



Seattle Design Commission Quarterly Briefing

West Seattle Link Extension (WSLE) and Ballard Link Extension (BLE)
City of Seattle Work Program

November 2, 2023

Purpose

Quarterly briefing to update the Seattle Design Commission on interdepartmental and interagency work on the West Seattle Link Extension (WSLE) and Ballard Link Extension (BLE) projects

Agenda

1. WSLE and BLE projects summary
2. 2023 Highlights
3. 2024 Focus Areas



A light rail train is shown traveling on an elevated concrete track. The train consists of several white and blue cars. The front car has a destination sign that reads "OF WASHINGTON". The train is moving from left to right. The background shows a blue sky with some clouds. The entire image has a blue color overlay. Overlaid on the left side of the image is the text "West Seattle Link Extension & Ballard Link Extension Project Summary" in white, bold, sans-serif font.

West Seattle Link Extension & Ballard Link Extension Project Summary

West Seattle Link Extension (WSLE) and Ballard Link Extension (BLE) Projects

At more than \$12 Billion, West Seattle Link Extension (WSLE) and Ballard Link Extension (BLE) projects together comprise the **largest infrastructure investment in City history**—with tremendous opportunity for transformation, but also potential for substantial construction and related impacts to existing communities.

The projects include:

- More than 12 miles of new light rail track
- 13 new or expanded stations
- New light rail-only downtown tunnel
- 2 water crossings



West Seattle Link Extension (WSLE)

Estimated Project Timeline



Ballard Link Extension (BLE)

Estimated Project Timeline



2023 Highlights



2023 City Team Workplan Highlights

Ballard Link Extension Board Action

- In March, the Sound Transit Board identified a preferred alternative for the 7.7-mile extension, with nine new stations and a new rail-only tunnel through downtown Seattle.
- In July, the Board modified the preferred alternative for the Denny Station to **Denny Westlake Shifted North**. Staff was directed to also carry forward the **Denny Westlake Shifted West** alternative that would consolidate the Denny and SLU stations as part of ongoing environmental review.



2023 City Team Workplan Highlights

Project-Wide Coordinating on Consistency in Design Approach

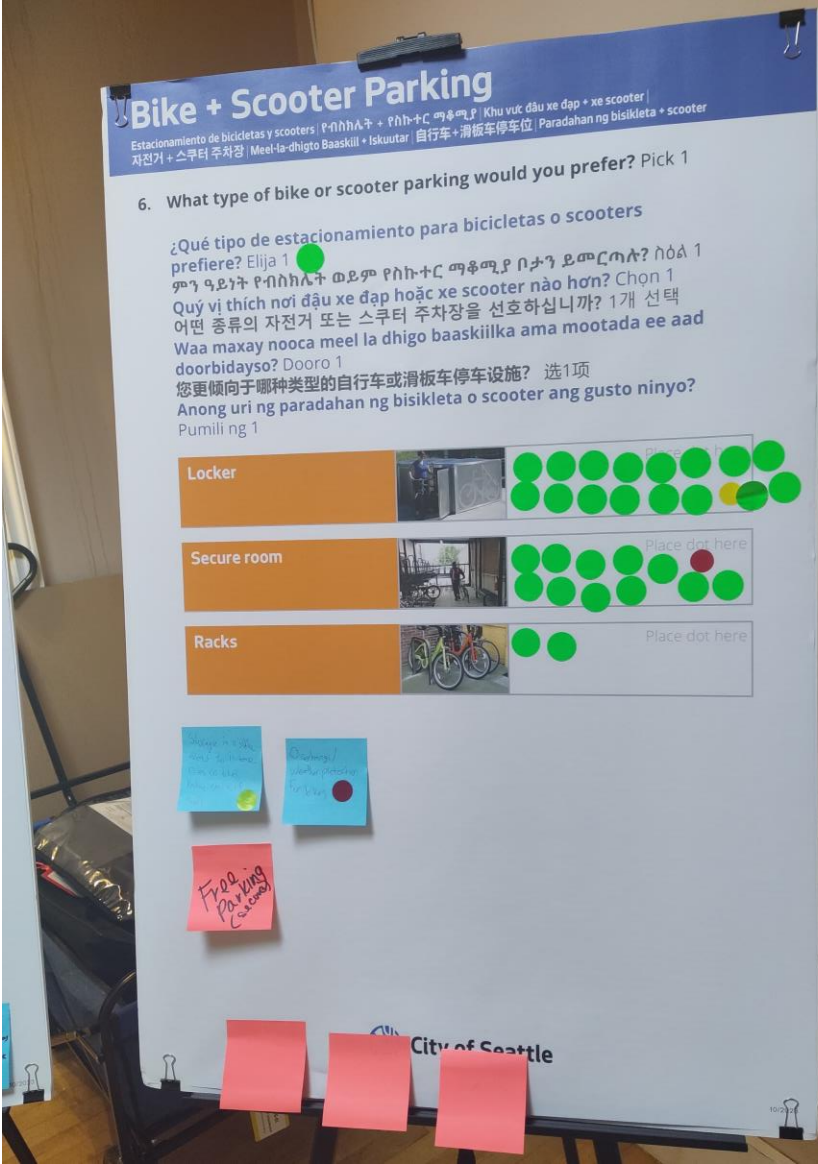
- Light Rail Design Guidelines & Development Standards (Planning & Permitting)
- Bike parking, quantity and location (Planning & Permitting)
- Activation under guideways (Planning)
- Pickup & drop-off (Planning)
- Bus layover (Planning & Permitting)



2023 City Team Workplan Highlights

West Seattle Link Extension October 2023 Engagement

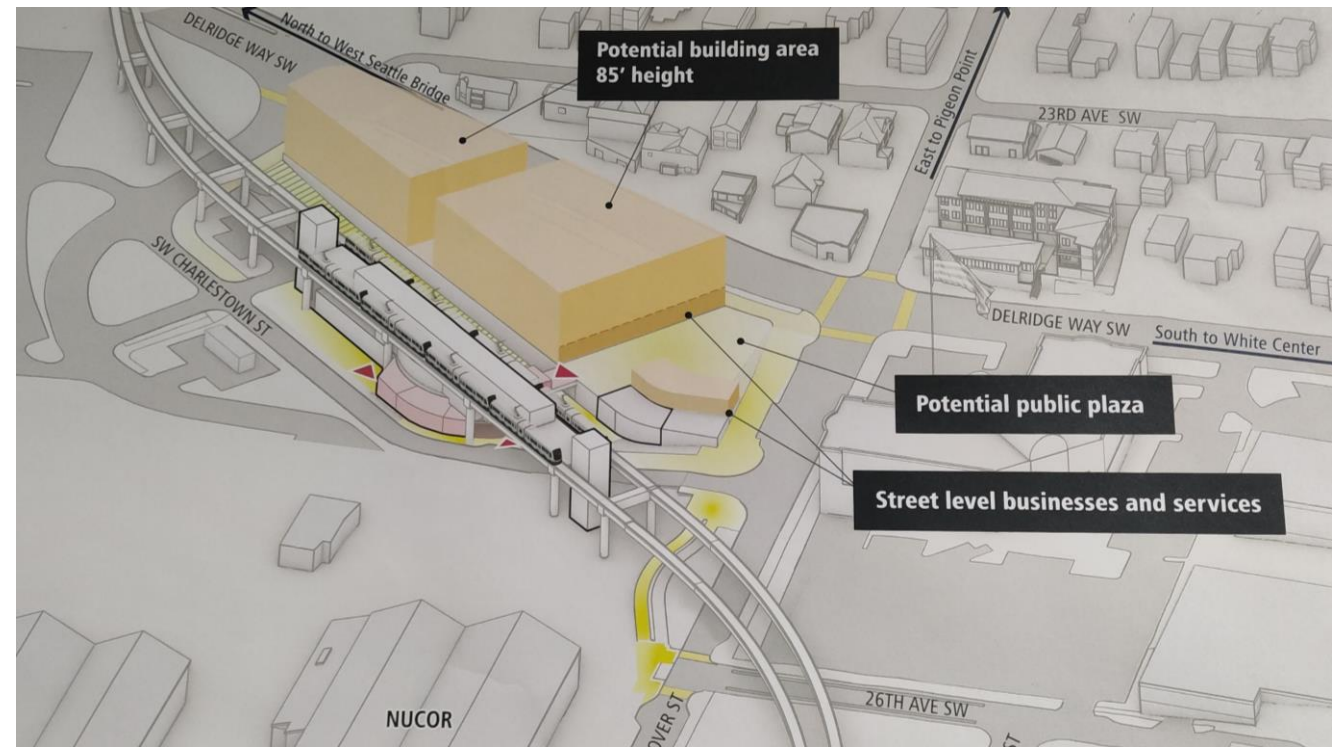
- Station design
- Street Design Concepts
- Light Rail Design Guidelines
- Light Rail Development Standards



2023 City Team Workplan Highlights

West Seattle Link Extension Preliminary Engineering Partnership

- The City of Seattle, Sound Transit, King County Metro, and the Port of Seattle are actively engaged in preliminary engineering and interdisciplinary pre-permitting design coordination to incorporate partner agency input and priorities while also meeting goals for project schedule and permit streamlining.



2023 City Team Workplan Highlights

Ballard Link Extension : South Downtown Hub Planning

Responds to ST Board direction to, regardless of station location:

- Develop a list of improvements to the public realm, access, and neighborhood connections
- Clarify potential scope and schedule of such improvements as well as funding and partnership opportunities

Builds on recent further studies effort, past community and agency planning, and continues engagement with the community



2023 City Team Workplan Highlights

Ballard Link Extension : South Downtown Engagement

November 15, 2023: South Downtown Open House

- Kick off community engagement process into 2024 and beyond
- Share ideas on opportunities to support and connect the South Downtown neighborhoods of Chinatown-International District and Pioneer Square, including the planning of potential new light rail stations
- Hear the latest about the Ballard Link Extension project, next steps, and how to engage
- Associated planning and capital projects in attendance

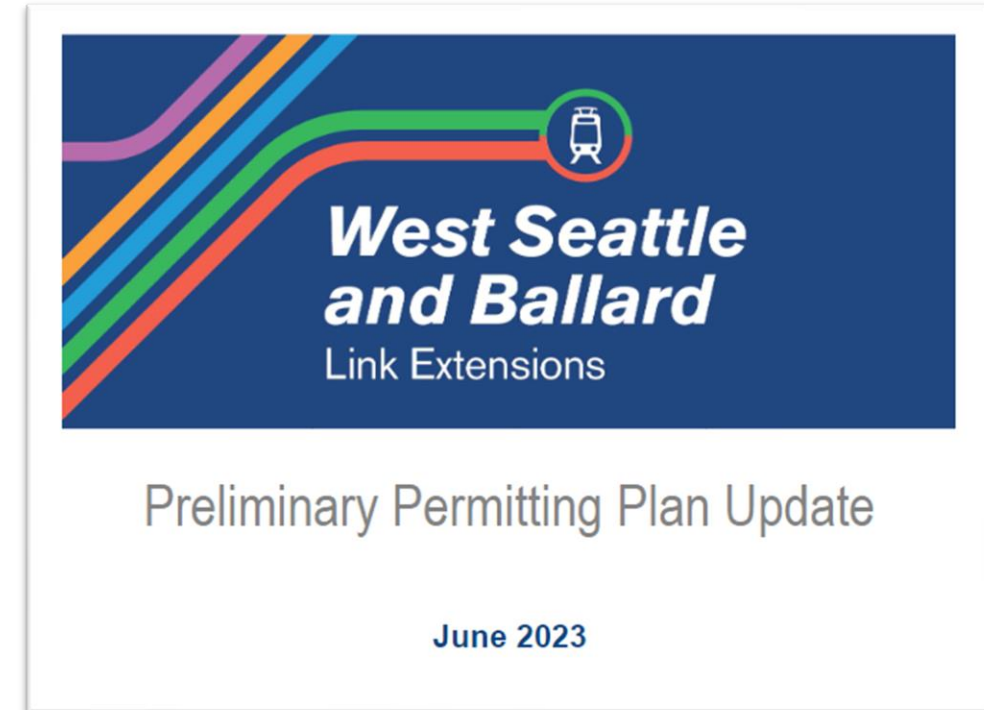
2024 Focus Areas



2024 Focus Areas: Project-Wide

Finalize Permit Plan

- Partnership between City and Sound Transit
- Documents policy framework, processes, tools, and design concurrences to ensure a streamlined permitting process
- Identifies scope and deliverables for:
 1. Code Amendments
 2. Application Processing
 3. Station Context Framework and Urban Design Concurrences
 4. Engineering Design Concurrences
 5. Project Review/Commissions
 6. Design Guidance
 7. Concurrence, Implementation, and Project Management



2024 Focus Areas: Project-Wide

City Legislation following the FTA Record of Decision (ROD)

- Amend the Transit Way Agreement
- Adopt the project to be built to allow project permitting
- Amend City codes and regulations to facilitate permitting process and advance City and community priorities
- Enact station area overlays or other tools to support longer-term station area planning
- Transfer of City property



2024 Focus Areas: West Seattle Link Extension

Planning, Permitting, & Engagement

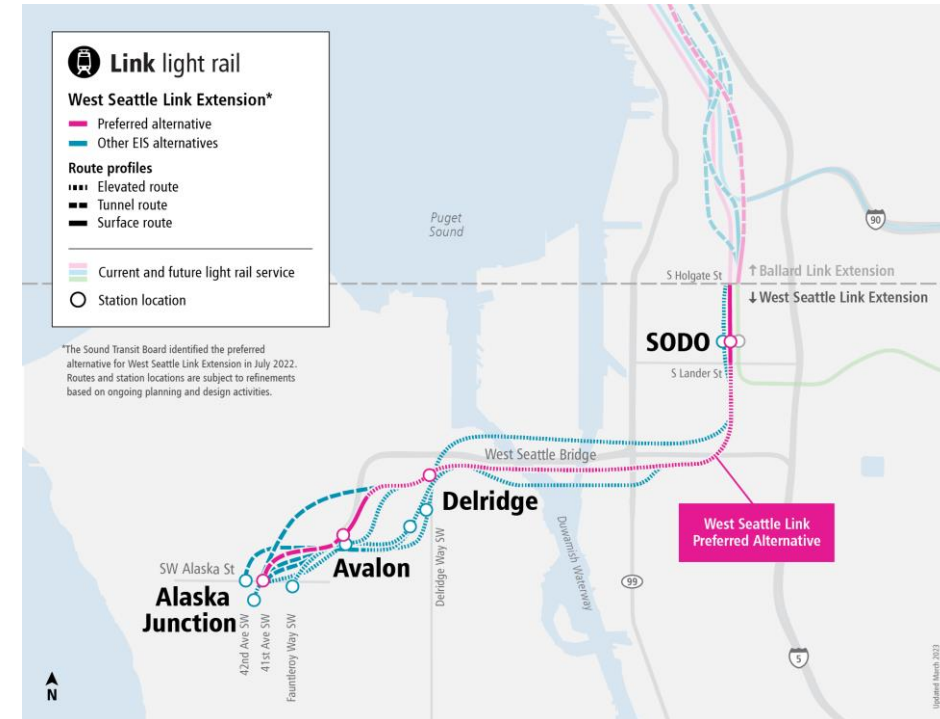
- Q1 engagement on Street Design Concepts, Design Guidelines, and Development Standards

Permitting

- Preliminary Engineering milestones including *Seattle Design Commission reviews for WSLE stations and select non-station project components*

Environmental

- City coordination on FEIS, with focus on methodology, impacts, mitigation
- Coordinate with ST on mitigation through pre-permitting process as design progresses



2024 Focus Areas: Ballard Link Extension

Environmental

- City identifies key issues of focus (e.g., new station locations that were not in WSBLE DEIS, impact on Interbay playfields, Elevated Elliott guideway, Noise and Vibration impacts to sensitive receivers and historic buildings, cumulative construction impacts)
- Sound Transit anticipates publishing BLE DEIS by end of 2024
- City review and comment on BLE DEIS (late 2024 or early 2025)



2024 Focus Areas: Ballard Link Extension

South Downtown Hub Planning

Planning & Engagement

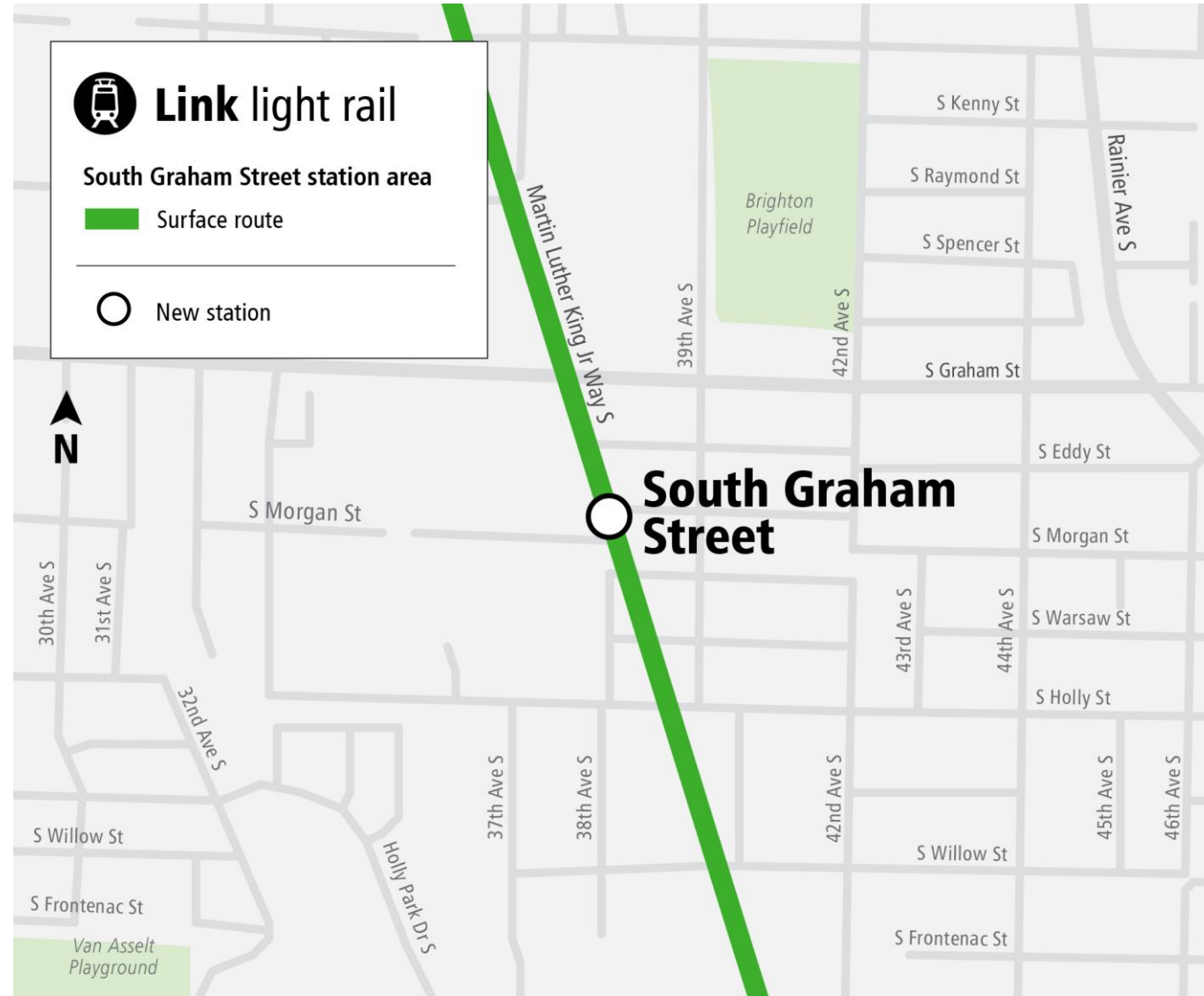
- South Downtown Hub Planning workshop series in collaboration with Sound Transit




2024 Focus Areas

Other highlights for 2024

- Planning for infill stations at South Graham Street & South Boeing Access Road
- New City staff and structures, including interfacing with Seattle Design Commission





Seattle Design Commission and ST3 City Team Coordination

Near Term Briefing Schedule

The ST3 City Team provides quarterly briefings to the Seattle Design Commission on the City's work plan and supports deeper dive discussions on other WSLE and BLE topics.

Date	Topic	Presenter
November 2 (today)	Quarterly briefing on City WSLE & BLE Work Programs	City of Seattle
	Quarterly briefing on key topics	Sound Transit
February 2024	Quarterly briefing on City WSLE & BLE Work Programs	City of Seattle
Q1 2024	SDC & City staff workshops on Design Tools and Process	City of Seattle
Q2/Q3 2024	West Seattle Link Preliminary Engineering Project Reviews	Sound Transit

Future Briefings

- Planning for Equitable Transit Oriented Development in station areas
- Promoting equitable outcomes through the Racial Equity Toolkit and Transportation Equity Framework
- Seattle Design Commission Light Rail review tools and processes

Thank you!

Contact

- Elliot Helmbrecht, ST3 Designated Representative, Mayor's Office
- Sara Maxana, Sound Transit Program Director, SDOT
- Vera Giampietro, BLE Project Manager, SDOT
- Nicole Kistler, Engagement & Partnerships Advisor, SDOT
- Lizzie Moll, Senior Transportation Planner, SDOT

