

Chinatown-International District Kick-off Open House 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 October 13, 2022, Sound Transit and the City of Seattle hosted an open house to kick off public engagement around further studies. More than 200 people attended the event staffed by Sound Transit, partner agencies, consultants, Community Liaisons, and Cantonese and Mandarin language interpreters.

Workshop participants were invited to share:

- How this process can reflect core neighborhood values and support neighborhood goals
- Your thoughts on design, construction, urban design and place-keeping opportunities for the 4th Shallow alternative
- Your other ideas for further study, including other locations for a Link transfer station in South Downtown



The event was complemented by an online survey offered through October 23, 2022. Community feedback from the event and online survey will shape the approach, content, and activities for future community engagement and what we study further.

WHAT WE HEARD

How can the engagement process reflect neighborhood core values?

- Apply the CID Engagement Toolkit and the neighborhood core values embedded within it to the project.
- Examine lessons learned from past light rail station planning projects (like in Rainier Valley) and other infrastructure projects here in the CID (like the First Hill Streetcar) and apply those lessons to the process.
- Report back on how input and feedback are informing the work and decision-making.
- Engage and gather input throughout all phases of the project, so real-time concerns and ideas from community can be integrated into the project.
- A challenge will be to ensure that as “tradeoffs” and “key issues” are considered in the process, that past harm and cumulative impacts are addressed, and that those two conversations build on each other with a goal of avoiding impacts where possible.
- Listen to the CID community and engage in ways that reach young people, residents, businesses, as well as seniors.
- Regularly engage and find ways to be part of community to build trust.
- Prioritize equitable engagement and focus on equitable outcomes, considering racial equity and legacy of cumulative impacts in both the short and long-term.

For more information on the project and how to engage:

<https://wsblink.participate.online/#further-studies>

October 2022

- Many shared a particular interest in when in the upcoming process they would understand the potential impacts of each option during construction and when operating.
- Make materials and activities engaging and accessible to community members, centering community values, easy to understand and provide translation and interpretation.

How can this project help meet your neighborhood goals?

- Better connect Pioneer Square and CID and provide pedestrian and accessibility improvements broadly
- Activate Union Station, King Street Station, the plaza above the existing station and other public spaces with foot traffic
- Concern about how to balance short-term construction impacts in CID with long-term transit benefits regionally.
- Desire to maintain and preserve neighborhood parks and community gathering spaces like Hing Hay Park.
- Interest in easy transfer experience and accessible station (shallow, connections to existing station and other modes of transportation like buses and streetcar and ferry system)
- Project should align with City investments in housing and business opportunities (beyond the transit investment) to provide community benefits.
- Safety and security a key concern throughout the neighborhoods. Station design should be responsive to neighborhood safety concerns.
- Interest in focusing on the long term (100+) goals, providing affordable and equitable access to the CID for future generations, and designing a station that is easy to access (not deep, connects to other modes of transit) and promotes a sense of safety with artwork that is culturally aligned.
- Strong concerns about gentrification and displacement generally – the possibility that community will be priced out of the neighborhood and the opportunity to access expanded transit in the area.
- Interest in 4th Avenue alternative to improve connections to Pioneer Square and other transit modes, such as Sounder and Amtrak, and to activate Union Station.
- Concerns that alternatives on 5th will create physical and visual barriers during construction and would further impact business activities and safety issues.
- Interest in a second station in CID as a regional transit hub to provide equitable and easy access to and from the CID as a cultural center and support regional transit connections. Concern that a station elsewhere would be too far for making connections.
- Interest in station outside the CID to avoid impacts and protect the community, interest in achieving regional transit goals at another station location, and concern that a station in CID does not support neighborhood goals or values.



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Focus of further studies: 4th Shallow design and construction ideas

- Interest in opportunities to make the 4th Shallow alternative shallower.
- Interest in relocating emergency exit and ventilation building as part of 4th Shallow alternative refinements from the front of Union Station to elsewhere.
- Concerns about duration and impacts of construction and interest in looking for ways to minimize those impacts. Suggestions to consider different construction methods.
- Interest in exploring how to relocate transit service during construction of 4th Avenue, such as converting 5th Avenue into a transit way and limiting car traffic, shifting bus zones, improving transit service along 1st Avenue from Edgar Martinez Drive S to S Jackson Street.
- Ideas for how to detour North and South bound traffic from 4th Avenue during construction and limit impacts to the CID neighborhood, including lidding over the existing railroad tracks and using that lid as a roadway during construction. After restoring 4th Avenue, make the lid available for community space such as a park.
- Interest in potential opportunity with 4th Shallow to combine construction impacts to the community of 4th Avenue viaduct replacement and building a new light rail station and improve intersection of S Jackson St, 4th Avenue S, and 2nd Avenue S.
- Consider stadium access for events, such as a pedestrian bridge to the south for Lumen Field Event Center
- Desire for elevators and escalators to go from the platform to the upper concourse. Center ADA accessibility.
- Prioritize long-term rider experience and neighborhood access (over short-term construction impacts).
- Focus on transfers and accessibility: Add redundant elevators and escalators, focus on ADA accessibility, streamline connection between the new and existing light rail stations and consider activating the concourse level to make it inviting, feel safe and attract riders visiting CID.



Focus of further studies: 4th Shallow urban & design placekeeping opportunities

- Rethink the use and design of 4th Avenue, prioritizing transit, walking, and biking, and making design and safety enhancements to the public street realm.
- Interest in activating Union Station, perhaps through creation of small shops, coffee and eating areas in the Great Hall, provision of space for community events, and services for passengers transferring between light rail lines and other transit modes. Make these spaces inviting.
- Look for opportunities to activate the plazas around the historic station hub, preserve culture and provide multi-lingual wayfinding.
- Questions about how a new station may contribute to existing concerns around safety.

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- Prioritize safety considerations and ease of access for people walking or rolling and leverage opportunities for creating green space, adding a tree canopy or landscaping in public spaces.
- Consider how station entrances and exits can best serve the community businesses.
- Look for opportunities to improve connection to King Street Station, Sounder and Amtrak.

Focus of further studies: Other ideas

- General desire for any station to have strong safety and security components.
- Questions and concerns about the potential duration for construction of any option in or nearby the CID neighborhood and noted the desire for mitigation of noise, vibration, traffic/road closure, and business operations impacts.
- Concerns about affordable housing and how the new light rail station could contribute to increasing real estate values in the CID neighborhood.
- Desire for simple transfers to other modes of transportation as well as pedestrian and street safety improvements around any future station.
- Strong interest in any option being in a tunnel, not above ground, to minimize impacts.
- General concerns about stadium events, crowds and creating options for transit to serve those populations and reduce impacts of those crowds on the CID.
- Other ideas were shared to consider for further study, including other potential station locations:
 - No new CID station
 - Station south of CID, near the stadiums, potentially north or south of Royal Brougham Way– Interest in potential to be a convenient transfer location with access to stadiums, further away from residents and businesses in the CID, appears to be a more industrial area with more potentially underdeveloped areas for station construction.
 - Station north of CID, in Pioneer Square – Location is possibly still walkable from CID neighborhood, would provide for transfer at existing Pioneer Square station.
 - Station West of Sounder and Amtrak, between Lumen Field and King Street Station – Interest in proximity to Union Station, Pioneer Square, stadiums and existing CID station while being further from the core of the CID neighborhood.
 - A station at parking lots in CID (5th Ave and S Jackson St or 5th Ave and S Washington St, for example)
 - An alignment that would travel further east, avoiding CID with a transfer connection at Judkins Park and potentially serving First Hill.
 - Use the existing DSTT tunnel
 - A station under Union Station



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