a variety of perspectives in West Seattle about the Avalon station. Some, including nearby residents of the numerous multifamily buildings on Avalon Way, emphasize the development on and around Avalon, and potential future development, and think keeping this station is important.

Others either support or could live with removing it, but only if it results in a commensurate benefit to the West Seattle community, such as a longer tunnel.

As noted above, a key point of the Racial Equity Toolkit is the importance of ensuring access from lower-income BIPOC communities to the south. While a number of those communities would access the line via Delridge, the High Point community would be most likely to access the line via the Avalon station at or by 35th Avenue SW. So, eliminating this station would require a clear plan for providing timely access from High Point and adjacent communities on the 35th Avenue SW corridor.

Duwamish crossing

Both the north and south crossings of the Duwamish have significant impacts to the community.

The southern options have potential displacements of 22-26 residences on Pigeon Point, while the North option on Harbor Island has impacts to Harbor Island. The number of impacted businesses impacted is similar, though the south crossing affects 670 to 680 employees, versus the 400 for the north crossing.

The West Seattle Bridge is currently undergoing repairs and is expected to continue in service through its original 75-year expected lifespan, roughly 2060. At that time, however, it will need to be replaced. Design of the Duwamish crossing will need to account for this.

Sincerely,



Seattle City Councilmember
District 1, West Seattle and South Park