



WEST SEATTLE and BALLARD LIGHT RAIL EXTENSION GUIDING PRINCIPLES SURVEY RESULTS

8.28.2020

SURVEY OVERVIEW

In May, the City launched a digital West Seattle and Ballard Light Rail Extension (WSBLE) Guiding Principles Survey to gather community input about the undergirding values and priorities related to light rail expansion in Seattle. The survey builds upon years of community engagement work around guiding principles for light rail expansion and was meant to be a touchpoint for the community to weigh in on these values. The four Guiding Principles surveyed were: Dependable Transit, Vibrant Communities, Climate Action, and Equity.

COVID-19 & Limitations of virtual engagement

Due to the pausing of in-person community engagement, the survey offers one of the few feedback opportunities for the WSBLE during Quarter 2 of 2020. Ideally, an online survey would be complemented by focus groups and community conversations targeting underrepresented communities, including communities of color and low-income residents. Given the reality of COVID-19, this snapshot offers a more limited perspective than is ideal for major infrastructure projects.

Survey response

The online survey was launched in May and remained open through mid-August. It received 2,199 responses.

Although the survey was made available in [top-tier languages](#) and digital Facebook ads were used to encourage in-language surveys, the in-language responses was nearly nonexistent. This reality points to the importance of piloting additional engagement strategies for communities who speak languages other than English during this time of limited in-person engagement. This is discussed further in the “Analysis & Lessons Learned” section.

SUMMARY DATA

For each Guiding Principle, a concept definition was provided, and survey respondents were asked to rank its importance using a Likert Scale rating of 1-5 (Not at All Important (1), Slightly Important (2), Moderately Important (3), Very Important (4), or Extremely Important (5)).

In addition, respondents were also asked to rank the importance of strategies related to how each principle could be achieved. For example, in the “Vibrant Communities” section respondents were asked to rank the importance of a light rail that “Supports more affordable homes and retail spaces.” A full list of the questions can be found in Appendix A.

Key Findings

- Overall, survey respondents expressed agreement with the Guiding Principles. Most notably, Dependable Transit was rated most highly (4.70), followed by Climate Action (4.32). There was also overall agreement with Equity (3.95) and Vibrant Communities (3.92).

- Within the category of Dependable Transit, survey respondents highly rated the strategy “Connects you to work, school, shopping, and recreation in other neighborhoods” most highly (4.59).

This was the highest rated strategy across demographic breakout groups, including respondents who identified as BIPOC; people of color; speaking a language other than English at home (or having a household member who does); gender-binary or non-conforming, transgender, or other gender; as having a disability (or someone in their household who does); and making less than \$33,000/year.

- Survey respondents who identified as people of color overall expressed support for the Guiding Principles. This includes Dependable Transit (4.61), Vibrant Communities (3.79), Climate Action (4.06), and Equity (3.56).
- The Guiding Principles were rated most highly by respondents who had an annual household income of <\$33,000 (this figure is approximately both 30 percent area median income (AMI) as well as the annual income for a full-time minimum wage worker in Seattle). This group rated items related to “Climate Action” higher than other groups. They also rated the principle of “Vibrant Communities” more highly than other groups (4.17 vs. 3.92 overall) as well as “Supports more affordable housing and retail spaces” (4.32 vs. 3.94 overall).

It is important to note that just 67 survey respondents – or about three percent – were below this income threshold.

- The survey **did not** capture a representative sample of the population of Seattle, including in relation to race and income-level. Although people of color make up 36 percent of the City’s population, they were just 16 percent of respondents.
- (Appendix B provides an in-depth breakdown of survey responses by various select demographic groups.)

ANALYSIS & LESSONS LEARNED

Limited feedback from underrepresented communities

Survey respondents skewed significantly toward people who have access to public policymaking processes. Although people of color make up 36 percent of the City’s population, they were just 16 percent of respondents. In addition, more than 60 percent of respondents identified as having a household income above \$100,000; and nearly 70 percent of respondents had household incomes above \$75,000.

The following groups are represented as their share of overall survey respondents:

BIPOC	2 percent
All people of color	16 percent
Annual household income less than \$33,000 (Approx. 30 percent AMI and annual income for someone earning minimum wage full-time)	3 percent
Gender non-binary or non-conforming, transgender, or other gender	4 percent
Survey respondent or member of their household has a disability	11 percent
Survey respondent or member of their household speaks a language other than English at	23 percent

This low level of feedback from people of color and low-income residents underscores the need for deeper engagement with these communities to ensure their perspectives are elevated in this process. In-person engagement is a preferable strategy to meaningfully engaging these groups. In this time of social-distancing guidelines, economic uncertainty, and racial reckoning the City will need to meaningfully pilot strategies to reach these groups while maintaining safety and respect that these communities may be dealing with more urgent issues.

Interpretation of concepts

In addition to an underrepresentation of input from people of color and low-income residents, the survey was unable to deeply explore priorities, and concerns of various demographic groups. Concepts may mean different things to survey respondents based on various intersecting identities and lived experience.

For example, items such as “Draws people to the neighborhood and enhances community” or “Improves public safety through more active neighborhoods” may connote different meanings to survey respondents in an affluent primarily white neighborhood than a neighborhood made up primarily of people of color. Concepts may mean different things to cisgender people than transgender or gender non-binary people. As such, this survey should be a starting point of engagement. Deeper engagement with BIPOC, communities of color, immigrants, people who are trans and gender non-conforming, people with low-incomes, people with disabilities, and people for whom their primary language is not English should be prioritized to further clarify these concepts.

NEXT STEPS

Deeper engagement with underrepresented groups, including RET station areas

In this unprecedented time, there have been many questions about what meaningful community engagement can and should look like. While many initially thought social distancing might be necessary for just a few months, we are moving into a new phase where this is becoming the new normal. Given this, it is important for creativity and innovation in terms of engagement.

The City of Seattle and Sound Transit’s joint Racial Equity Toolkit (RET) identifies the Chinatown-International District station area as well as the Delridge bike/walkshed area as area of particular importance for engagement due to their above average prevalence of people of color in these neighborhoods. In addition, underrepresented groups throughout the new light rail’s corridor must be engaged more deeply.

While reaching people of color and low-income residents online or safely in person should be prioritized, this also must be done with the recognition that COVID-19 and its related economic impact is hitting these communities hardest. This means that engagement should be made as easy and beneficial as possible for those being engaged. Finally, many communities are organizing around efforts related to structural racism and police reform. These essential priorities are competing for people’s time and energy and this recognition should be accounted for when considering the necessary timeline for meaningful engagement on a public infrastructure project of this magnitude.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A. SURVEY QUESTIONS

Sound Transit is building 14 new light rail stations with service to West Seattle in 2030 and Ballard in 2035. The new light rail lines and transit tunnel under Downtown, South Lake Union and Seattle Center/Uptown are the largest transit investments in our city’s history. To help guide City decisions, we created these guiding principles and objectives. Tell us how important they are to you and your community.

1 = Not at All Important

2 = Slightly Important

3 = Moderately Important

4 = Very Important

5 = Extremely Important

<p>1. Dependable Transit: Support efficient and reliable light rail service to your neighborhood that gets you where you need to go.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Dependable Transit• Connects you to work, school, shopping, and recreation in other neighborhoods• Integrates with robust transit services in your neighborhood• Reduces number of cars on the road, improving travel time for all• Allows efficient movement of freight• Supports a safer transportation network and fewer collisions	<p>2. Vibrant Communities: Create opportunities for housing and businesses located near stations that support your diverse community with more places for you live, work, and shop.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Vibrant Communities• Draws people to the neighborhood and enhances community• Supports more affordable homes and retail spaces• Adds shared public areas like plazas and improves access to parks• Improves public safety through more active neighborhoods• Supports public art and neighborhood culture
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<p>3. Climate Action: Reduce our dependence on cars and give communities real, clean energy alternatives for transportation that reduces our impact on the changing climate.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climate Action • Reduces vehicle emissions, improves air quality, and supports our climate action goals • Incentivizes walking, biking, and bus riding through locating stations and city investments • Limits parking near stations to encourage other transportation options 	<p>4. Equity: Ensure race and social justice is the foundation for City decision-making on light rail expansion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equity • Provides welcoming and comfortable light rail options for all regardless of race and ethnicity • Reduces short- and long-term negative impacts that disproportionately burden communities of color • Provides access to transit regardless of language proficiency, physical ability, age, income, or other status
<p>5. Additional comments (open response)</p>	

DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONS (OPTIONAL)

1. What is your race? Select one or more.

- White
- Black or African American
- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Asian
- Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
- Some other race (please specify)

2. Do you or anyone in your household speak any languages other than English at home?

- Yes, I speak a language other than English
- Yes, someone else in my household speaks a language other than English

- No, no one speaks a language other than English

3. Follow up to language question: If so, what language(s)

- Spanish
- Chinese/Cantonese/Mandarin
- Vietnamese
- Korean
- Somali
- Tagalog
- Cambodian
- Amharic
- Oromo
- Tigrinya
- Laotian

- Thai
 - Russian
 - Other
 - Other (please specify)
4. Follow up to language question: How well do you speak English? Would you say...
- Very well
 - Well
 - Not well
 - Not at all
5. Do you identify as... (select all that apply)
- Male
 - Female
 - Gender non-binary or non-conforming
 - Transgender
 - Other gender identity (please tell us)
6. Do you, or does anyone in your household identify as having a disability?
- No
 - Yes, I have a disability
 - Yes, someone in my household has a disability
7. Where did you live most of the time in the last thirty days?
- In my own house or apartment that my family rents or owns
 - In a house or apartment that a relative rents or owns
 - In a house or apartment with someone who is not a relative
 - In a shelter
 - In a car or RV, park, or campground
 - In a motel/hotel
 - On the street
 - Moved from place to place
8. Including yourself, how many people live in your home?
Sliding scale 1-20.
9. Which of the following categories does your age fall into?
- Under 18
 - 18 – 24
 - 24 – 34
 - 35 – 44
 - 45 – 54
 - 55 – 64
 - 65 and older
10. What is your total approximate household income? It is...
- Under \$12,000
 - \$12,000 - \$15,999
 - \$16,000 - \$19,999
 - \$20,000 - \$23,999
 - \$24,000 - \$32,999
 - \$33,000 - \$41,999
 - \$42,000 - \$49,999
 - \$50,000 - \$57,999
 - \$58,000 - \$65,999
 - \$66,000 - \$74,999
 - \$75,000 - \$99,999
 - \$100,000 or more

- I prefer not to say

11. Which station(s) are you most likely to use?

- Alaska Junction
- Avalon
- Delridge
- SODO
- Stadium
- Chinatown/International District
- Midtown
- Westlake
- Denny
- South Lake Union
- Seattle Center
- Smith Cove
- Interbay
- Ballard



APPENDIX B. GUIDING PRINCIPLES WEIGHTED SCORES, OVERALL AND BY SELECT DEMOGRAPHIC GROUPS

Key

- 1 = Not at All Important
- 2 = Slightly Important
- 3 = Moderately Important
- 4 = Very Important
- 5 = Extremely Important

- = Score ≥ 4.5
- = Score ≥ 4.0 and < 4.5

Survey Question

	ALL (All respondents) (n =2,199)	BIPOC (n =59)	All People of Color (n =356)	Respondent or a member of their household speaks a language other than English at home (n =503)	Gender non-binary or non-conforming, or other gender (n =95)	Respondent or a member of their household has a disability (n =241)	Household income is less than \$33,000 (n =67)
Dependable Transit: Support efficient and reliable light rail service to your neighborhood that gets you where you need to go.	4.70	4.64	4.61	4.67	4.33	4.65	4.80
Connects you to work, school, shopping, and recreation in other neighborhoods	4.59	4.52	4.48	4.56	4.26	4.49	4.66
Integrates with a robust transit service in your neighborhood	4.28	4.05	4.18	4.24	3.89	4.35	4.50
Reduces number of cars on the road, improving travel times for all	4.10	3.53	3.85	4.11	3.59	3.97	4.15
Allows efficient movement of freight	2.85	3.00	2.96	2.91	2.80	3.00	2.82
Supports safer transportation network and fewer collisions	3.98	3.56	3.92	4.02	3.62	4.06	4.03
Vibrant Communities: Create opportunities for housing and businesses located near stations that support your diverse community with more places for you to live, work, and shop.	3.92	3.59	3.80	3.92	3.47	3.75	4.17

Draws people to the neighborhood and enhances community	3.54	3.14	3.43	3.49	2.99	3.25	3.80
Supports more affordable homes and retail spaces	3.94	3.28	3.59	3.79	3.54	3.70	4.33
Adds shared public areas like plazas and improves access to parks	3.67	2.98	3.49	3.63	3.28	3.53	3.95
Improves public safety through more active neighborhoods	3.80	3.45	3.76	3.78	3.36	3.63	3.92
Supports public art and neighborhood culture	3.40	2.90	3.27	3.36	3.15	3.26	3.59
Climate Action: Reduce our dependence on cars and give communities real, clean energy alternatives for transportation that reduces our impact on the changing climate.							
Climate Action: Reduce our dependence on cars and give communities real, clean energy alternatives for transportation that reduces our impact on the changing climate.	4.32	3.69	4.06	4.19	3.85	4.20	4.52
Reduces vehicle emissions, improves air quality, and supports our climate action goals	4.34	3.67	4.05	4.25	3.85	4.22	4.58
Incentivizes walking, biking, and bus riding through locating stations and city investments	4.31	3.74	3.99	4.20	3.74	4.08	4.61
Limits parking near stations to encourage other transportation options	3.26	2.88	3.07	3.18	2.65	2.98	3.47
Equity: Ensure race and social justice is the foundation for City decision-making on light rail expansion							
Equity: Ensure race and social justice is the foundation for City decision-making on light rail expansion	3.95	3.28	3.56	3.80	3.55	3.74	4.12
Provides welcoming and comfortable light rail stations for all, regardless of race and ethnicity	4.32	3.90	4.01	4.18	3.75	4.17	4.35
Reduces short- and long-term negative impacts that disproportionately burden communities of color	4.10	3.50	3.74	3.93	3.65	3.95	4.11
Provides access to transit regardless of language proficiency, physical ability, age, income, or other status	4.39	3.97	4.09	4.29	3.98	4.32	4.37

APPENDIX C: GUIDING PRINCIPLES WEIGHTED SCORES BY CITY COUNCIL DISTRICTS*

*Survey respondents were asked to identify WSBLE station(s) they would likely utilize. Respondents for each district are made up of survey respondents who indicated they would likely use one of the stations in the district.

Key

- 1 = Not at All Important
- 2 = Slightly Important
- 3 = Moderately Important
- 4 = Very Important
- 5 = Extremely Important

- = Score ≥ 4.5
- = Score ≥ 4.0 and < 4.5

Survey Question

	ALL (All respondents) (n =2,199)	D1 (Alaska Junction, Avalon, Delridge) (n =1,016)	D2 (SODO, Stadium, International District/Chinatown) n (=1,014)	D6 (Ballard) (n =1,256)	D7 (Midtown, Westlake, Denny, South Lake Union, Seattle Center, Smith Cove, Interbay) (n =1,381)
Dependable Transit: Support efficient and reliable light rail service to your neighborhood that gets you where you need to go.	4.70	4.74	4.78	4.78	4.77
Connects you to work, school, shopping, and recreation in other neighborhoods	4.59	4.61	4.66	4.68	4.67
Integrates with a robust transit service in your neighborhood	4.28	4.35	4.37	4.33	4.34
Reduces number of cars on the road, improving travel times for all	4.10	4.10	4.18	4.18	4.14
Allows efficient movement of freight	2.85	2.90	2.80	2.76	2.80
Supports safer transportation network and fewer collisions	3.98	4.01	4.08	4.06	4.05

Vibrant Communities: Create opportunities for housing and businesses located near stations that support your diverse community with more places for you to live, work, and shop.	3.92	3.95	4.02	4.05	4.02
Draws people to the neighborhood and enhances community	3.54	3.52	3.66	3.67	3.63
Supports more affordable homes and retail spaces	3.94	3.89	4.11	4.10	4.08
Adds shared public areas like plazas and improves access to parks	3.67	3.64	3.76	3.80	3.73
Improves public safety through more active neighborhoods	3.80	3.79	3.86	3.91	3.86
Supports public art and neighborhood culture	3.40	3.39	3.50	3.52	3.46
Climate Action: Reduce our dependence on cars and give communities real, clean energy alternatives for transportation that reduces our impact on the changing climate.	4.32	4.32	4.47	4.45	4.43
Reduces vehicle emissions, improves air quality, and supports our climate action goals	4.34	4.32	4.45	4.47	4.44
Incentivizes walking, biking, and bus riding through locating stations and city investments	4.31	4.25	4.49	4.49	4.45
Limits parking near stations to encourage other transportation options	3.26	3.19	3.46	3.45	3.39
Equity: Ensure race and social justice is the foundation for City decision-making on light rail expansion	3.95	4.02	4.12	4.09	4.09
Provides welcoming and comfortable light rail stations for all, regardless of race and ethnicity	4.32	4.39	4.44	4.43	4.45
Reduces short- and long-term negative impacts that disproportionately burden communities of color	4.10	4.18	4.24	4.24	4.23

Provides access to transit regardless of language proficiency, physical ability, age, income, or other status	4.39	4.44	4.52	4.50	4.49
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