



The City of Seattle

International Special Review District

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ISR 180/22

MINUTES FOR THE MEETING OF TUESDAY, December 13, 2022

Time: 4:30pm

Place: Remote Meeting

Board Members Present

Lizzy Baskerville
Ryan Gilbert
Nella Kwan
Adrian Lam
Michael Le
Ming Zhang
Andy Yip

Staff

Rebecca Frestedt
Melinda Bloom

Interpreters

Qingci Cai
Lillian Young

Absent

Chair Andy Yip called the meeting to order at 4:30 pm.

121322.1 APPROVAL OF MINUTES

June 28, 2022 Tabled

July 26, 2022

MM/SC/LB/ML 5:0:2 Minutes approved. Messrs. Gilbert and Lam abstained.

August 9, 2022

MM/SC/RG/AL 5:0:2 Minutes approved. Ms. Baskerville and Mr. Zhang abstained.

August 23, 2022 Tabled.

121322.2 PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

121322.3 BOARD BRIEFING

121322.31 Sound Transit's West Seattle and Ballard Link Extensions light rail project
Sound Transit West Seattle Ballard Link
Presenters: Leda Chahim, Sloan Dawson and Stephen Mak, Sound Transit

Leda Chahim presented on behalf of the team (presentation materials in DON file). She provided an overview of the project to link West Seattle and Ballard via light rail. She said four new stations are proposed, with one proposed in Chinatown International District (CID). She went over schedule and noted they are currently in planning phase, which will continue through 2024, with construction beginning in 2027. The estimated opening would be 2037-39. She said the draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) was published in 2022; Final EIS will be published in 2023. She said in July 2022, the Sound Transit Board selected the preferred alternative for West Seattle Link, but chose to request additional information for the Ballard Link. The preferred alternative will be identified before the final EIS is published. She said the process has been informed by the CID toolkit. She noted that the most recent workshop was held on Nov. 11th. Workshop #3 and #4 will be held later in December.

Ms. Kwan arrived at 4:44 PM.

Sloan Dawson said the process has been iterative with each open house as they understand the key uses and amenities desired by the community. He noted a desire for what feels safe and has more active uses and program. He went over locations considered in South Downtown. He explained the desire for the station to be closer to the stadiums and provide needed transfer to westside line. He said not having a station in the south end means that Pioneer Square and CID would not be served by new line and there would be no interchange between lines. He said at the last workshop there was discussion about what the community would like to see at Union Station Plaza. Responses included an outdoor market, retail spaces, kiosks and open space for celebration. He asked what would help people feel safer in the plaza. He summarized options that were initially discussed, but not moved forward during the work session, because they either didn't serve regional markets or would have impacts on CID.

Mr. Zhang arrived at 4:49 PM.

Stephen Mak explained 4th Avenue shallow alternative as being considered for further study. He went over construction impacts and challenges to the neighborhood and suggested mitigation. He said they were working on ways to minimize displacement at Icon Apartments and looking at options for moving ventilation stacks. We went over possible mitigation, including: retaining wall/bridge structure construction technique, sound walls/barriers, low-noise equipment, phased construction closures, temporary roadway decking, temporary art/creative construction screening, limiting construction work to daytime, and access management. He said ventilation would be needed at both ends of shallow station. He said light rail vehicles operate using electric power. Vent fans would be activated only in emergencies to exhaust smoke from tunnel. Vents are run once a month for a brief period to validate functionality. He said structure height is determined by proximity to occupied buildings. He referenced proposed lid over BNSF

tracks and commented on poor soil that creates structural challenges. He noted other lid concepts including community desire for added park / greenspace for the community.

Ms. Frestedt said permits and a Certificate of Approval are required as well as Design Commission input.

Ms. Baskerville asked if the options presented are the only ones being considered at this time.

Ms. Chahim said the draft EIS options included 5th & 4th Ave options. Based on Sound Transit Board feedback, they are studying 4th Avenue alternatives and other locations (north and south “couplet”).

Mr. Yip asked if a ‘no CID station’ option is still an option.

Mr. Mak said the concept is still there. He said it would mean one less station for transfer but they will continue to listen to the community.

Mr. Yip appreciated that it is still on the table.

Mr. Zhang said a station is an important asset and it would be a mistake for the line and cultural aspect to not have one. He said that coming up with a solution is important, otherwise it will be a future regret for the City.

Mr. Lam thanked the team for their presentation. He asked how different budget and timeline elements would impact decision.

Ms. Chahim said they are studying that right now and she would have more information in upcoming workshops. She said they are sharing results with community as they go with specific community requests about what should be included. She said cost and schedule are important factors.

Mr. Lam said it is helpful to understand how those will impact the wish list and he asked about Sound Transit’s prioritization.

Ms. Chahim said those issues will be raised; it is important to get community input for those tradeoffs. She said they don’t make recommendations, just share information and feedback.

Mr. Yip said he understands budgetary concerns and community desires. He asked what system exists to tell community realistic outcomes.

Ms. Chahim said there are a lot of policies and projects that have not benefitted the community. She said there are only so many resources available. She said they don’t want to overpromise but to look at ways to partner and find ways to implement desires or take a step in that direction. She said it will be a push-pull and there will be hard conversations.

Ms. Baskerville said it is helpful to know the process for final decision-making process and to have as much transparency to community as possible.

Mr. Lam expressed concern about impacts to CID businesses.

Mr. Mak said 5th Avenue station would cause displacement. The 4th Avenue focus is coming from the public, and the draft EIS preferred alternative is where they are trending now. He said only when it is submitted to board will they have certainty of route and station location.

Ms. Chahim said there has been much concern about impacts to 5th Avenue businesses.

Ms. Frestedt said transit oriented development provides future opportunities to building housing and retail around the stations.

Mr. Dawson said as they have progressed work to other locations, they looked at transit-oriented development (“TOD”) options. He said it provided interesting potential to north and south locations. He noted they are looking at under-utilized / transitioning property. He said the 4th Avenue right of way constriction provides a larger opportunity attached to Union Station.

Ms. Frestedt said the board can provide specific feedback and submission of formal comment for support of one option. She said Pioneer Square Preservation District is also following the process and is according with this district accordingly. She said community can submit public comment at anytime to her and she will provide to board. It will become part of the public record.

121322.4 STAFF SUMMARY and BOARD BUSINESS

Ms. Frestedt summarized administrative approvals since November 22, 2022.

Ms. Frestedt said Ms. Baskerville’s term is ending and she has agreed to stay through January. She said a notice of vacancy has been completed and the process fill the position has begun. She said it could take some time for the decision to be made.

Adjourn

Rebecca Frestedt, Board Coordinator