

West Seattle and Ballard Link Extensions

*Seattle Design Commission Briefing:
Co-Planning Approach*

May 6, 2021

Today's Briefing

- 1. Refresh on WSBLE project alternatives and approach**
- 2. Update on interagency co-planning partnership around WSBLE station alternatives**
- 3. Look-ahead to future engagement around DEIS and beyond**

WSBLE Project Refresh

West Seattle and Ballard Link Extensions

Project timeline



Project scope and schedule subject to change.



VOTER
APPROVAL

2016



PLANNING



DESIGN

2017–2019

Alternatives development

Feb–March 2018:
Early scoping

Feb–April 2019:
Scoping

May–Oct 2019: Board identifies preferred alternatives and other DEIS alternatives



2019–2023

Environmental review

Mid-2021: Publish Draft EIS

Board confirms or modifies preferred alternatives

2023: Publish Final EIS

Board selects projects to be built

Federal Record of Decision

Project scope and schedule subject to change.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

Draft EIS alternatives

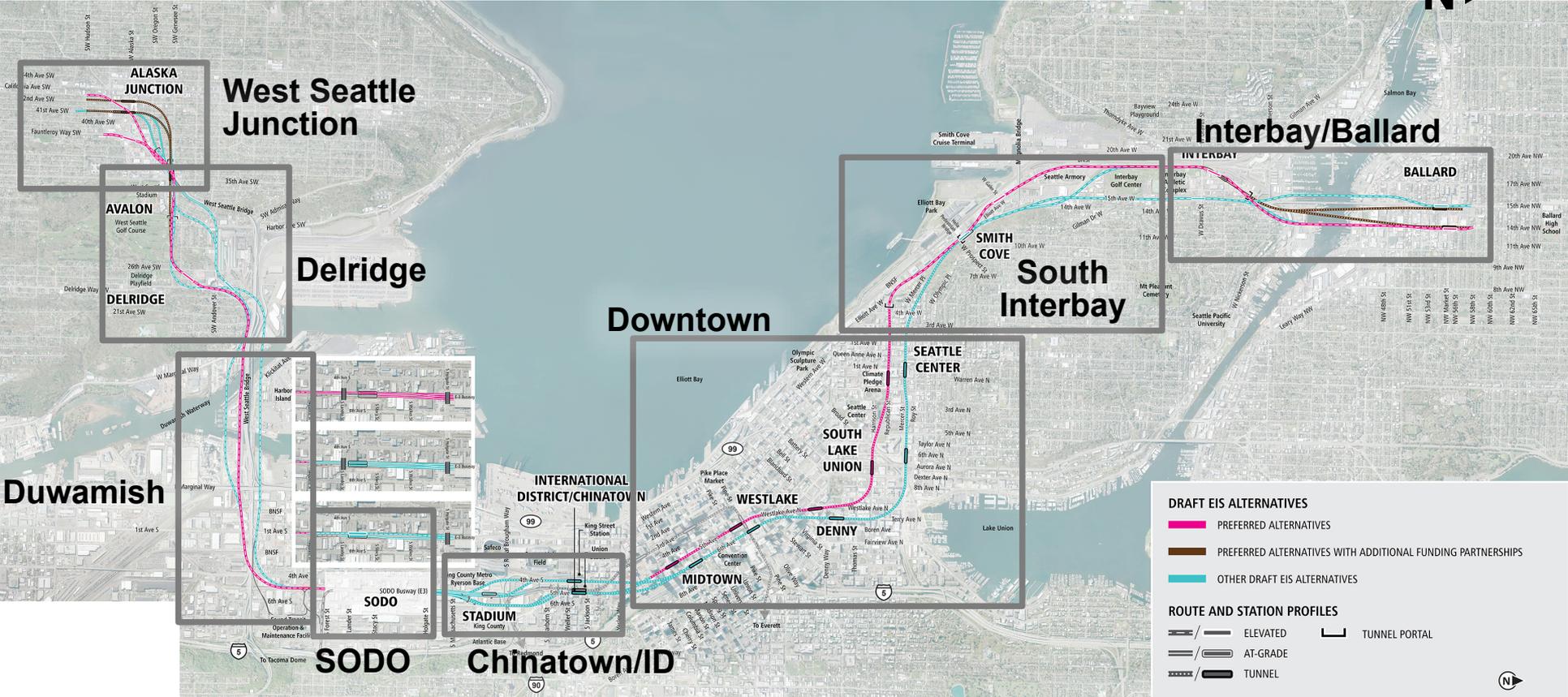
What we're studying in this phase

-  Preferred Alternatives
-  Preferred Alternatives with Third-Party Funding
-  Other Draft EIS alternatives

*Project delivery dates currently under review due to the COVID-19 recession.



Draft EIS alternatives



DRAFT EIS ALTERNATIVES

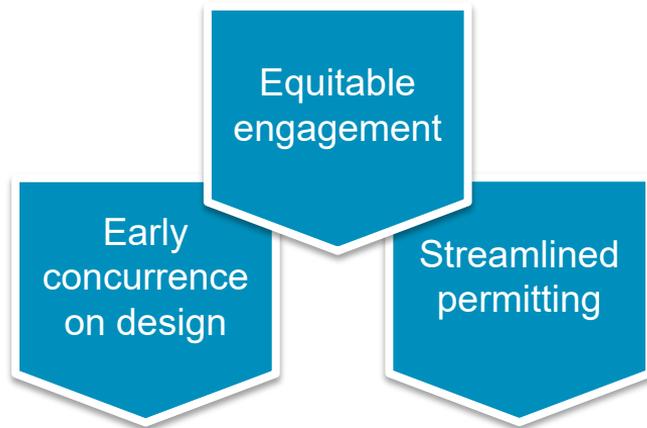
- PREFERRED ALTERNATIVES
- PREFERRED ALTERNATIVES WITH ADDITIONAL FUNDING PARTNERSHIPS
- OTHER DRAFT EIS ALTERNATIVES

ROUTE AND STATION PROFILES

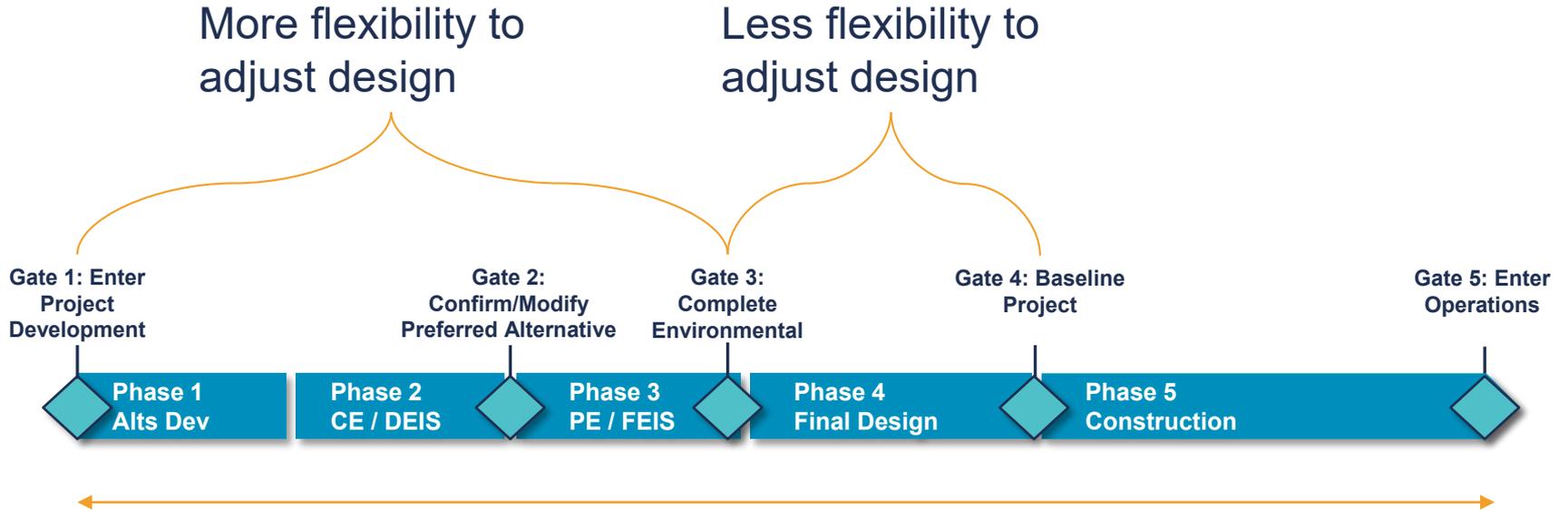
- / ELEVATED
- / AT-GRADE
- / TUNNEL
- TUNNEL PORTAL

Approach to project development

Achieve timely project delivery through effective engagement and partnering.
Three core concepts:



Why does this matter?



How we got to EIS alternatives

Metrics from Alternatives Development engagement (2018-mid 2019)



5,600+ responses to comments and questions



189 presentations to local community groups



26 neighborhood fairs and festivals visited



25 email updates sent to our subscribers



21 stakeholder and elected leadership group meetings facilitated



17 open houses and workshops held in neighborhoods

Partnering on a Racial Equity Toolkit

- **Sound Transit & City of Seattle RET Leadership Team**, supported by working group structure focused on project decisions, including engagement and analysis (began in late 2017/early 2018)
- Collaboration to elevate issues and considerations to **better inform the alternatives development process**
- Strive to **provide information** that data alone cannot provide

Racial Equity Toolkit

to Assess Policies, Initiatives, Programs, and Budget Issues



The vision of the Seattle Race and Social Justice Initiative is to eliminate racial inequity in the community. To do this requires ending [individual racism](#), [institutional racism](#) and [structural racism](#). The Racial Equity Toolkit lays out a process and a set of questions to guide the development, implementation and evaluation of policies, initiatives, programs, and budget issues to address the impacts on racial equity.

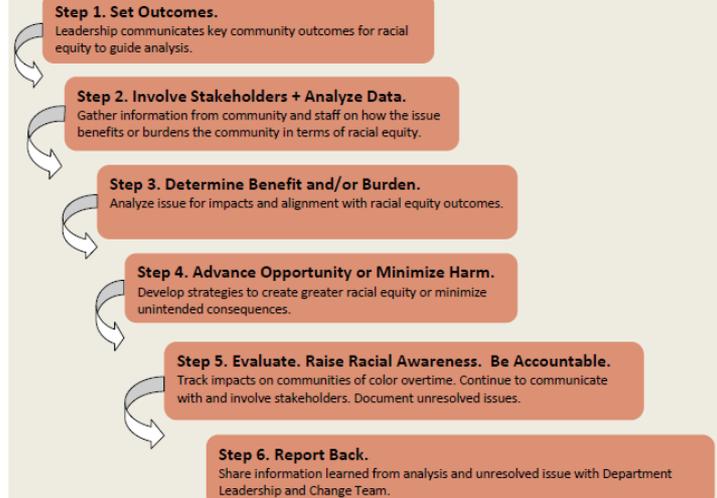
When Do I Use This Toolkit?

Early. Apply the toolkit early for alignment with departmental racial equity goals and desired outcomes.

How Do I Use This Toolkit?

With Inclusion. The analysis should be completed by people with different racial perspectives.

Step by step. The Racial Equity Analysis is made up of six steps from beginning to completion:



Racial Equity Toolkit Outcomes

- *Advance environmental and economic justice to improve economic and health outcomes for communities of color.*
- **Enhance mobility and access** *for communities of color and low-income populations;*
- **Create opportunities for equitable development** *that include expanding housing and community assets for communities of color;*
- **Avoid disproportionate impacts** *on communities of color and low-income populations;*
- **Create a sense of belonging for communities of color at all stations,** *making spaces where everyone sees themselves as belonging, feeling safe, and welcome; and*
- **Meaningfully involve** *communities of color and low-income populations in the project.*



How the RET informs the process

Shared RET outcomes

Targeted engagement strategies

Guide design development and environmental review

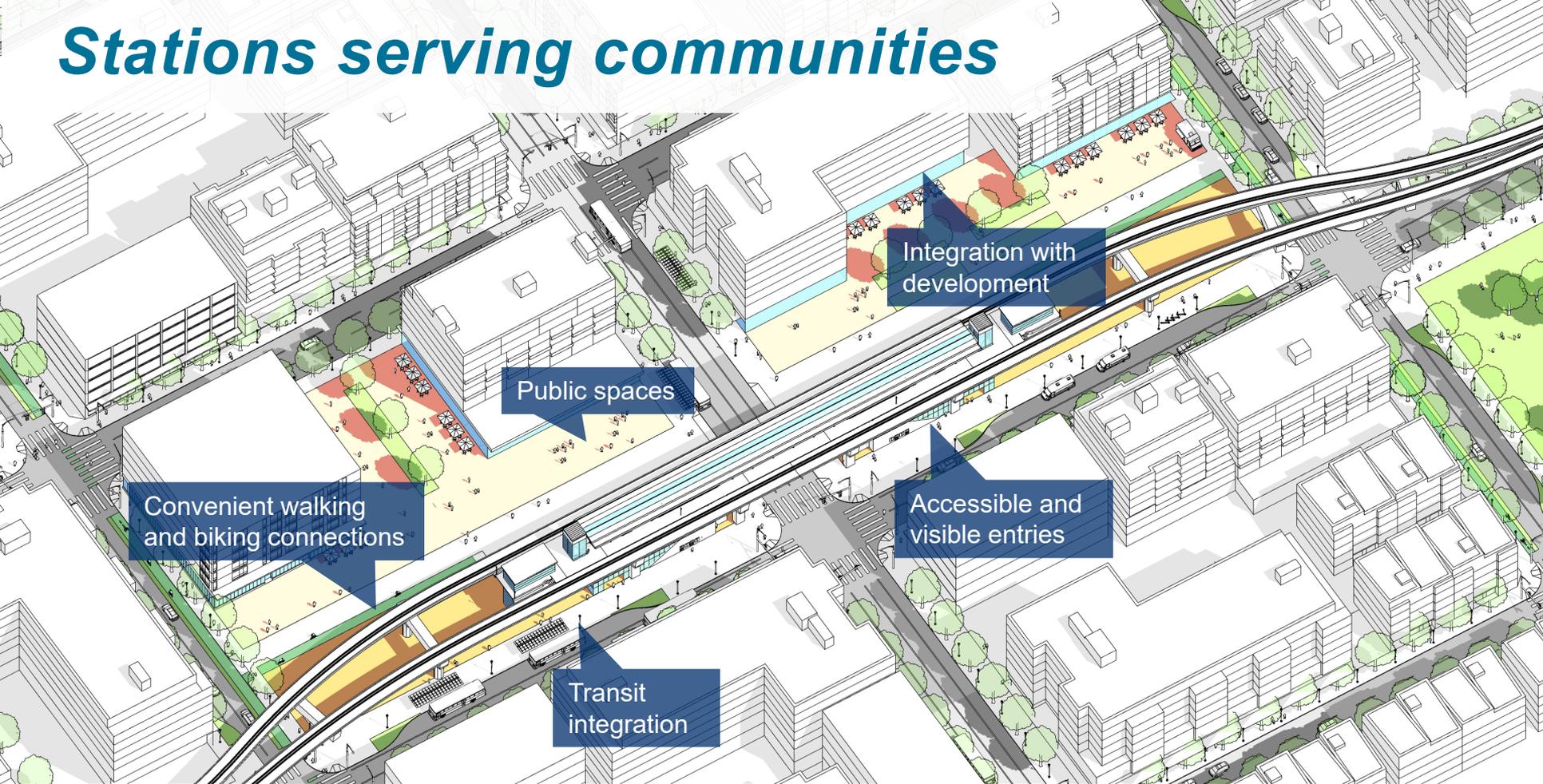
Support decision-making of agency partners, work groups



Inform the ST Board's confirmation or modification of the preferred alternative

Co-Planning Partnership

Stations serving communities



Co-Planning Partnership: Roles



SOUNDTRANSIT

- ✓ Routes and station locations
- ✓ Light rail guideway and station design
- ✓ Environmental review

Centering racial equity

&

Co-planning stations with communities



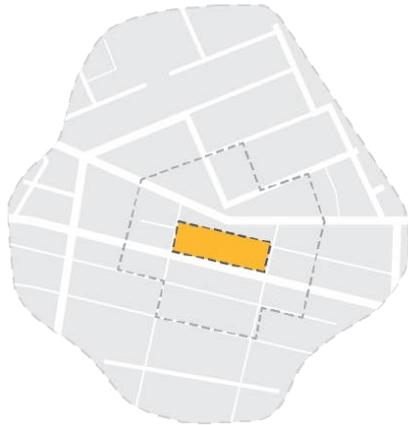
City of Seattle

- ✓ Community planning and station access
- ✓ Land use and zoning
- ✓ Street and right-of-way use

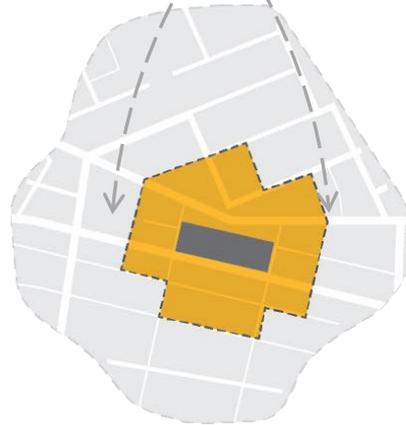
Co-Planning Partnership: Scope



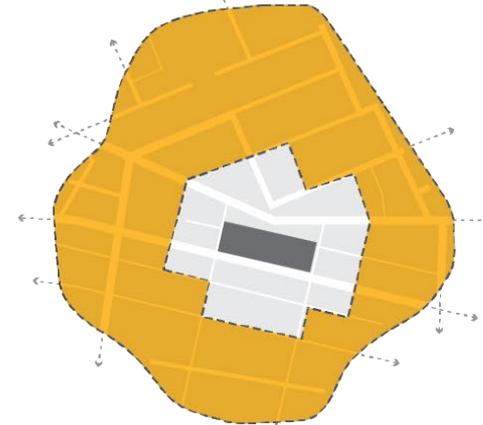
City of Seattle



Station



Station context



Station area

Co-Planning Partnership: Schedule



Early engagement

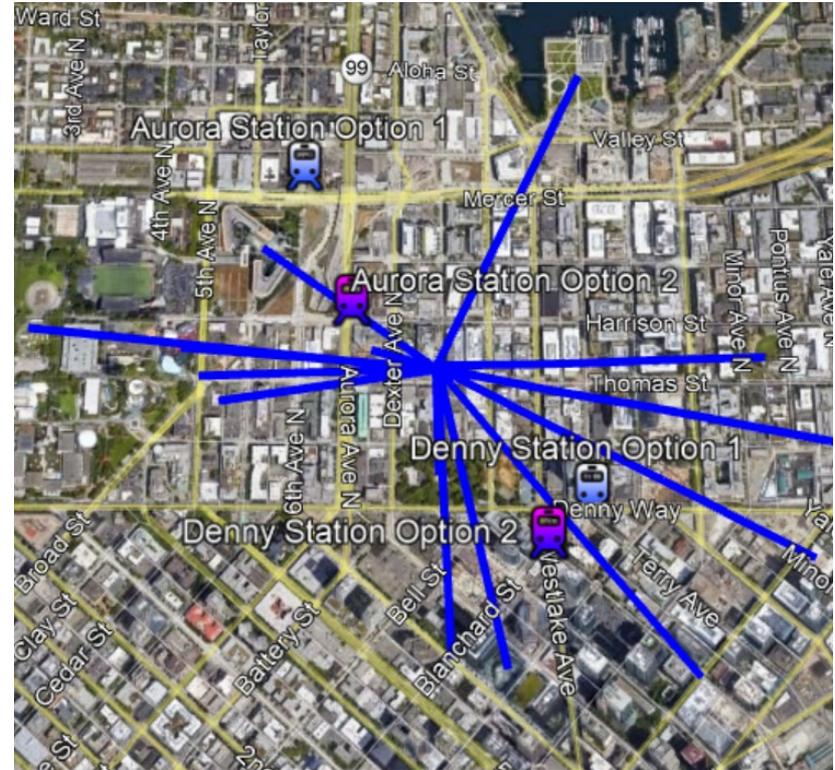


Themes from early engagement

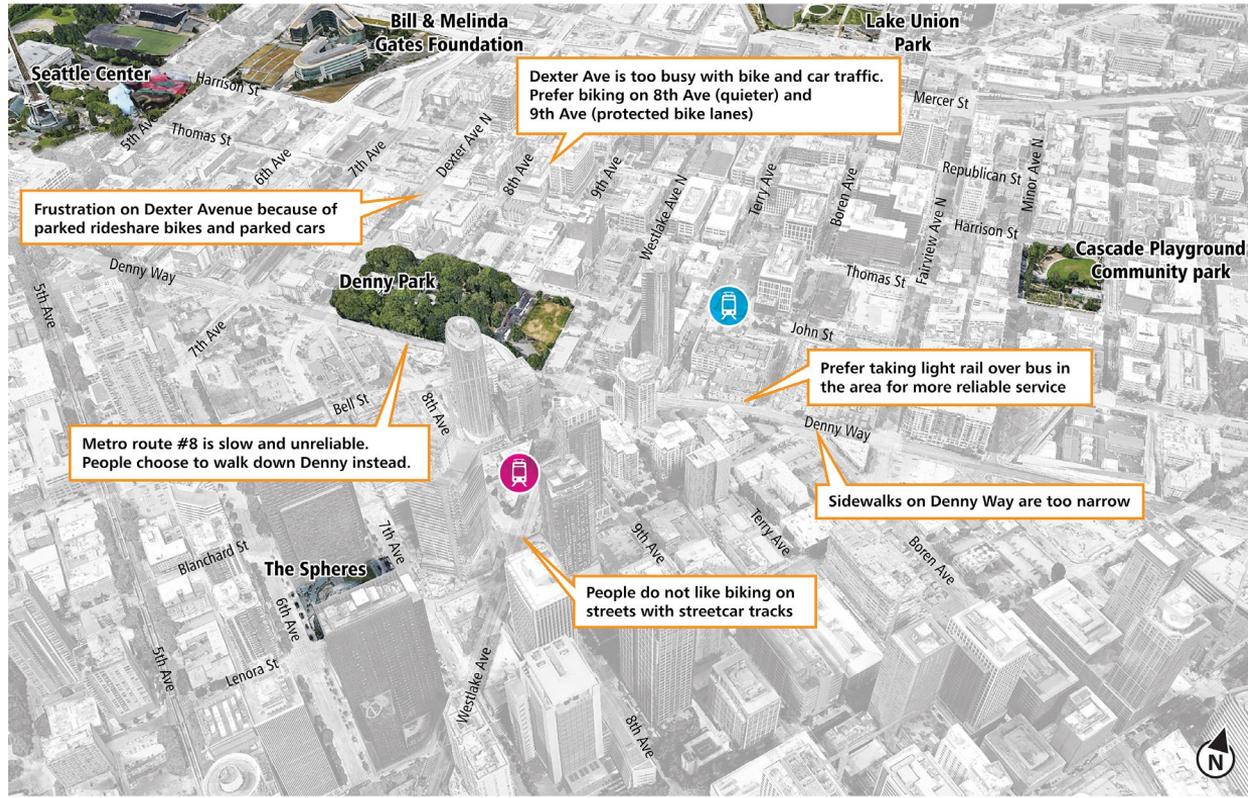
- Few people drive in the neighborhood. The majority walk, bike, or take transit.
- With many bicyclists and pedestrians in the area, sidewalk and bike facility improvements should be considered
- Station entrance locations can help improve neighborhood access across topographic barriers and busy streets

Legend

- Desire lines between station area and destinations



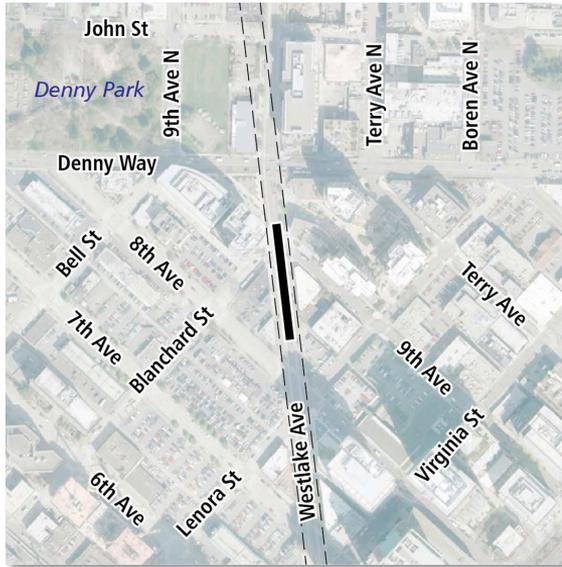
Themes from early engagement



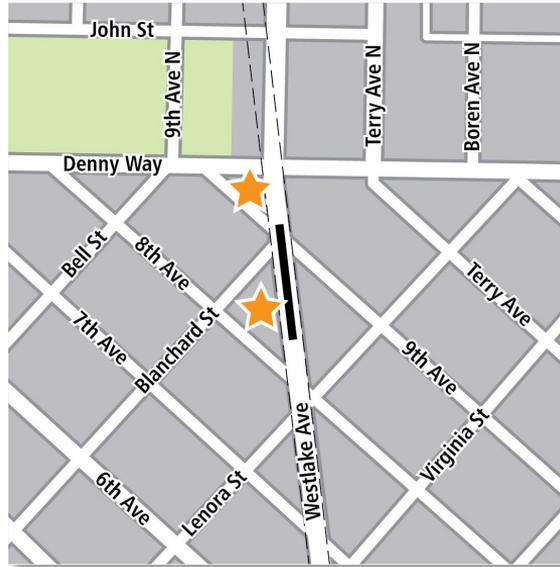
Agency workshops



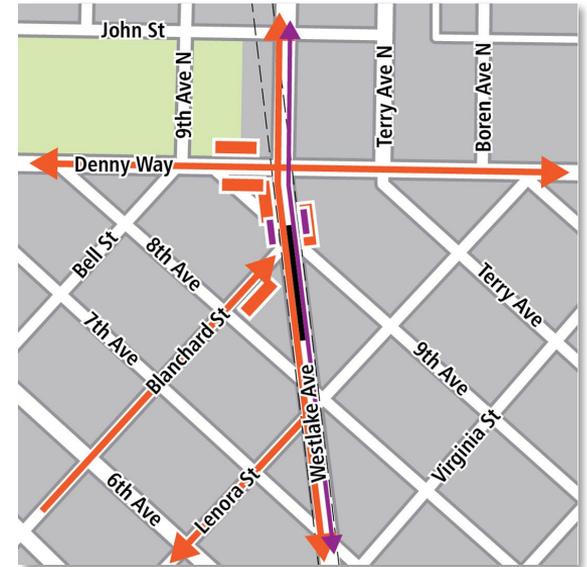
Focus of agency workshops



Urban context



Station configuration & public spaces



Station access & circulation

City and partner preparation

RECENT COMMUNITY & STAKEHOLDER INPUT

Connections & Activation

MAJOR PROJECT CONTEXT

North Downtown Mobility Action Plan (NODO MAP)

PLANNING PRIORITIES

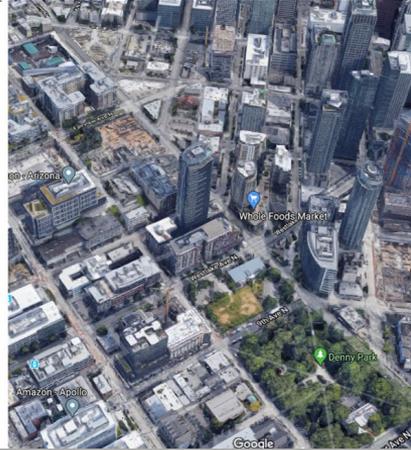
Denny

Urban Design and Placemaking

- Integrate entrances within existing buildings where possible
- Advance station design that is reflective of the unique industrial history and emergent tech industry
- Where possible integrate station entrances into ETOD

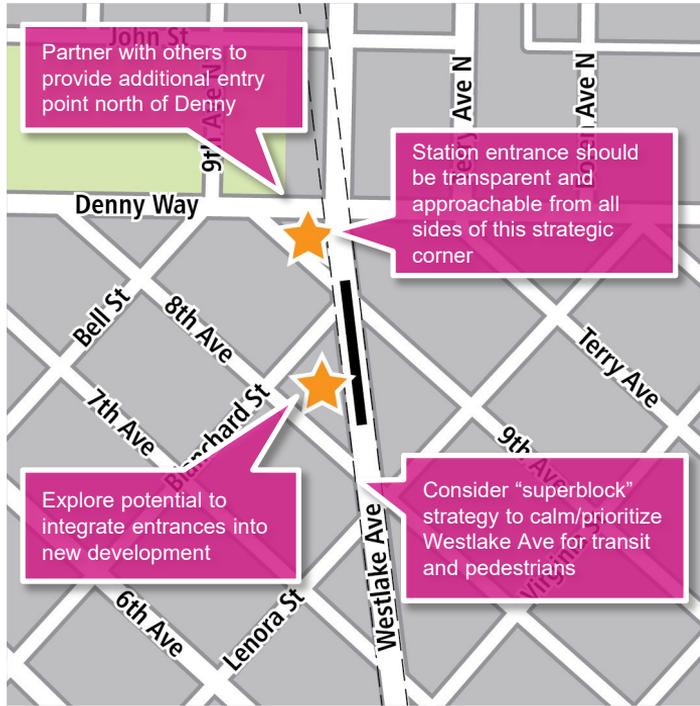
Access and Connectivity

- Increase connectivity across Denny Way
- Leverage station entrances to navigate grade change east-west
- Integrate intuitively with bus and streetcar
- Provide several station entrances; include a mix of main entrances with smaller entrance locations integrated within existing buildings
- Provide setbacks at corners for pedestrian flow
- Provide direct wayfinding and connection to Thomas St for pedestrians and cyclists

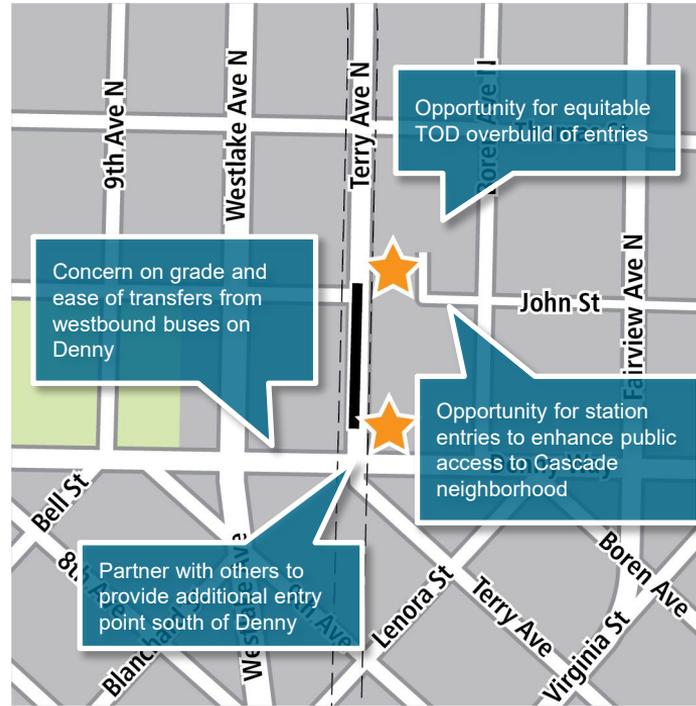


Identify opportunities and refinements

Tunnel Westlake Avenue Station



Tunnel Terry Avenue North Station



KEY



Station entrance



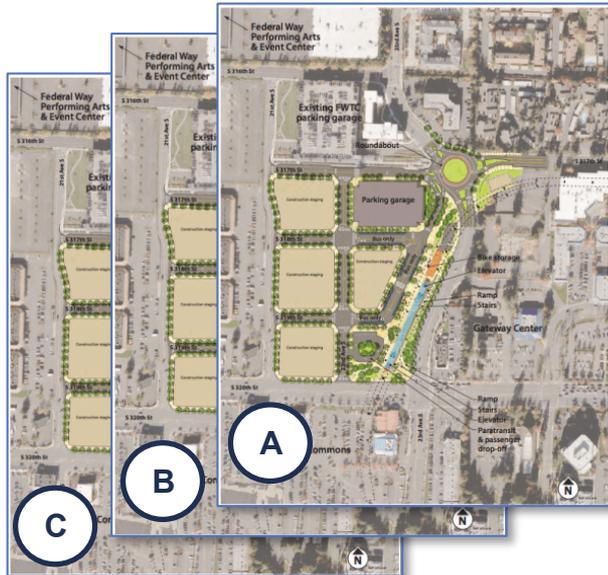
Looking Ahead

Reconciliation and documentation



City alignment on design issues

City-generated design markups by station & alternative



Note: image of Federal Way Transit Center Station used for illustrative purposes

Comment logs

ID	Agency	Station	Alternative	Comment	Thematic Classification	Priority Classification for ST Response
26	Seattle DOT	Ballard	14th AIs (A)	Enhancing connection to Burke Gilman Trail is very important. Bike Master Plan includes protected bike lanes on 14th Ave NW	Non-motorized access and circulation	1
27	Seattle Parks	Ballard	14th AIs (A)	Consider bringing Greenway Park section down to the station area, but only if it can be an actively used space and not become difficult to maintain	Land use/TOD	2
28	KCM	Ballard	14th Elevated (B0-1a)	Would charging for electric bicycles be permitted under the gateway? KCM commented that with the 14th alternative, the first instance of OGS under an ST gateway would occur. This would probably require a complex agreement for operations, maintenance, access, etc.	Transit integration and circulation	2
29	Seattle DOT	Ballard	15th Tunnel (B0-2a)	Explore allowing public pedestrian access through the 15th tunnel? (Could fare-paid zone begin below that level?)	Non-motorized access and circulation	4
30	Seattle DOT	Ballard	All AIs (B0-1a, 2a, 2b, 3)	Consider closing off NW 54th Street at 15th Ave NW to extend curb space on 15th Ave NW for buses. This would allow for pick-up/drop-off space on 54th that doesn't result in vehicles then entering 15th Ave NW from NW 54th, where there aren't safe merge conditions.	General traffic, operations and circulation	2
31	KCM	Ballard	All AIs (B0-1a, 2a, 2b, 3)	Explore locating bus layover under the gateway on 14th in the industrial area, so that buses could use Leary to circulate back around to active bays	Transit integration and circulation	3
32	Seattle DOT	Ballard	All AIs (B0-1a, 2a, 2b, 3)	SDOT would like bus layover to be off the curb, but KCM says that bus layover is not allowed to be off street in this neighborhood.	Transit integration and circulation	4
33	KCM	Ballard	All AIs (B0-1a, 2a, 2b, 3)	Are there opportunities to site bus layover within TOD? Fleet will be all electric by 2035, so there won't be emissions. Only need three 80-ft spaces.	Transit integration and circulation	4
34	Seattle OPCD	Ballard	15th Elevated (B0-3)	Could the elevated station mezzanine be into 2nd story retail across 15th?	Land use/TOD	4
35	Seattle OPCD	Ballard	All AIs (B0-1a, 2a, 2b, 3)	Could the station billboards also provide access to residential TOD above? If the residential and station billboards were combined, how would they integrate on the ground floor?	Land use/TOD	4
36	Seattle OPCD	Ballard	All AIs (B0-1a, 2a, 2b, 3)	If NW 54th St is closed at 15th Ave NW, explore the idea of an overhead connection between two future TOD buildings at the 2nd or 3rd floor level. Could be as tall as needed to provide clearance underneath.	Land use/TOD	2
37	Seattle OPCD	Ballard	All AIs (B0-1a, 2a, 2b, 3)	Second floor TOD would be perfect for child care, and there is public financing available.	Land use/TOD	4
38	Seattle OPCD	Ballard	All AIs (B0-1a, 2a, 2b, 3)	Office of Housing only provides financing for affordable housing, so it would be ideal to have no ground-floor retail. Explore ground floor bike parking or some other use that the developer is responsible for.	Land use/TOD	4
39	Seattle OPCD	Ballard	All AIs (B0-1a, 2a, 2b, 3)	Station entrances should be set back from the sidewalk to create circulation space, visibility, and "sanding space" for riders to pause and figure out which way to go.	Station configuration	1

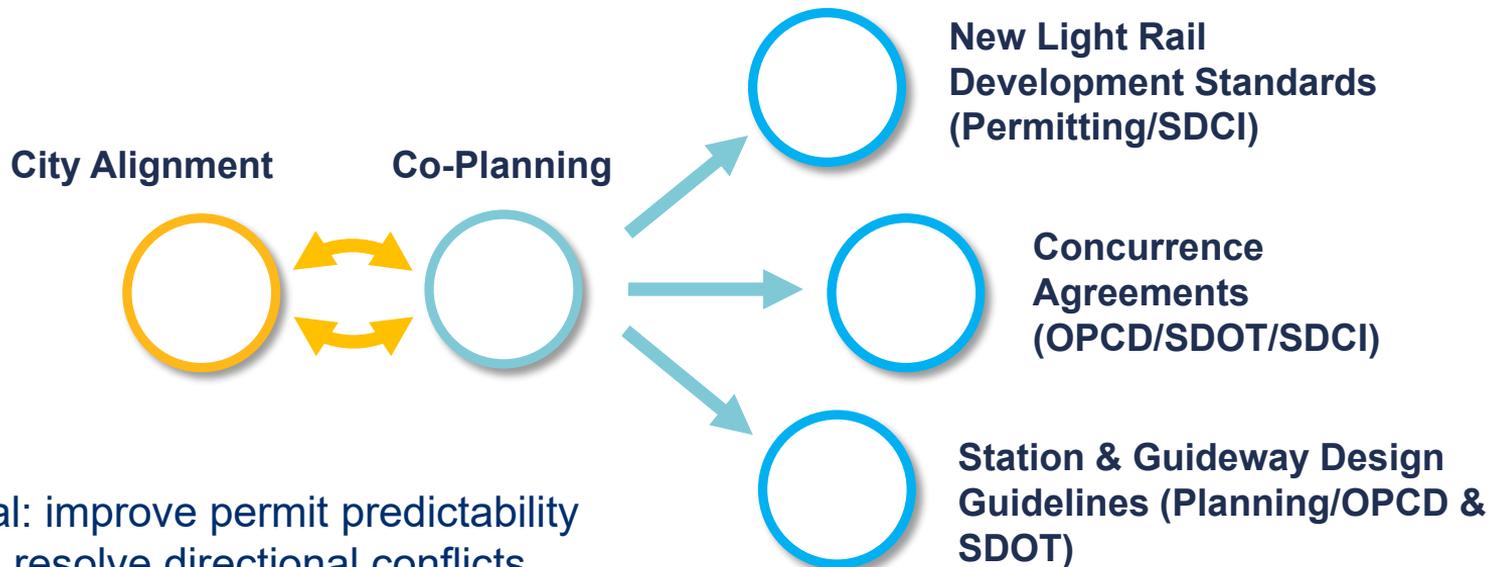
Station Context Framework Progress Report

- Share more detailed station concepts and proposals for access, circulation, public space, and joint development
- Identify unique opportunities and considerations for each alternative
- Highlight potential refinements and issues for community to weigh



Note: image of Downtown Redmond Station used for illustrative purposes

City policy changes from co-planning



Goal: improve permit predictability and resolve directional conflicts between agencies

Upcoming engagement (to mid-2021)

Focus: Prepare the community for publication of the Draft EIS, including updates around station planning and how to engage

- Online engagement platform (wsblink.participate.online)
- **Community briefings**
- **Equitable engagement approaches**
- Outreach to **property owners** (Mid-2021)

Engagement around Draft EIS (mid-2021)

Focus: Share information found in Draft EIS and collect feedback

- Seek formal comments on the Draft EIS to share with the Sound Transit Board and Federal Transit Administration
 - Share information in a variety of formats (including online), focus on accessibility
 - Provide several ways for people to provide comments. For example, online, voicemail, email, in-language, public comment and more.

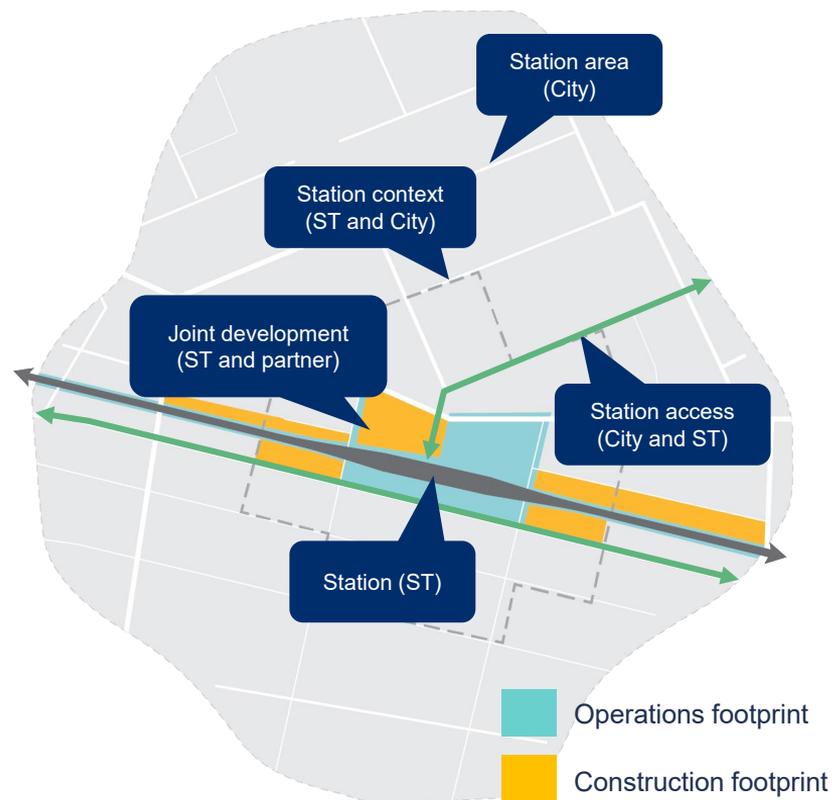
Engagement post-Draft EIS (early 2022)

Focus: Engage communities in refinements to project alternatives, station concepts and specific design moves

- Exact approach to be developed
- Likely centered on interactive workshops with in-person and virtual components

Co-planning focus after Draft EIS

- Advance station designs with refinements
- Develop conceptual plans and cross-sections for key streets around stations
- Explore potential joint development partnerships
- Continue coordination across agencies and zones of responsibility



Next Touch Point with SDC

Share more detailed station urban design concepts reflecting interagency work

- Return later in the year for a deeper dive into one or more set of station alternatives
- Additional briefings or workshop(s) following publication of the Draft EIS and Station Context Framework Progress Report

Questions and Discussion

Thank you.



 [*soundtransit.org/wsblink*](https://soundtransit.org/wsblink)

