

Chinatown-International District Workshop 1 Summary

In July, the Sound Transit Board identified a preferred route and station locations for the West Seattle Link Extension and directed staff to conduct further studies and community engagement for the Ballard Link Extension, including Chinatown-International District (CID). On November 2, 2022, Sound Transit and the City of Seattle hosted a workshop, building off feedback from an open house and online survey in October, to engage around further studies. More than 60 people attended the event staffed by Sound Transit, partner agencies, consultants, Community Liaisons, and Cantonese and Mandarin language interpreters.

Workshop participants were invited to engage on:

- Ideas for activation and amenities for Union Station and plaza
- 4th Shallow further study ideas
- Other ideas for further study, including other locations for a Link transfer station in South Downtown

The proposed scope of further studies outlined in the meeting was informed by feedback during the October 13 CID Kick-Off Open House and complementary online survey and feedback from the event is informing planning for future workshops.

WHAT WE HEARD

Ideas for activation and amenities for Union Station and plaza

How would you like the Plaza to be used?

(Participants were invited to place a dot next to uses they were interested in and invited to share their own other ideas as well.)

| Use | Interest (expressed through dots) |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Outdoor dining/food | ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● |
| Vending carts | ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● |
| Retail spaces/kiosks | ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● |
| Art or cultural exhibitions | ● ● ● ● |
| Community celebrations | ● ● ● ● ● |
| Performances | ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● |
| Exercise Classes | ● ● |
| Outdoor night market | ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● |

Other ideas added by participants: Multilingual farmers market (Asian specialties); Intergenerational use of plaza/facilities; Add Asian (Chinese) design characteristics as per ISRD; Cross reference Jackson Hub Plan which has many vetted visions for the plaza.

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What amenities would you like to see in the plaza?

(Participants were invited to place a dot next to uses they were interested in and invited to share their own other ideas as well.)

| Use | Interest (expressed through dots) |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Landscaped areas | ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● |
| Public art | ● ● ● ● ● ● ● |
| Places for bicycles | ● ● ● ● |
| Neighborhood information | ● ● ● ● ● |
| Wayfinding signs | ● ● ● ● ● ● ● |
| Sitting areas | ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● |
| Overhead lights | ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● |

Other ideas added by participants: Multilingual signs; Pretty string lights; Remove all seating (concerns about how seating is being used currently); Cross reference Jackson Hub Plan which has many vetted visions for the plaza.

What uses would you like to see in Union Station?

| Use | Interest (expressed through dots) |
|----------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Exercise classes | ● ● ● |
| Exhibitions | ● ● ● ● ● |
| Community events | ● ● ● ● ● |
| Café/tea shop | ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● |
| Indoor market | ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● |
| Sitting areas | ● ● ● ● |
| Formal dining | ● |
| “Grab and go” dining | ● ● ● ● |
| Vending/food carts | ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● |
| Performances | ● ● ● ● ● ● ● |
| Music | ● ● ● ● |
| Transit information | ● ● ● |

Other ideas added by participants:

- Better acoustics so the space is more functional;
- Other spaces to support commercial affordability for AAPI and BIPOC entrepreneurs;
- Like Boston Faneuil Hall or San Diego’s Liberty Station;

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- Police presence;
- Coffee shop;
- Other small business;
- Preserve historic character as much as possible;
- Art center dedicated to Asian art (film, theater);
- Kiosk connected to surrounding neighborhoods (e.g. Where you can sign up for tours or events hosted by community organizations);
- Revolving carts curated for neighboring restaurants where people can sample cuisine and learn more about what to expect in the neighborhoods.

What would help you feel safer in the plaza?

Strong interest in safety topic. Participants shared particular interest in more cleaning services and landscape maintenance, lighting improvements, 24/7 security and police presence and ways to activate the plaza (food trucks/food carts; more people visiting the area and not just walking through to transfer; fun games).

Many other suggestions provided including: Paved/smooth walkways for seniors; bright colored art and multilingual art signs; no cars parked or driving; deterrents to pigeon roosting and feeding; attention to rainwater drainage to prevent vehicles spraying sidewalks and people (e.g. West side of 4th and outside of Union Station).

4th Shallow further study ideas

4th Shallow Design and Construction ideas for further study

- Some noted continued interest in 4th Avenue station location for accessibility. Some shared continued concerns about any alternative in CID, including 4th given community's vulnerability in aftermath of pandemic and history of past harm.
- Continued interest in further study topics, including construction methods, ways to address or manage impacts. Interest in creative solutions for traffic detours, like lidding the BNSF tracks to create roadway capacity and avoid diversion of traffic into the CID during construction, and/or reducing duration of roadway closures.

Refined 4th Avenue Shallow Concept

Questions & Comments

- Interest in continuing to study this concept and learn more about the differences in construction impacts between the Draft EIS 4th Shallow alternative and Refined 4th Shallow concept. Interest in whether impacts could be lessened over what was disclosed for Draft EIS 4th Shallow alternative and how concerns are being addressed.
 - Does a shallower station have cost reductions or reduce construction duration?
 - Is the shallow concept more or less disruptive?
- Will ICON residents be displaced? Will CID buildings be impacted/displaced? (Concerns about older buildings and potential vulnerability, past experiences during streetcar construction.)
- What is the displacement potential for the buildings to the north of ICON? These buildings also host affordable housing.
 - How would businesses maintain access to their buildings during construction?
 - How would this refined concept be constructed? Will it be constructed in phases?

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- Do you have to rebuild the 4th Avenue viaduct with this concept? Does that have an effect on cost?
- What construction methods are used and what are the relative impacts? (Where do you bore the tunnel vs. where do you cut and cover?)
- Any safety or congestion effects?
- What kind of engineering constraints and assumptions informed the Draft EIS 4th Shallow alternative versus this refined concept?
- Seems like a shallower station could improve access, reduce transfer times and better serve events; see an opportunity to activate Union Station with transfers. Interest in more information on both topics.
- Strong interest in understanding differences in construction impacts and traffic detours with Refined 4th Avenue Shallow concept and Draft EIS 4th shallow, and if there are any strategies for minimizing these that can apply to shallower as well.
 - What streets will be impacted and for how long?
 - Can road closures be phased north and south of Jackson to keep neighborhood access?
- Desire to see more detail of structures and extents of construction impacts and a visual of the structure underground in future meetings
 - What is the exact configuration of 4th Ave north of Jackson; would the whole structure have to be demolished or is there a creative approach to cut and cover?
 - How does the viaduct structure relate to the ICON building (is it on a hill? Parking underground?)
- Can the new platform be at the same level as the existing platform? Does the mezzanine run through the whole station platform? (Interest in streamlining access for seniors for whom changing levels to transfer between existing and future station may be a challenge.)
- This station location serves Pioneer Square and the CID, and seems like the final result could be great. Want to understand the long-term opportunity versus the construction impacts and community context.
- Given different responsibilities of different government agencies, how will various agencies be working together in this area?
- Interest in ways to minimize construction timeline.

4th Shallow – Potential emergency exit and ventilation location refinements

Questions and Comments

- Broad interest in more information on size (footprint and massing) and function to inform feedback on location options. Visual mockups or examples would be helpful. Questions include:
 - How big is the ventilation building? Can it be smaller?
 - What is the pedestrian experience like walking next to the ventilation building?
 - Are there safety considerations with a ventilation building near the sidewalk?
 - What would a ventilation and emergency exit building look like? Could the footprint be integrated into pedestrian coverings? Is it possible to have a separate emergency exit and ventilation structure? Would it minimize the footprint? (Interest in minimizing the footprint.)
 - What technical considerations inform location? Noise, air quality, space and size, proximity?
 - How would the emergency exit work? How does the ventilation work and what are effects for riders and residents? (Concerns shared about air quality and proximity to the CID.)

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- Some shared concern about air quality and public safety around a structure like this and many were interested in more information about vented air
- Many reiterated concerns with Draft EIS location for structure in front of Union Station, with some interest in locations further away from the CID and Union Station, such as the on-street location north of Jackson
- Interest in whether the structure could be located south of the station. Is that possible?
- Interest in design strategies to make the building look nicer and possibility to integrate a ventilation building with amenities.

4th Shallow urban design and placekeeping opportunities for further study (anything we missed or other topics)

Questions and Comments

- How long would a lid over BNSF for temporary construction detours be in place?
- Interest in rain cover over entrances for pedestrians.
- Suggestion to make connection of art between Pioneer Square/King Street Station and light rail station and interest in farmer's market and food.

Other ideas for further study

Including other locations for a Link transfer station in South Downtown

New station north of CID (Pioneer Square):

Questions and Comments

- Overall interest in more information about station concepts north of CID in future meetings.
- Questions about how transfers would work and how riders traveling through the system would be affected, particularly those transferring from East Link to the airport or from Ballard to the stadiums. Some comments that Pioneer Square could become a light rail transfer hub.
- Questions about who the station would serve and what a station in this location would mean for access to and from the CID, for CID residents and seniors, and for gameday traffic.
- Interest in learning more about construction and potential impacts to Pioneer Square and surrounding area, including:
 - Effects to City Hall Park, streets and buildings, historic structures and areaways, traffic (deliveries, buses).
 - How would a tunnel be constructed? Where would construction staging areas be located?
 - Would there be construction related impacts to the CID?
 - How would these locations interact with the BNSF tunnel? Would it address potential challenges?
 - Residential displacement and effects to the unhoused population
- Some shared concern that impacts would shift to another vulnerable community (Pioneer Square).
- Interest in station access, area activation and opportunities to align with County, City, and neighborhood planning efforts, including:
 - Could entrances be located so that they enhance connections, access to services, and activate the City Hall Park area? (Interest in an entrance at City Hall Park).

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- Interest in whether this could create an opportunity to improve the existing Prefontaine Place station entrance and clean up/replace the fountain and other infrastructure
- Interest in opportunities to activate and enhance the area with new development, including housing and retail, though some noted there may be less transit-oriented development potential in these locations given existing density
- What does access to these stations look like and what would the transfer experience be like for riders? Is underground walkway possible between the existing and new station for pedestrian transfers?
- What would a station north of CID mean for Midtown (a less deep tunnel? Stations are close, would you have a station at Midtown?)
- What factors are considered to inform potential station locations? Technical or engineering considerations?
- Where would the ventilation / emergency exit be located for these options?
- What are the cumulative impacts to other projects and development in this area?

New station west of Sounder:

Questions and Comments

- Mixed interest in further study of West of Sounder.
- Participants noted opportunities to better serve the Stadium and events at Lumen Field and potentially pursue a transformative development on the parking lot (affordable housing, retail, culturally supportive uses, more open/public space?)
- Participants also shared concerns with potential station depth, current parking lot environment, the distance from the CID and existing station and how people would transfer between lines or access the station (distance, different grades, challenging to navigate – particularly for those with limited mobility or seniors). Participants wondered:
 - How would a station feel safe, welcoming, and connected in this location?
 - What does access to the CID, stadiums, and Pioneer Square look like?
 - Who would this station serve? Those going to stadium events? Observation that many event goers may continue to use the existing CID station given connections from the north and east.
- Some wondered if a station in this location would be technically feasible and/or if complexities with this location would limit the ability to realize the opportunities of this station. Interest in soil condition, potential underground constraints,
- Concerns were also shared about loss of parking and interest in understanding where parking would go (would overflow parking go to CID, Pioneer Square?). Questions about whether light rail would reduce need for parking with easy transit access to the stadiums.
- Interest in learning more about what construction would look like here, potential impacts to the neighborhoods and stadium activities/major events. Concerns about:
 - Truck traffic and fragile streets
 - Would this create a development buffer to CID? Would it be less or more impactful to CID and Pioneer Square? (Less impactful to CID? More impactful to Pioneer Square?)
- If station were pursued, interest in a holistic vision of the station, with future development helping to transition riders and event goers to an elevated concourse at the same level as Weller Pedestrian Bridge; or alternatively, creating an underground concourse connection.

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- Interest in a lid over BNSF that could integrate with the new development and station on Lumen parking lot.

New station south of CID

Questions and Comments

- Interest in anticipated ridership and understanding how people could transfer between lines with a station south of CID: Between the 1 Line (Ballard to Tacoma) and 3 Line (West Seattle to Everett)? Between the 1 Line and 2 Line (Redmond to Mariner)?
- Station in this location may serve stadiums and CID, further from Pioneer Square. Some interest and concern about how the Sounder connection to Ballard and Tacoma light rail line would work here.
- Interest in connections between North of Royal Brougham station location to both Stadium Station and CID. Some participants noted opportunities with North of Royal Brougham station location to have two entrances, one oriented to CID, and the other oriented to Stadium.
- Interest in whether a North of Royal Brougham station location could still serve and be convenient to CID while keeping impacts outside of the neighborhood. Could this location feel like an extension of the CID? Would traffic and construction impacts be reduced? Would construction of the tunnel alignment north have any impacts on the surface?
- With the South of Royal Brougham station location, concerns with potential effects to Metro parking garage structure and the bus base. Concern that South of Royal Brougham is a “no-person’s land” with a limited walkshed and few destinations or transit connections, and likely to remain so in perpetuity. Concerns as well about street environment for pedestrians.
- Questions about status of developments in the area and how these station locations would interact with those plans.
- Observation that the area is less developed currently and streets (like Airport Way) are not as busy as other streets. Could this location avoid residential displacement and have less traffic effects?
- Interest in possibility to incorporate affordable housing and services around the station?
- Could improvements be made to crossing Dearborn and Seattle Blvd? Walking in this area can be challenging and confusing. Opportunities to improve walkability?
- Where would the ventilation and emergency exit structures go?
- Comment that access and transfers seem more challenging than if the station were located on 4th.
- Overall, interest in further study of a station location south of CID. Appeared to be much more interest in further study of North of Royal Brougham (near Seattle Blvd) option than South of Royal Brougham option.

Additional feedback on other ideas for further study

- Question about whether a station outside of the CID would still have impacts on the CID and whether mitigation would be available for those impacts.
- Would a new station’s purpose be to serve the existing community or others?
- Are there policies to help residents and businesses that are affected during and after construction?

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- Concerns about a new station impacting small businesses and residents, effects to air quality, noise, health, parking, construction impacts, displacement, and access during construction (emergency vehicles, access to businesses, parks).
- Concern that the CID has given up too much for the public realm and the region without enough investment in the community that calls this place home.
- Is a new station needed? Could the existing station and tunnel be used instead? (Interest in learning more about why a tunnel and station were proposed and if using the existing tunnel and station is possible.)
- What would happen if you did not have a new station at CID? Continue with the project as planned, but do not build the CID station. Would there still be impacts to the CID? What would it mean for access to and from the CID? Riders making connections?
- Request for information on the number of transfers forecasted at the CID station, and whether information is available on boardings serving the neighborhood.
- Some shared continued interest in a new station serving the CID to provide long term benefits for the CID community once the new line is operating. Comments that transfers are the most convenient here. Acknowledgement of the challenges of construction.
- Interest in learning more about ideas for no new station and using the existing Downtown Seattle Transit Tunnel (DSTT)
- Some interest in whether a station south of CID, at the Salvation Army site, would be possible.
- Interest in whether a station under Union Station would be possible.
- Question about the Judkins Park idea.

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