



## Meeting Summary

### Community Advisory Group: CID/SODO

**Subject:** Meeting #6 – Consolidating Feedback

**Date, time:** Thursday, May 12, 2022; 5pm to 7pm

**Meeting Recording:** <https://youtu.be/qSU-yR6RdU>

### Participants

<b>CAG members:</b> Brien Chow George Cloy Erin Goodman Jared Jonson John Marchione Tiernan Martin Jeremy Park Tija Petrovich MaryKate Ryan Jessa Timmer Yin Yu	<b>Facilitator / presenters:</b>	Emily Alice Gerhart, Facilitator  Leda Chahim, Sound Transit  Cathal Ridge, Executive Corridor Director, Sound Transit
	<b>Agency Partners:</b>	Chris Arkills, King County Metro Sara Maxana, City of Seattle
	<b>Sound Transit / Consultant Team:</b>	Daniel Turner, Sound Transit Sloan Dawson, Sound Transit Salima Hamlin, Sound Transit Consultant

#### Overview of Presentation Topics

Cathal Ridge provided an update on community engagement and collaboration and next steps in the project process.

#### Consolidated Feedback from CAG Members

The following abbreviations are used in this summary:

- Q: Question
- A: Answer
- C: Comment

#### Draft EIS Alternative Feedback

CAG members shared their feedback to the following questions:

- What are your thoughts on issues and tradeoffs between the alternatives?
- What are your thoughts on confirming or modifying the preferred alternative?



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### SODO segment

**C:** (Brien Chow) I'm not too familiar with the SODO area because I've been really concentrating on the CID. The only thing I'd throw in there is if there's an alternative to the CID choices, looking to possibly go into the SODO area to move the CID station. Other than that, I hope Sound Transit does the best thing for the neighborhoods.

**C:** (Erin Goodman) It was really challenging for SODO to participate in the process because of the splitting of SODO in half. With half of SODO in the West Seattle line, where Lauren represented us, and half here, it took us a long time because there are elements to it that impact businesses separately. We finally came together around a consensus of what was the "least worst" which is not exactly where we want to be. We do not have a preference on some of the other things but one of the things that people got around was station location. As you're fully aware, the current SODO station is an underperforming station due to some of its design elements being in the middle of a block. So, what SODO would like to suggest is that we move forward with station option 1B. One of the benefits of this is it's one of the station options connecting to all of the proposed CID stations, so that therefore you can think about SODO without thinking about all the other neighborhoods. The key reason for this is that it shifts the station down to Lander Street. With the completion of the Lander St bridge overpass in 2020, that became the major east-west connector in SODO to our major employment center around 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue. Between the Homeplate building and the Starbucks center, the majority of people that do take transit into SODO are taking it to go there. All of the other configurations would put people coming out in the middle of the block, and these are SODO blocks, that are just too long. The SODO BIA and all of SODO would really like to see station alternative 1B.

**C:** (MaryKate Ryan) Thanks for having me while Kathleen is on vacation this week. Historic South Downtown does not have a preferred alternative in SODO but our primary questions around SODO's location revolve around two factors: 1) How construction and operations will eventually long-term effect the very different traffic patterns that SODO has versus the CID or Pioneer Square and 2) how will this affect Metro? We have listened very carefully to what the SODO BIA and other SODO neighbors have had to say about this, but also to Metro and their concerns about the location. Rather than a preferred alternative, we do have some additional questions which we raised in our letters about those two aspects.

**C:** (Jared Jonson) Regarding SODO station, I do not have a preferred station option.

**C:** (John Marchione) I favor 1B because it gives the greatest flexibility going north and south from there. Erin's comments about people accessing the stations, I agree with also.

**C:** (Tiernan Martin) No comment on the SODO station.

**C:** (Jeremy Park) I second what Erin said about the 1B option, being that we are a business that relies on traffic being able to move freely in that area as well as people being able to use the station. Making the station more usable is better for us and especially our customers.

**C:** (Tija Petrovich) I'm going defer to SODO folks.

**C:** (Jessa Timmer) I will also defer to our friendly neighbors to the south, the SODO BIA, for their comments for this alternative.

**C:** (Yin Yu) No comment.



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### CID Segment

**C:** (Brien Chow) I'm sure you're all aware that we prefer the 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue because there are too many human costs if it's on 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue. It's an area that should be saved and not disturbed. There are too many things that are going to go on in Chinatown that will destroy the neighborhood if 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue is picked. 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue would have construction in our neighborhood for 8, 9, 10 years. Business in the CID would not be able to withstand the construction terror that goes on. For the first 3 years, there would be a number of businesses that would go out of business. There's a lot of human costs that are going to come with a 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue choice. This new ventilation facility would go on 100 years. To bring in good air to the tunnel and to bring out bad for 100 years is just not right for everyone that lives in the neighborhood. 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue has much better opportunity to not affect the neighborhoods like the one on 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue will. During construction, you have digging up dirt-- every 10 minutes dump/hauling trucks would go through the community causing noise and dust and everything bad that comes with tunneling dirt coming out of the ground every 10 minutes, going on 7:30 to 10:00 at night. It's a bad environment. All the construction that happens during those 8 years will keep people away from Chinatown, the CID. It only takes 3 years to kill a business. If there is a CID left after construction, you're going to surprise a whole lot of people. When you have the streetcar coming off Jackson down 7<sup>th</sup> during those 8 years, that cuts right in half with total construction going on in the whole neighborhood. Our seniors are going to be stuck in their apartments because of the construction. The good thing is we have a choice of going to 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue. I would like to see more studies of somewhere besides 4<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue with an outside consultant with fresh eyes and come up with a different way to have the 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue station put somewhere else. I understand the cost and impact on the bus depot, but again 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue's human costs are too much. This is the last Chinatown. Three times Chinatown's been moved from the docks to 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue and the area right now, a historic district. The CID is home to an Asian culture. You have Japantown, Little Saigon, and Chinatown and all the different cultures that make up this unique area. It's just not right. The big concern I have is the ventilation facility that's going to be spewing bad air into the neighborhood for 100 years. There's no answer Sound Transit can provide to reassure me that that's not going to happen because a ventilation system is put in a tunnel for a purpose. It's to bring out the bad air. I want to thank the committee for putting up with my emotional comments in the past. I am emotional because this is our heritage in Seattle. We have nowhere else to go. If the great state of Washington loses their Chinatown, Japantown, Little Saigon, it's just not right and that's what happens if you go down 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue. You will lose the three neighborhoods. I've lived here all my life and never had to put up such a difficult fight to stop something so wrong to our community. You just need to find a different answer and not go down 5<sup>th</sup>. I don't blame you Leda for any of this, you are the messenger. I appreciate you doing all the things you've done to try to help us get the message to Sound Transit that 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue is not the right way. Thank you.

**C:** (Erin Goodman) In terms of the alternative that is chosen, I want to defer to my CID and Pioneer Square neighbors to the north. But I do want to take a moment and speak to some of what Brian said. He's absolutely right; this is a 10-year construction period, that is not a temporary condition, that is a permanent condition. We need to be designing a route for 100 years. We also need to think about what we want the area to look like in 100 years. He's absolutely correct; a Seattle without a vibrant active International District and Chinatown is not Seattle. It's really important that Sound Transit work with this community to go with a selection, whether it's one of these or alternate one to be determined, that has the least impact to this historic and important community.

**C:** (MaryKate Ryan) I don't think anyone's addressed the Deep options. HSD does not think the Deep options meet the purpose and needs stated in the DEIS. They don't promote a good rider experience for the next 100 years, they don't address the connectivity needs. The preferred alternative that the HSD Board chose was CID-1A, the 4<sup>th</sup> Ave Shallow option. Connectivity is definitely at the top of the list of positive reasons to choose 4<sup>th</sup>. It has the potential to improve mobility and connectivity between the two neighborhoods we serve--the CID and Pioneer Square—and has the potential to activate the Jackson Hub area between King Street and Union Stations that our two communities have been working on for a number of years. We see a



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lot of opportunities that could be capitalized on if the 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue Shallow alternative is the project that's chosen to be built. Additionally, we don't believe that with the information provided, that the effects of the 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue alternatives on the CID are mitigable at this time. There's too much eating away at the edge of the district and that's just from the physical standpoint. We prefer the 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue alternative. Beyond the connectivity, there's a potential for increasing pedestrian safety and the reactivation of Union Station is a long-stated goal for both of the communities that we work with. We have a lot more to say in our letter which is on our website.

**C:** (Jared Jonson) I want to echo MaryKate. From SCIDpda's perspective, the Deep alternatives should not warrant any further study. We also believe they do not support the long-term visions nor do they operationally work the best, so we do recommend these be removed from further study. For the remaining Shallow options, we did not identify a preferred alternative because we don't feel there's enough information about 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue. Of the remaining options, 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue is by far the least impactful to the CID. It's businesses and residents and property owners agree with MaryKate and HSD that 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue Shallow does increase the potential for connectivity between the neighborhoods in terms of supporting that long-term end condition for the station area. We do believe that 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue is that alternative. The CID as a neighborhood has been bisected and been impacted by infrastructure projects every decade for the last six decades and this next project is probably going to be the next one. The mitigation strategy needs to be centered on community and include residents, businesses, property owners and other stakeholders within the neighborhood and it needs to take into account that past harm that's been done to this neighborhood. Is that the full responsibility of Sound Transit? No, I don't think it is, but between Sound Transit, King County... *[inaudible]*... on this historic neighborhood and its existential crisis that it faces with this next infrastructure project, I think those things need to be taken into account.

**C:** (John Marchione) I appreciate and respect everyone's comments. The Draft EIS is large both geographically and substantially in terms of the information to go through, just for the CID part, let alone from West Seattle to Ballard. We, the public stadium authority, don't think there's enough technical analysis to select a preferred alternative. We would like to see additional analysis about what the detours would be for the various scenarios. The Draft EIS identifies which streets traffic might go to, but it doesn't look at cumulative effects or what detour routes would be—just identified roads, it didn't have any structure. We at the stadium provide a number of high-impact single-event occurrences. So, traffic involving a full stadium is not analyzed anywhere in the Draft EIS. But because of our volume, we are not in favor of the Deep alternatives because we don't believe that the elevators could get —when 69,000 people let out— up and down and on transit fast enough. Besides traffic mitigation during construction, what would traffic be like if 4<sup>th</sup> was built because of the reduction of the lane—we didn't find that analysis either. Having detour plans are things we'd like to see to make a decision. The other thing we'd like to see is a mitigation plan for the small business disruption for any of these scenarios, or at least the surface scenarios. If I was a small business, it would be hard to know what's going to happen to me or what Sound Transit is thinking in terms of mitigating and is it really going to be 9 years? In some cases, yes. In some cases, it looks like road closures are 6 months. There's a deeper mitigation and impact analysis for the small businesses that would help make the decision.

**C:** (Tiernan Martin) Thanks Leda and Sound Transit staff for leading the CAG all these months. I don't have a preferred alternative for CID alignments, but I'll share some observations of the tradeoffs of the different alternatives. Most of these will be what you've heard before from folks like MaryKate and Jared. For the Deep options, both on 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue, I don't think those are serious options when you think about the 100-year lifecycle of this infrastructure investment. If you look 100 years into the future for our neighborhood, I don't think that designing elevator-only access to the stations fits with the type of connectivity and mobility that we would want to have so those should be taken off the table and that leaves a couple of Shallow options. For those on 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue, both the one along 5<sup>th</sup> and diagonal, the amount of impact that you're talking about, both direct in terms of displacing businesses temporarily and permanently, and the indirect



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impacts that would occur from having the construction of the station go on in the core of the historic Chinatown portion of our district, are just not something we should support for the vitality of our neighborhood. I don't think that option fits with the values that we hold here and that Sound Transit has been talking about especially from a racial justice standpoint. That leaves us with the 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue Shallow alternative which I agree is the least impactful, in the negative sense of the word, on the neighborhood. That said, there are still serious concerns that come up with that option including the displacement of residents of an apartment building on the corner of 4<sup>th</sup> and Jackson. I don't think we should forget about those people in our analysis. The length of the construction impacts for that alternative are concerning because 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue will need to be closed while the viaduct is removed. Where does the traffic go? What I would like to see Sound Transit do during the Final EIS is come back to the community with a lot more information about that alternative. We need to know some of the things that John just brought up. What is the Traffic Management Plan that the community can expect? From the perspective of the community, that's the key, not just what streets will it go down, but putting yourself in the shoes of small businesses and residents and visitors to the community, so we can understand those impacts. Similarly, especially for business owners, what does the mitigation plan look like from their perspective? What resources will be available to them? How will Sound Transit work with the community to make those available, filling in all the details there? Lastly, I want to say something about the station itself. We've talked about the potential to reactivate Union Station which would be really wonderful with the 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue Shallow alternative tying in with the Jackson Hub station area concept. When we talk about 100 years in the future, we need that space for people not just for the cars and the trains that run beneath it. That's an understudied aspect of this alternative that I think would be a good use of time and staff resources during the Final EIS period. I also really want to look at some of the negative impacts that station would have like a very large ventilation structure placed on the northwest corner of the Union Station plaza. Not just showing us where that is, but what are some alternatives that would be less impactful to the community so that the station is a celebrated public space and doesn't have compromising features. Those are some of the things that I hope Sound Transit will look at in the next step of this process.

**C:** (Jeremy Park) I would defer any comments to the CID people.

**C:** (Tija Petrovich) In looking at the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Deep, they don't seem like good rider experiences, they rely on elevators that fail, long transition times and that's not why anyone takes these modes of transportation. I would take both of those out. The 5<sup>th</sup> Shallow seems really hard on the CID—the businesses, the residents, some of the historic buildings and I don't see it offering any change to our existing Pioneer Square light rail station. That leaves 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue [Shallow] as the top choice for what's offered. While longer in construction, I think it will have the most use from Pioneer Square and from the CID. For people coming into Seattle, like using Amtrak and other modes, they will also have a connection which seems good. It will reactivate Union Station, something we've been trying to do for a long time. It offers public realm upgrades and opportunities. In asking for the choice of alternatives, I want to ask for more information in return. There's going to be high volume uses during events—Pioneer Square, CID, how does it affect us? I would like to see more study, more analysis for alternatives for the traffic management plan. So, in asking for a choice, I can tell you 4<sup>th</sup> Shallow but would also like a lot more information.

**C:** (Jessa Timmer) Thank you to Sound Transit staff for pulling these meetings together. This is a hefty topic with a lot of opinions and information so thank you again for making it palatable for us. Long-term, Pioneer Square prioritizes the pedestrian connection to this project. When we were looking at the Draft EIS, we understand that 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue viaduct rebuild, when viewed alone, is a disadvantage. However, we do see opportunity and potential there in reconnection of the neighborhoods, reconnection of the CID to the waterfront, better access to the ferry terminal and cruise terminal, the new waterfront transportation network. We also support Union Station activation as a transportation hub with economic development potential for both neighborhoods. The Deep options on both 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> are untenable from a regional transit perspective and a neighborhood perspective. A new station with elevator-only access will require queuing into the



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neighborhoods on a good day and will dissuade folks from using the station on days with surge events. For these reasons, we believe that 4th Avenue Shallow provides the best outcomes with what we were presented. Having said that, we believe there needs to be further study on any alternatives that are moving forward, specifically reducing construction timing and cost, haul routes, detours, surge event traffic routing, mitigation for businesses, property owners and neighborhood entities, King County Metro interruptions, temporary displacement, temporary and long-term pedestrian conditions. After we know more about these things, we'll have a better understanding of how to move forward with both Sound Transit and the City in mitigating the severe impact this will have for both the CID and Pioneer Square.

**Q:** (Yin Yu) Is what is being built in CID a regional transit hub and how many are being built?

**A:** (Leda Chahim) This is the big transit hub, but there are other transfer points in the system as well.

**C:** (Yin Yu) This the only regional transit hub that's being built and it's being chosen to be built in CID when other major metropolitan cities, regional transit hubs are in downtowns or other locations. I appreciate the current CID station, but the question is why does the CID have to take on the whole regional transit hub for Sound Transit? As a resident in Little Saigon, I have no preference for any of these as they are all impactful. Cathal just did a presentation last time about changing the route because of 300 new apartments to mitigate that apartment building's impacts, so there is possibility to change the design for CID. The impact is really, really high and we're barely recovering from COVID. There's still a lot of boards on the windows and the decisions that non-profits have to make with federal funding to invest that in windows instead of other things the CID needs. This neighborhood is slowly trying to recover in this time of Covid. I'm feeling the impacts this is having in my neighborhood right now. CID Coalition did request a 90-day extension on the public comment. During the last week of when the public comments were due, there were so many businesses that were for the first time learning what was happening in the neighborhood. There's not enough people that are engaged in culturally language accessible information, directly targeted to the residents. I used to live at Bush Hotel. How many residents would know about what is happening in the neighborhood and their thoughts about what is happening in the neighborhood? The request for a 90-day extension is because there is not direct, targeted engagement to each of the businesses. Yes, you can host things at the various farmers markets, but that's different than targeted, cultural language communication. I want to uplift CID Coalition's request for an extension on comments. I want to share that I don't believe the CID should be taking on a regional transit hub for the whole region.

**C:** (George Cloy) I agree with a lot of the comments that were already made about CID. My preferred alternative is the 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue [Shallow]. How many more hits can the CID take and what will be left of the CID? I think it's going to destroy that community and that neighborhood and once the CID is gone, how can it come back? I appreciate being able to be a part of this committee and engage in this process and appreciate the time that everyone else has put into it, but I agree with so many of the other reasons that were already mentioned. I think it's unfair to the CID and I don't want to see it destroyed and disappear.

### Materials shared:

- Presentation: <https://oohwsblink.blob.core.windows.net/media/Default/images/Community-Advisory-Group-Presentation-20220512.pdf>

### Action items/next steps:

- Sound Transit to consolidate CAG member feedback to share with the Sound Transit Board.