

Seattle Design Commission

In conjunction with other City boards and commissions

Draft comments on the Sound Transit 3, Level 2 alternatives
July 25, 2018

Commission review to date

May 10	Work Session 1 Principles
June 7	Full SDC Principles
June 7	Site Tour Part 1 W. Seattle, SODO & ID, First Hill
June 14	Work Session 2.1 West Seattle, Duwamish
June 14	Work Session 2.2 SODO, Chinatown ID
June 21	Full SDC Sound Transit presentation
June 21	Full SDC Report out
June 21	Site Tour Part 2 Westlake, SLU, Interbay, Ballard
June 28	Work Session 3.1 Bridges and Guideways
June 28	Work Session 3.2 Downtown, Uptown
July 12	Work Session 4.1 Interbay, Ballard
July 12	Work Session 4.2 Bridges and Guideways
July 19	Full SDC Discussion of Recommendations

Upcoming Commission reviews and process

July 26, 11 am - 1 pm	Work Session 5 Finalize Recommendations
August 2	Full SDC Finalizing recommendations
August 3-9	Finalize recommendations
Aug 9	Send draft report to Elected Leaders Caucus
Aug 10-17	Meet with City Councilmembers and Mayor's Office to present recommendations

Other Boards and Commissions that joined the work sessions

Michael Austin	Seattle Planning Commission
Rick Mohler	Seattle Planning Commission
Amy Shuman	Seattle Planning Commission
Marci Carpenter	Transit Advisory Board
Chetan Sharma	Pedestrian Advisory Board
Don Brubeck	Seattle Bike Advisory Board
Clifford Cawthon	Seattle renters Commission
Molly Holmes	Aging and Disabilities Commission
Lauren Boling	LGBTQ Commission
Jesse Moore	Georgetown Community Council

General Recommendations (Part 1)

- Do not decide on a preferred alternative before the Draft EIS is published
- Provide visualizations of stations, guideways, bridges, and portals in three dimension context before alternative analysis proceeds.
- Sound Transit must provide the City and public the supporting analytics and technical information necessary for decision making. This must be done in a timely manner. Prioritize providing information in the areas where there are the most issues. Per Partnering agreement between Sound Transit and the City of Seattle Sound Transit is to provide "detail about project risks and opportunities;"(p. 10). Only with this level of information can the City collaborate on the evaluation of alternatives and support the common goal of early and durable consensus put forward in the partnering agreement (p.9).
- Convene smaller advisory panels for elements such as bridges and tunnels that are the most complex, costly, and contentious decisions.
- Besides conventional TOD, identify opportunities for co-development of retail and services such as underground shopping passages to link stations. Identify and develop an approach to selecting possible locations for transit-supportive development by private parties and other public agencies. Look to recent examples but also search for innovative ideas tailored to particular locations, communities, and development conditions. Electeds should be champions in an effort to create real opportunities and set the stage early. Priority areas for this are: Chinatown / ID Station, South Lake Union Station, West Seattle Junction Station, Westlake Station, Dravus Station, and Delridge Station.
- Plan for restrooms at transfer stations and potentially terminus stations.
- Improve pedestrian connectivity in the vicinity of the stations by providing entrances to underground stations on both sides of busy streets, and where at grade rail is planned, provide grade separated crossings for non-motorized movements. This might include a station that spans the street or a pedestrian bridge, for example.
- Prioritize multi-modal connections and bus access at stations when deciding on station locations.

General Recommendations (Part 2)

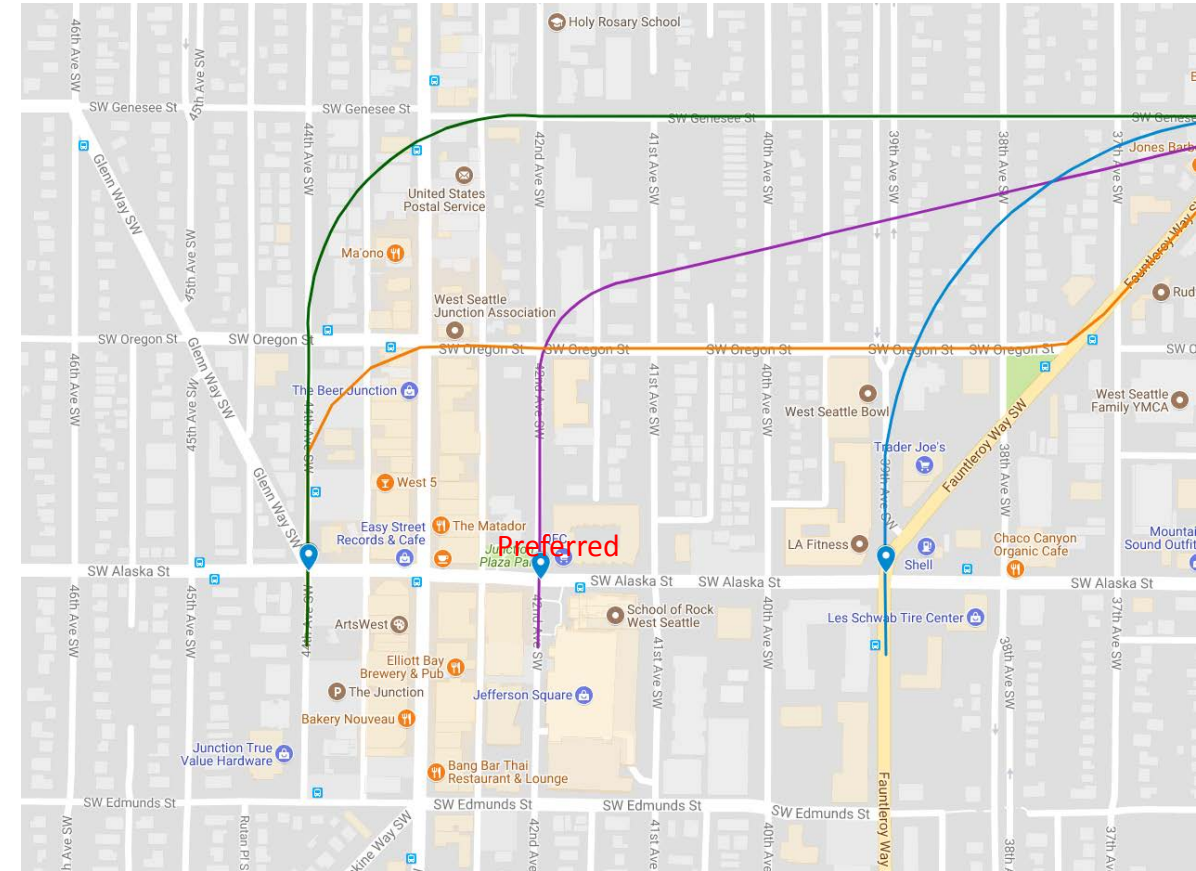
- Where alternatives include transit "interchanges" - riders moving from one station, hub, or transit corridor to another - consider universal access and wayfinding. Consider grade slopes, weather protection, and the need for signage. Level boarding connections are preferred.
- Given the importance of the Duwamish River and Lake Washington Ship Canal to indigenous peoples, and the degraded condition of natural systems caused by past infrastructure projects, provide funding for sustained involvement of indigenous communities, both local tribes and urban native organizations, in the design of bridges, guideways, and mitigation for ST3.
- To capitalize on the immense public investment in these new light rail stations, the City should work strategically to prepare for more intense use of the land near the stations.
 - They should consider walkshed, rider projections, and whether a station is a sending or receiving station.
 - There are inherent conflicts in locating stations in industrial zones that require innovative solutions.
 - Also, the City should reexamine the practice of placing higher densities along busy streets and consider increasing density in nodes around stations to support placemaking, avoid suburban sprawl, and provide more healthy housing options for people living in denser urban settings.
- The City should also consider where future stations might be needed so that these locations can be built "station-ready" for infill later.
- And to facilitate the best decisions about these new light rail lines, the City should reexamine it's long range plans for pedestrian and bike networks and adapt and fit them to the changing circumstances.

Alaska Junction Station

Study (in order of preference)

- 42nd Ave SW & SW Alaska St, below grade
- 42nd Ave SW & SW Alaska St, above grade

- Avoids impacts to California Ave SW
- Aligns with greater existing and planned residential density east of California, avoiding lower density areas to the west of California
- Proximity to California supports N/S bus corridor
- Better ADA accessibility to California due to relatively small grade change
- More pedestrian friendly than Fauntleroy
- Reduces potential impacts on existing development and character along California
- Orient station north south for future system expansion
- Supports potential redevelopment options at Jefferson Square parking lot
- If station is located above grade, 42nd Ave SW is the best location given the scale of existing development
- Below grade station is preferred because
 - Less impact to the surrounding neighborhood central commercial area
 - Capitalizes on terrain
 - Less disruptive to traffic
 - Need to acquire less property and disrupt community to accommodate for turns along alignment
- If 35th Ave SW is best corridor for future light rail expansion, station near Fauntleroy might be better option



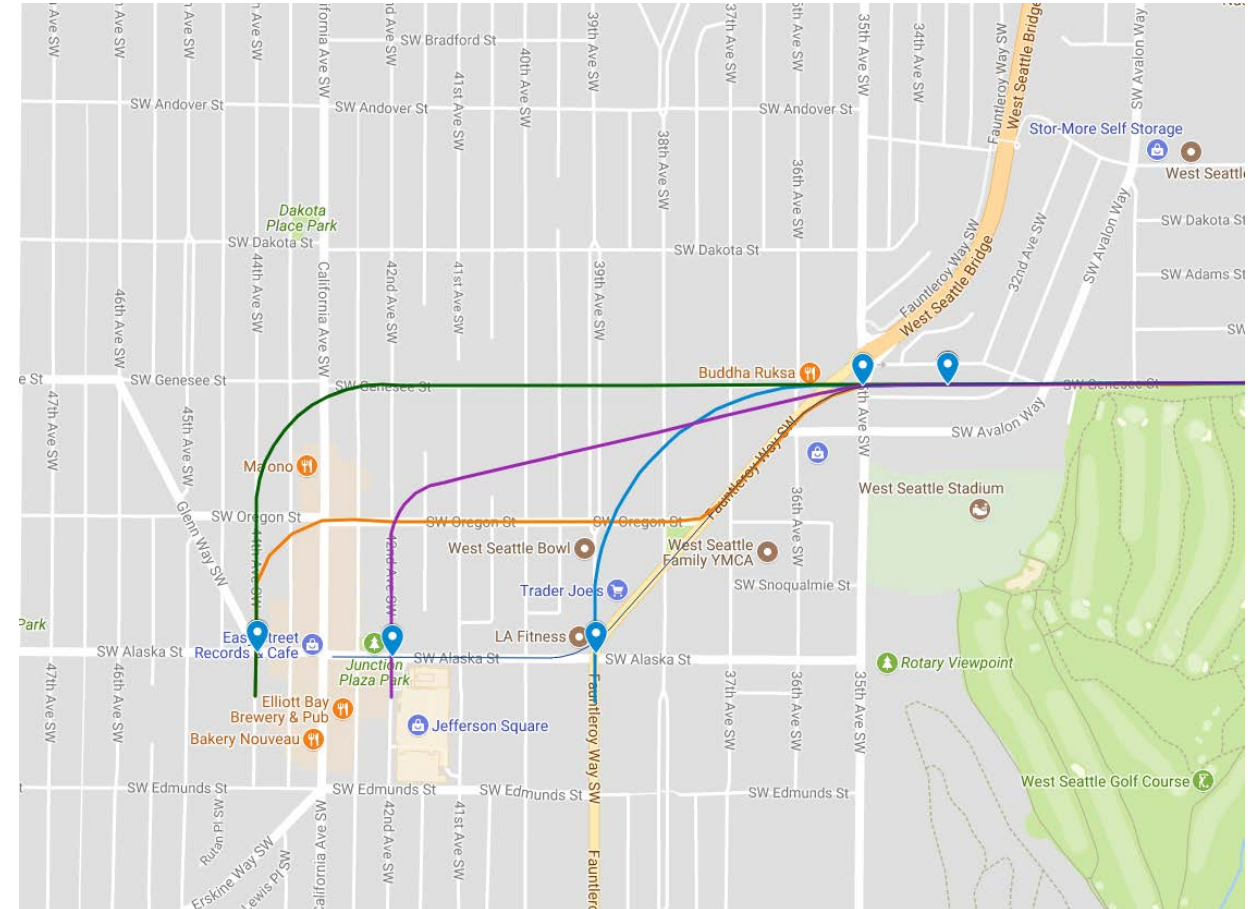
Alaska to Avalon Line

Study (in order of preference)

Below grade

Above grade along Fautleroy and Alaska St

- Below grade alignment will reduce negative impacts within an already developing community
- Avoids the need to respond to large grade change between Fautleroy and California
- Provide information and analysis of visual impacts and cost of the above grade alternative



Avalon Station

Study: Fautleroy & SW Genessee

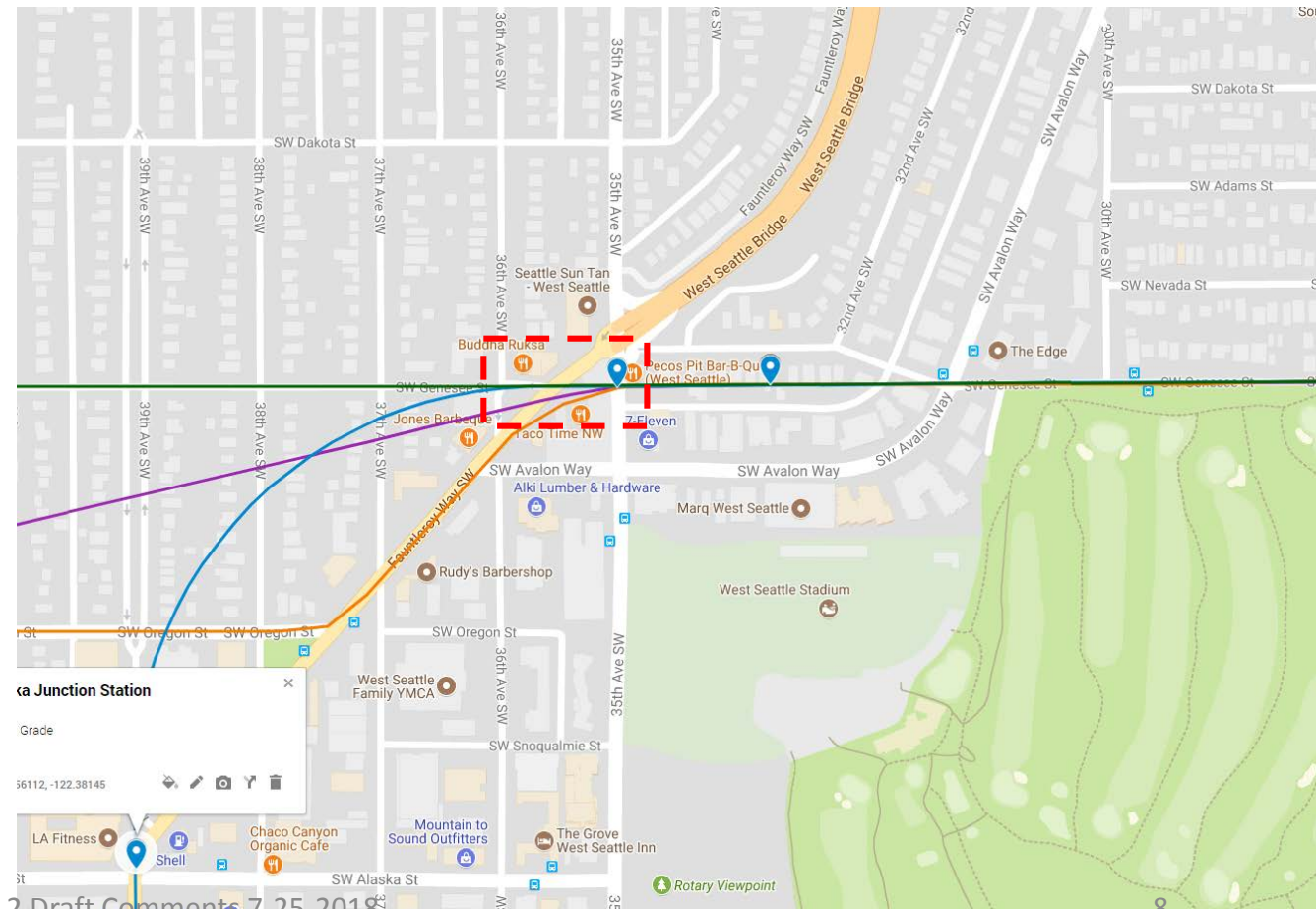
- Station west of Fautleroy aligns with greater zone density
- Station spanning street improves pedestrian connectivity to neighborhoods
- Improve at grade pedestrian crossings at Fautleroy
- Consider the Taco Time site as a station location
- Don't locate station north of Avalon due to lower density
- Provide information and analysis of who the station will serve
- City of Seattle address need for new strategy for golf course properties to align with this very significant public investment in transit

Reasons to eliminate station:

- Relatively low densities in area
- Awkward access given street grid

Reasons for retaining this station

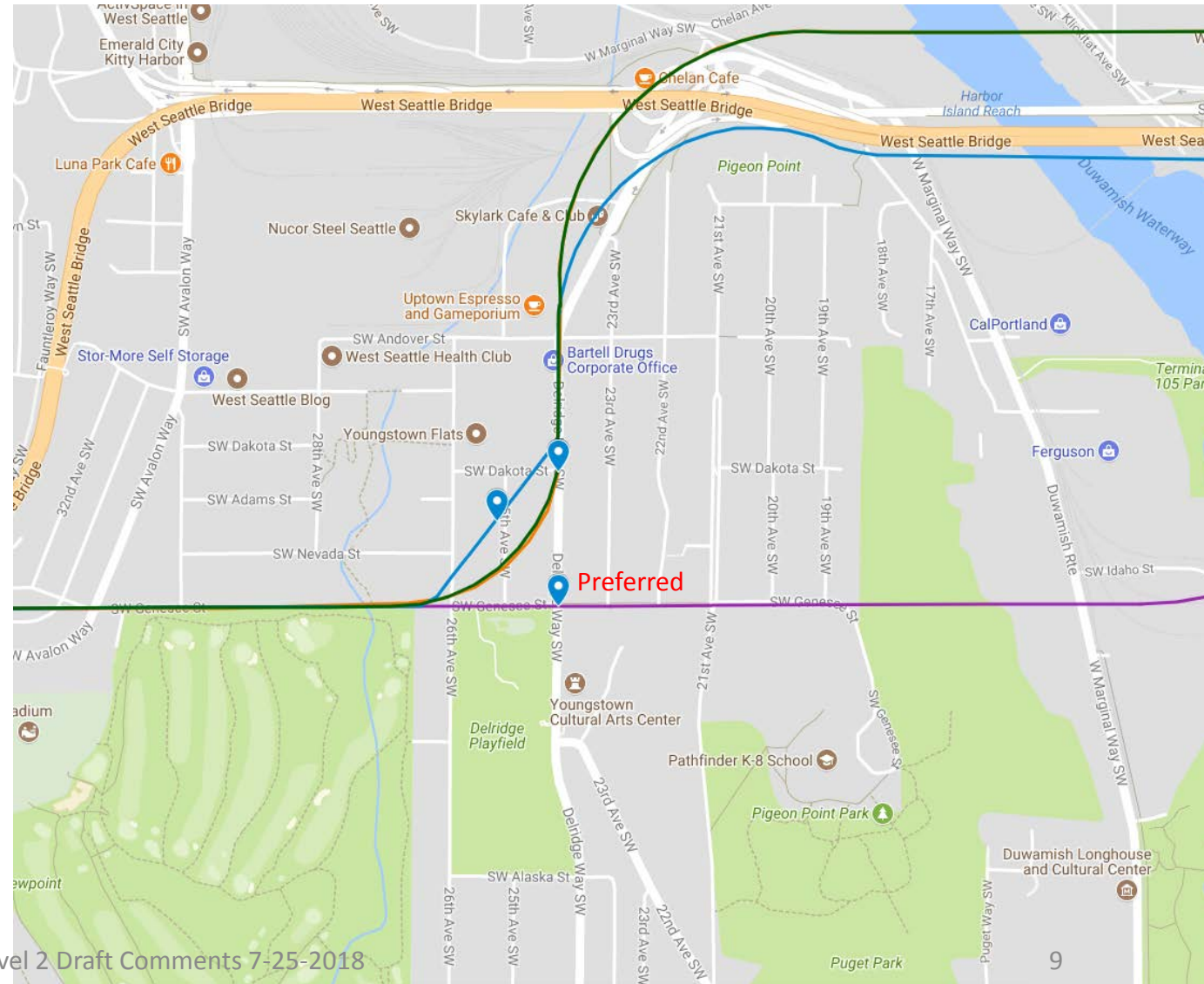
- Area is rapidly developing, this is the fastest developing area near the junction
- Provides better connection to transit because steep grades to Alaska Junction make accessing it difficult
- Provides good transit connections to buses on Delridge or California



Delridge Station

Study: Genesee and Delridge, above or at grade

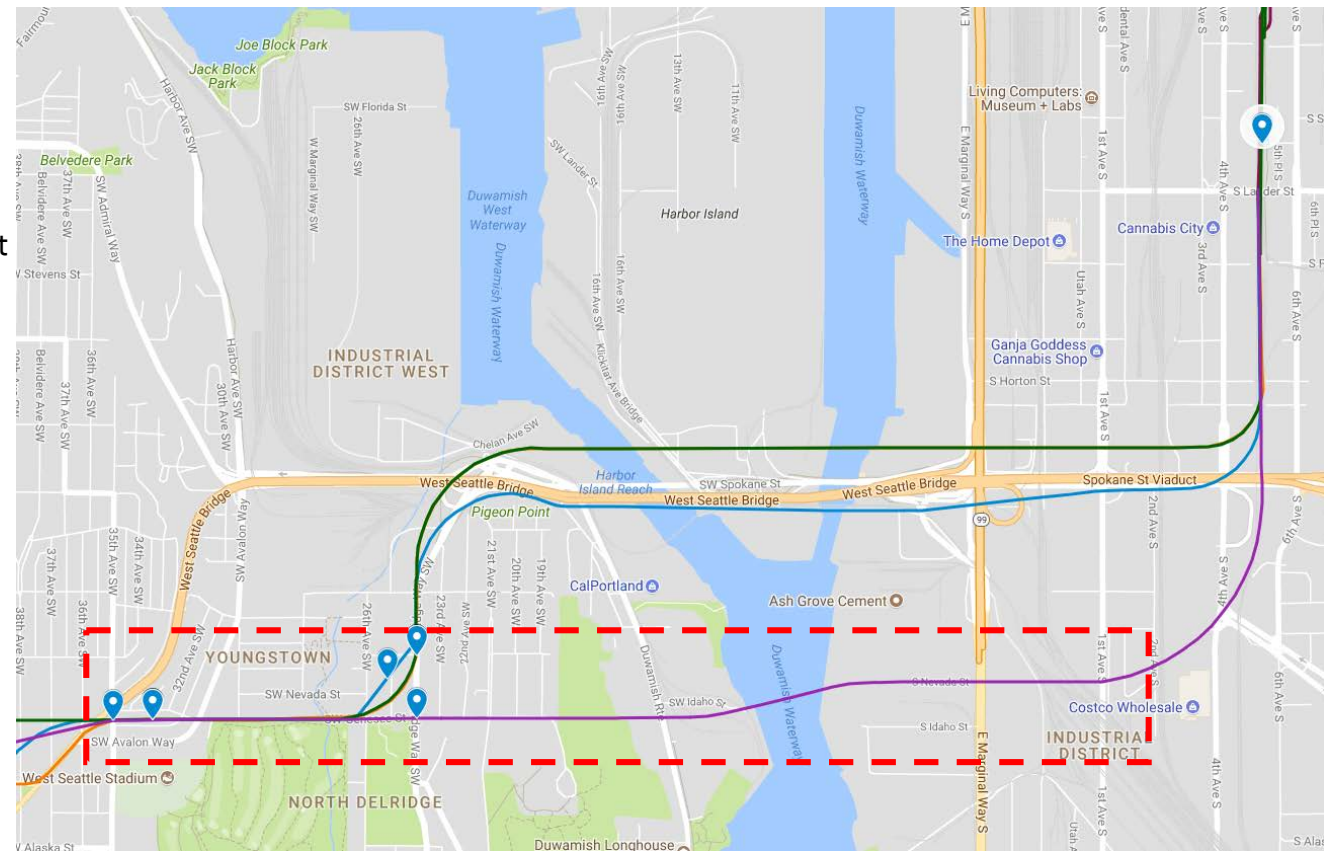
- Study the potential for TOD north of Genesee and west of Delridge Way SW, which could replace naturally occurring affordable homes with permanently affordable housing and increase the amount of housing in the ridedshed of the station
- Serves the larger community along Delridge Way corridor:
 - Builds upon and enhances the community hub
 - Better connection to South Seattle College
 - Better service for underserved communities
 - Provides a transfer location for communities located south of station area
- Serves Delridge community center, skate park, and Youngstown Cultural Arts Center
- Has lower station and guideway heights than alternative station locations to the north
- Supports bike mobility and connections to greenway and surrounding community
- Better connectivity to existing and future bus lines
 - Rapid Ride H line will be along Delridge Way



Avalon to SODO Line (part 1)

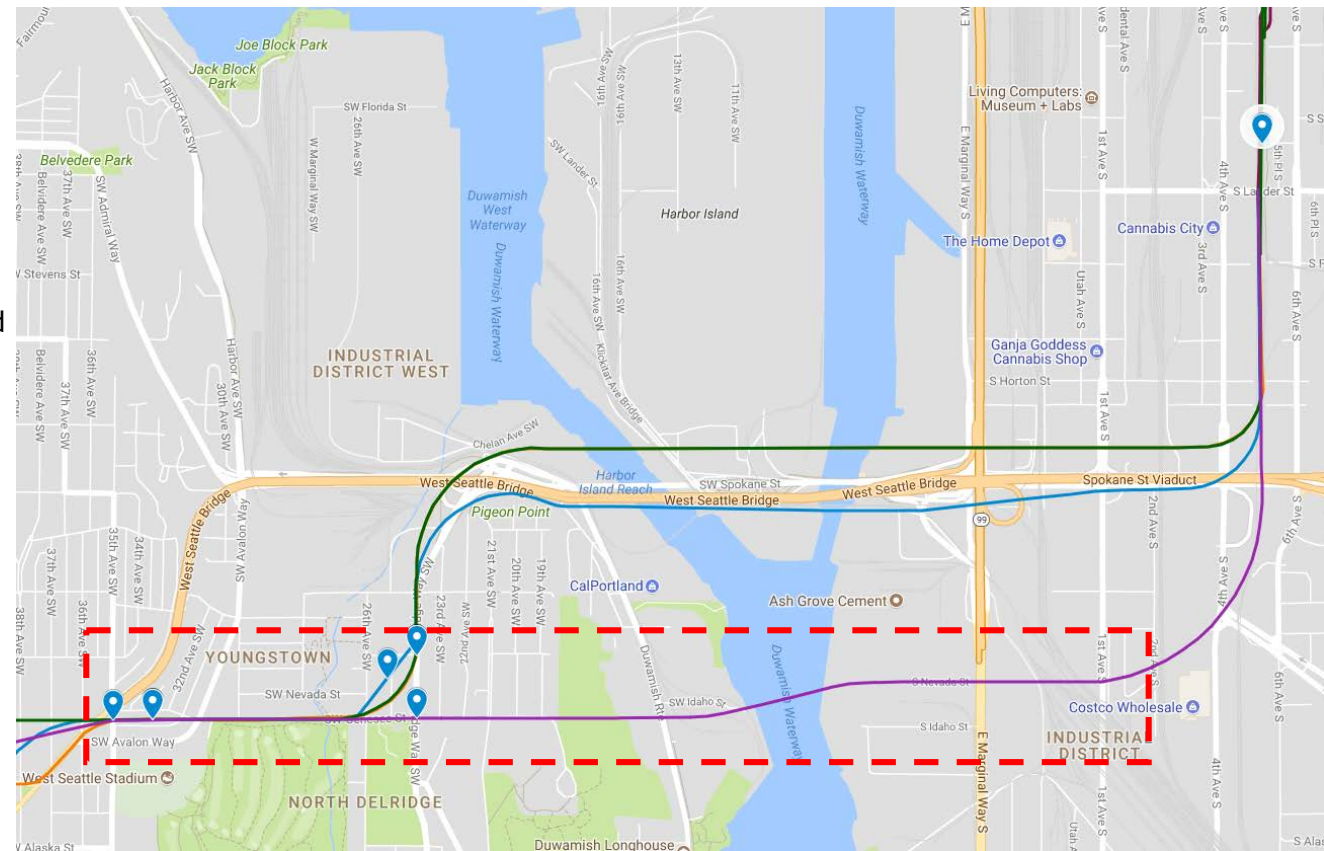
Study: "Pigeon Ridge" along Genesee or south of it, elevated except for tunnels under Pidgeon Ridge and at grade in parts of SODO

- Requires less overwater coverage over Duwamish River
- Reduce impacts to environmentally sensitive areas and residential areas at tip of Pigeon Point
- Avoids technical difficulties of locating guideway in pinch point between West Seattle Bridge and Pigeon Point hillside
- Simplifies alignment between SODO and Alaska Junction (reduces number of curves/turns)
- Has less impact on the Port of Seattle
- Better serves underserved communities to the south and South Seattle Community College
- Requires lower guideways in the neighborhood and lower Delridge station



Avalon to SODO Line (part 2)

- Allows for potential infill light rail station in future east of E Marginal Way
- Reduces grade of elevated sections across Longfellow Creek valley
- Works best with terrain/grade change
- Avoids extremely high guideways along north end of Delridge Park
- Study possible solutions for routing past the Seattle City Light substation
- A new bridge in any location should be complimentary to its surroundings and sensitive to its natural, cultural, and built context
- If the northern alignment along the West Seattle bridge is selected, explore locating the new bridge north of the existing bridge.
 - Avoids impacts to the hillside and residential areas of Pigeon Point
 - Has better views into downtown for light rail riders
- For cost savings consider
 - Eliminating one of two tunnels in West Seattle
 - Eliminating tunnel under Pigeon Ridge would impact marginalized communities in an area that has received insufficient public investment in infrastructure
 - Eliminating tunnel from Avalon to Alaska Junction would impact densest part of neighborhood

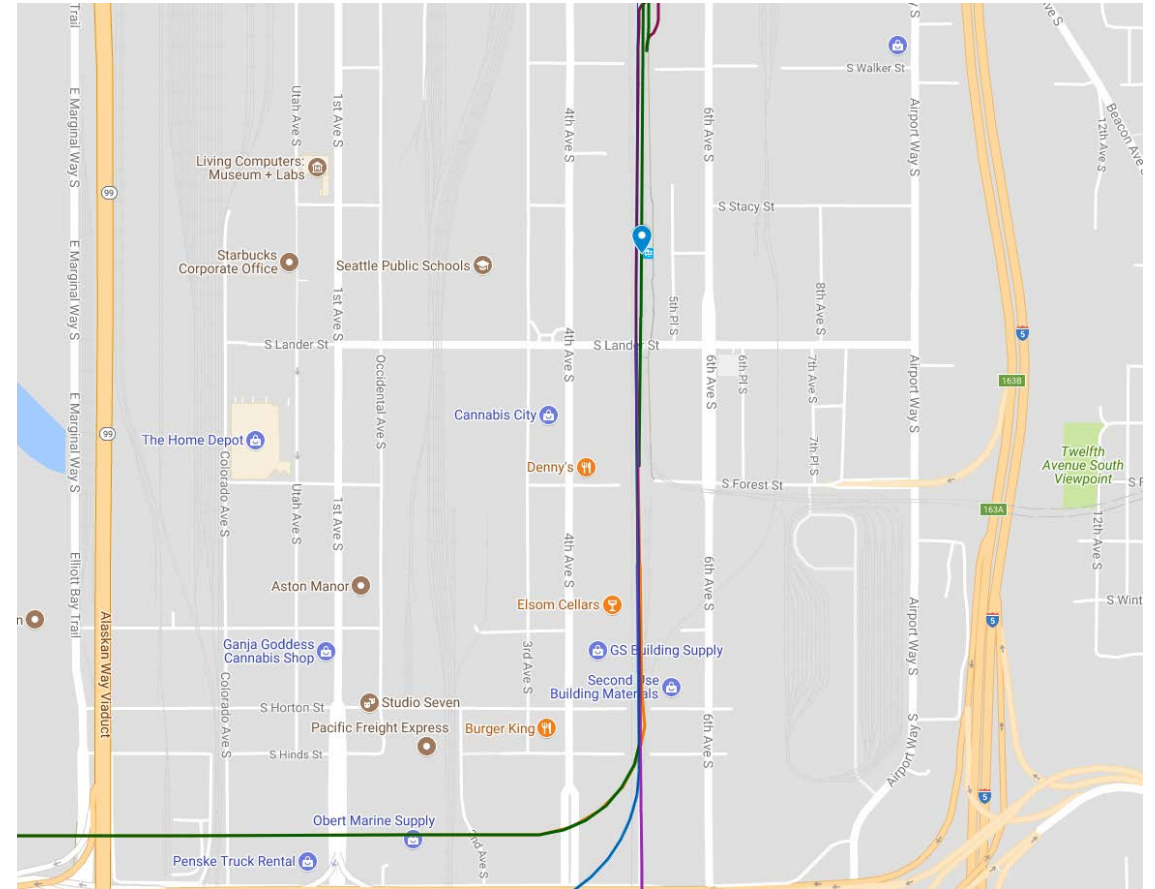


SODO Station

Study (in order of preference)

In the E-3 corridor east of current station, at grade with shared platform
First Ave

- Provide a transfer strategy for the various light rail and high volume bus lines that converge here - Eastside, SeaTac Airport, West Seattle, Tacoma
- Plan for bike share and other means to connect from station out into this important employment center
- Consider that buses in the E-3 corridor are connecting between employment areas and affordable residential areas to the south, and that this trend is increasing. Explore and use data on these jobs and housing connections.
- Consider that SODO is the current and interim light rail station that serves West Seattle

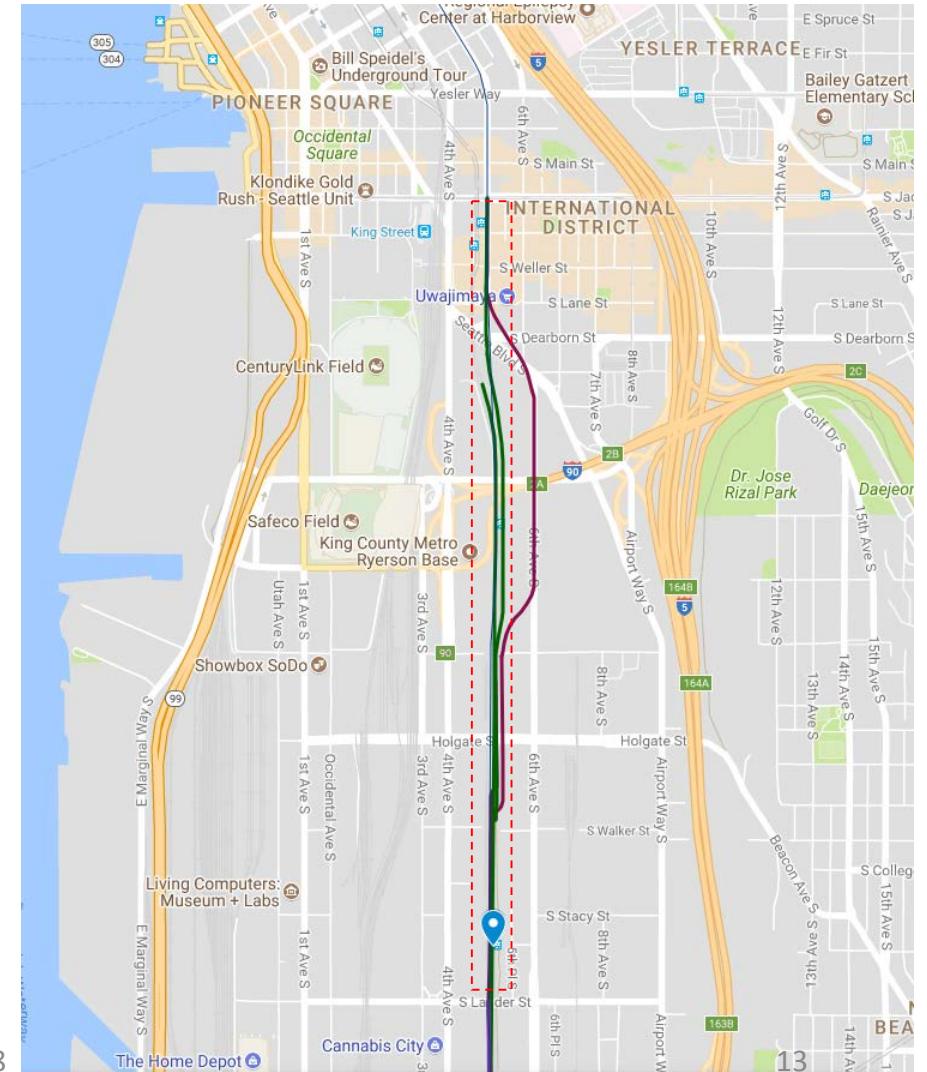


SODO to Chinatown ID Line

Study (in order of preference)

E-3 Corridor, at grade at south and below grade at north First Ave

- Continue to study E-3 and First Ave
- Place the line in a location that allows for the best solution for the Chinatown ID station.
- If the E-3 corridor is used then retain the bike trail in this right-of-way. If not possible then relocate it.
- Analyze carefully which streets might accommodate bikes
- Consider City bicycle investments to the bike network, including long-term proposal for bike share connections
- Study whether at grade pedestrian and bike improvements would be more appropriate and affordable than overpasses over the rail lines at Lander and Holgate. Walking or riding over the tracks is more cumbersome and less attractive. Weigh this with data on anticipated wait times at grade.
- Buses in the E-3 corridor are connecting areas to the south that provide more affordable housing to the jobs in Seattle, and this trend is increasing. Explore and use data on these jobs and housing connections.
- Provide a transfer strategy for the various light rail and high volume bus lines that converge here - Eastside, SeaTac Airport, West Seattle, Tacoma
- Consider that SODO is the current and interim light rail station that serves West Seattle
- Consider that SODO is an important transfer point for the 50, 101, 150 buses that serve the south end of Seattle

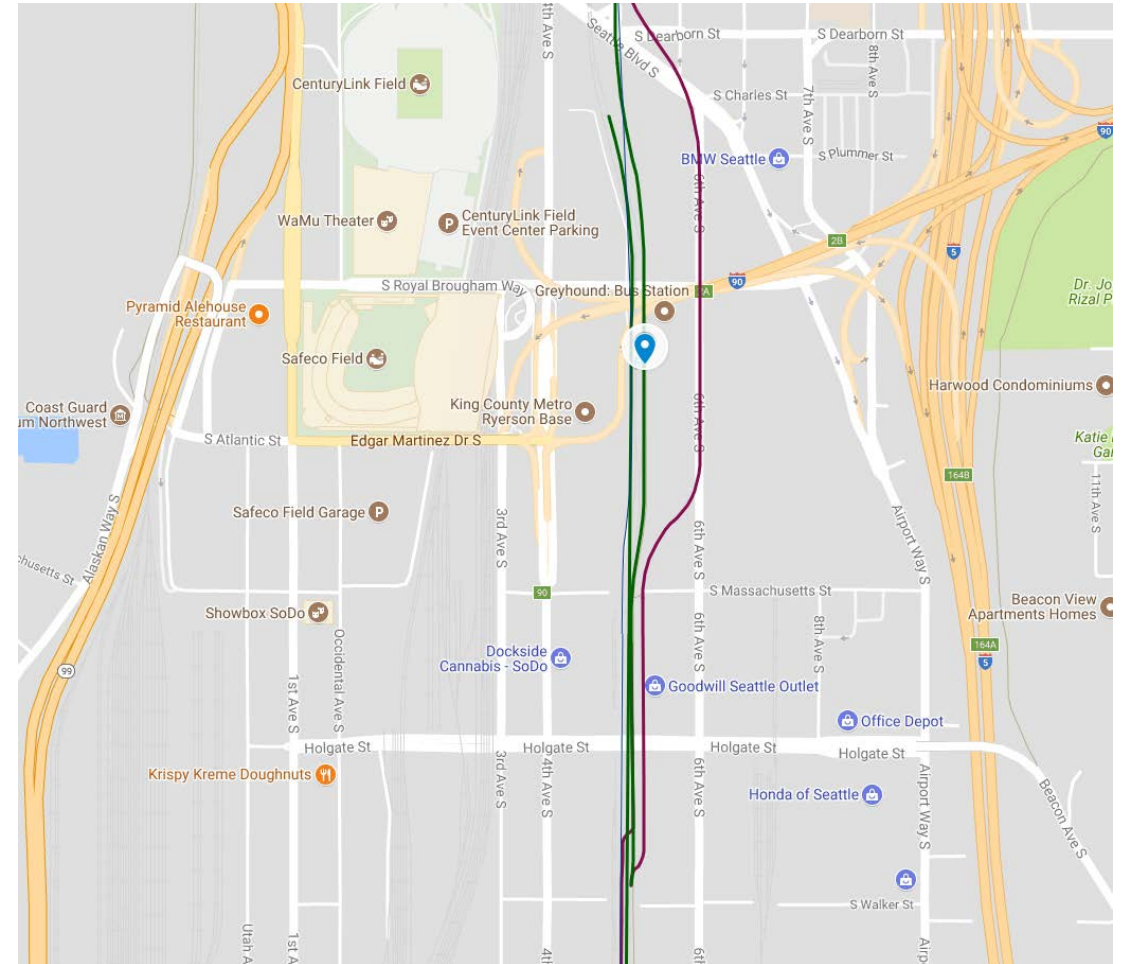


Stadium Station

Study (in order of preference)

Near the existing station, at grade with a shared platform
1st Ave location

- Strongly support locating a station that serves the stadiums for greater choice and connectivity
- Provide for transfers directly across one platform
- Connect the station with the existing stadium station as well as possible no matter where it's location
- Consider transfers to Greyhound
- Provide for food services/retail and restrooms at this station



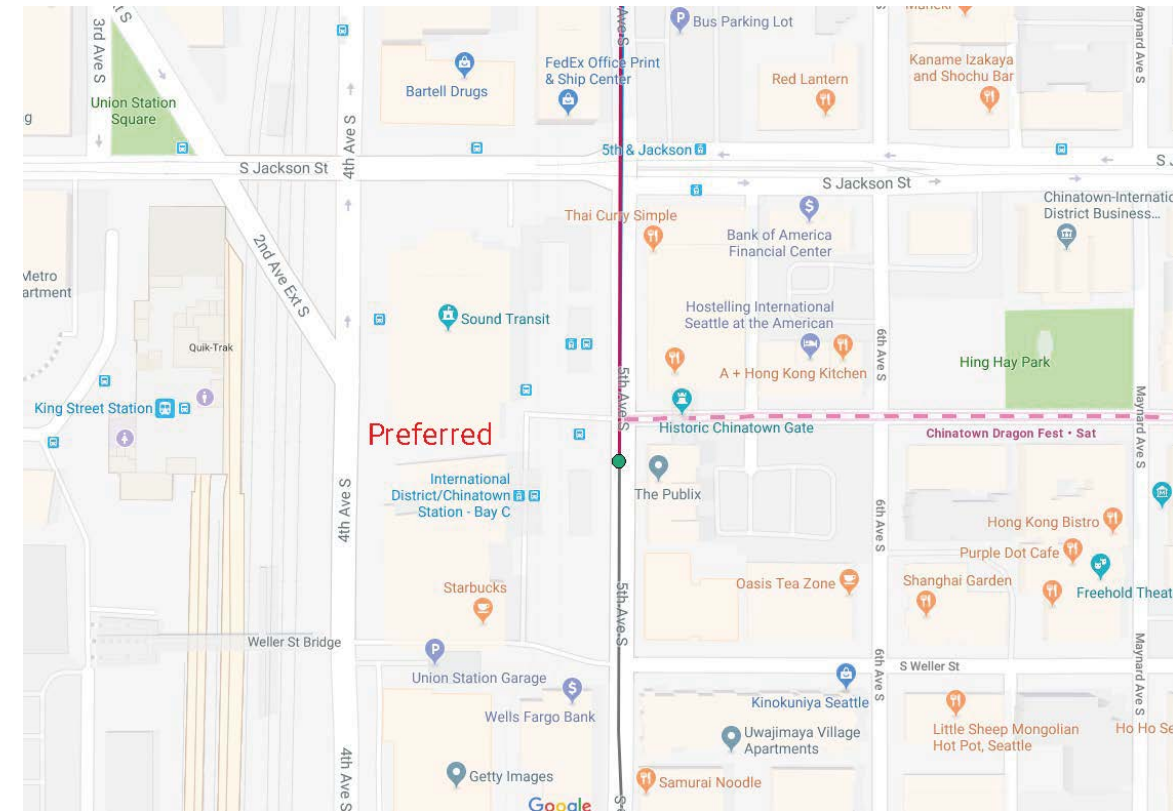
Chinatown ID Station (part 1)

Study (in order of preference):

4th Ave and Union Station

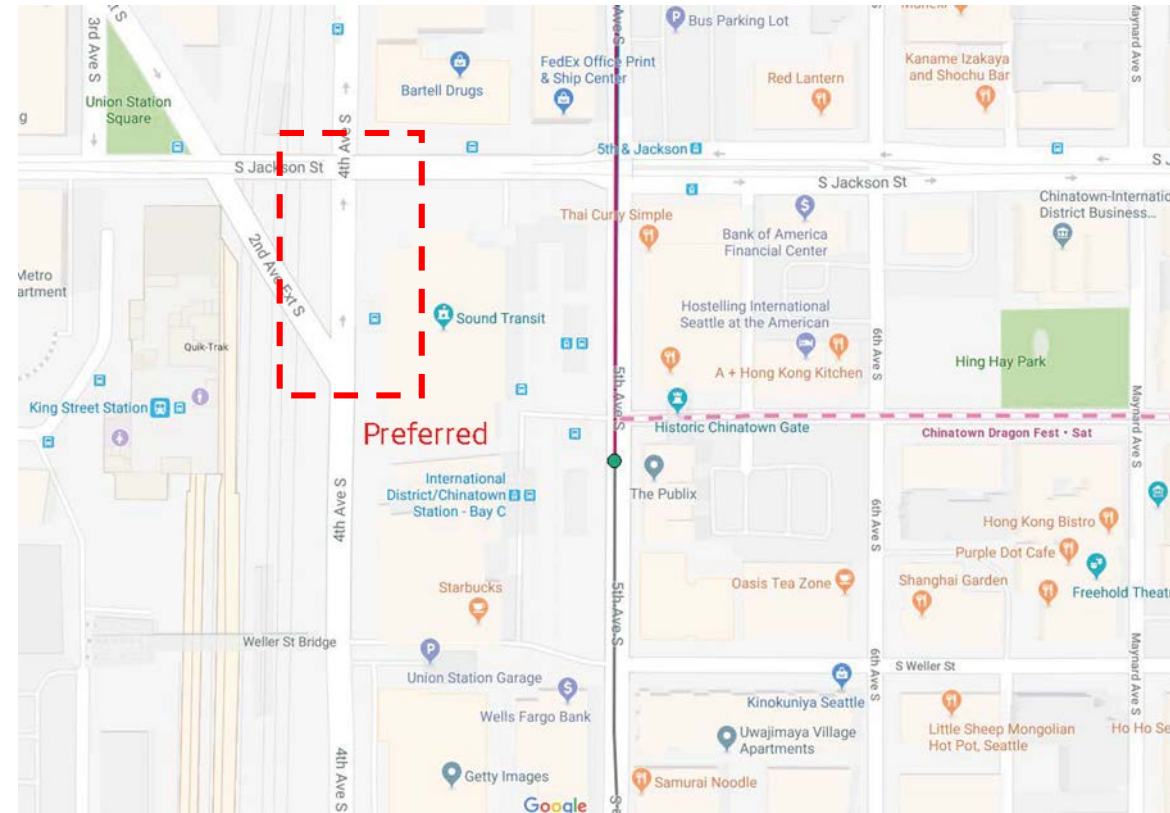
A location north of Jackson St

- Use DEIS and other data to weigh multi modal traffic impacts
- Support for using Union Station as the light rail station, which aligns more closely with its original historic purpose
- Create a connection between south end of Union Station to King Street station to enhance intermodal and neighborhood accessibility
- Recommend developing the Union Station and adjacent public open space to be a cultural hub as it reflects the communities desire for a central space. Recognize the potential to reconcile historic injustices to businesses and the community here.
- Make the most of the potential for culturally informed economic development. Given the regional draw of cultural events and amenities here the station is in an optimal position to support transit access.
- The City should consider investing in the 4th Ave alternative given the poor condition of the substructure.



Chinatown ID Station (part 2)

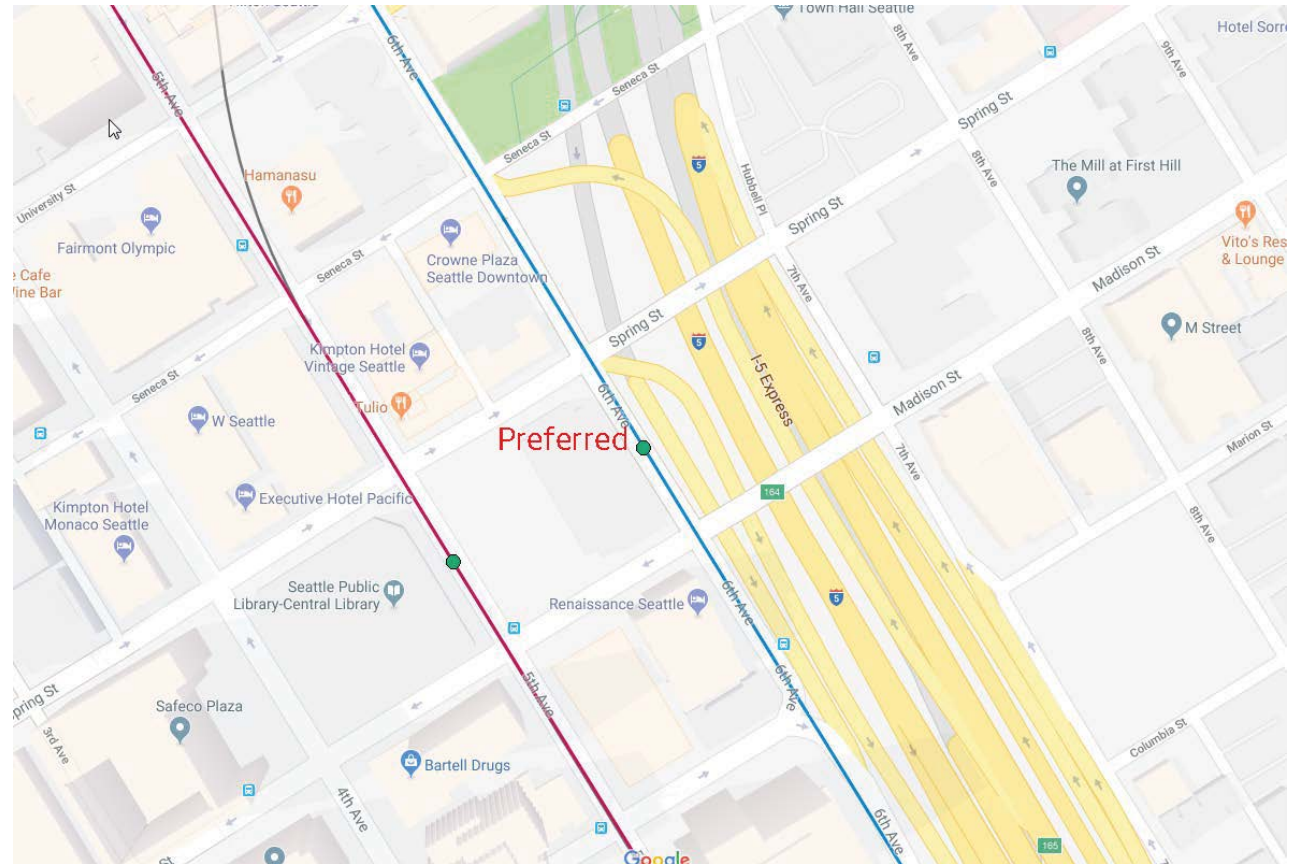
- A station in 5th Ave is the least optimal alternative due to disruption to the culturally significant, small local businesses and to traffic
- If the station must be located in 5th Ave, preference for a deep bore tunnel over a cut and cover station
- Advise against a deep bore tunnel with a station under the existing CID station because of the long distance to street level.
- Consider a location north of Jackson if the 4th Ave alternative isn't possible
 - Provide pedestrian tunnels under Jackson to connect to the CID station
 - One drawback of this location would be the long connection to the Sounder at King St Station
- Strongly recommend against any alternative that is in the Jackson right-of-way because of impacts to transit and traffic.
- Whether the station is located in 4th or 5th, carefully plan for as little disruption to local traffic as possible due to its location at hub between Central District, Beacon Hill and downtown.



Midtown Station

Study : 5th Ave near Madison St

- This location is closer to the Madison BRT stop between 4th and 5th than the 6th Ave location
- This location has less intense existing use of curb space
- Study construction of a pedestrian tunnel under I-5 to connect First Hill and its regional health care facilities and very dense residential population



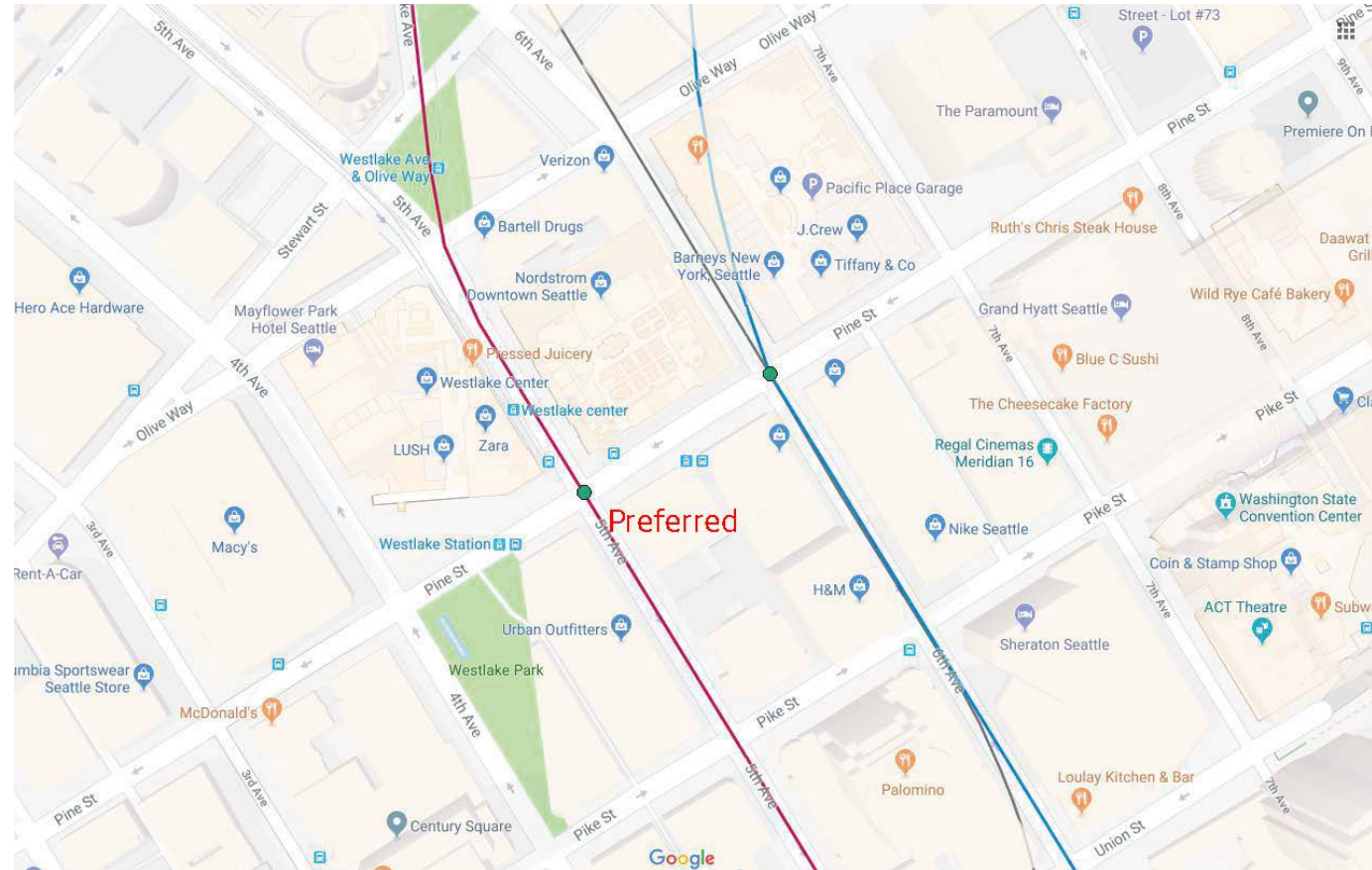
Westlake Station

Study (in order of preference):

5th Ave location

6th Ave location

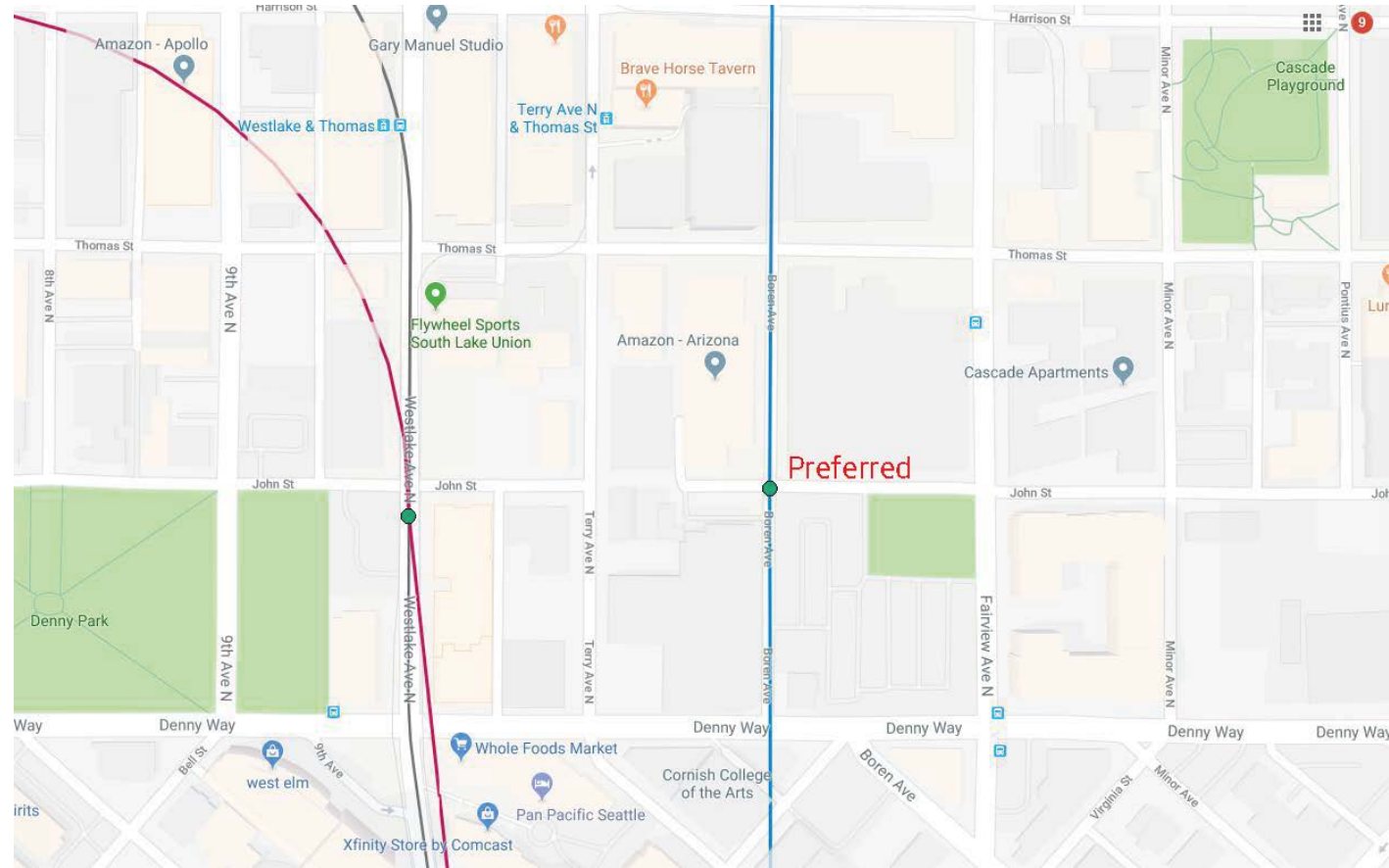
- 5th Ave will provide superior transit connections because it is closer to
 - the Link lines in the existing Westlake Station
 - 3rd Ave transit corridor
 - Buses on 4th and 5th that serve areas beyond the City to the north
 - SLU streetcar station at McGraw Square
- If along 6th Ave, provide accessible tunnel between existing and new stations



Denny Station

Study: Boren and John

- Serves upland Cascade residential neighborhood, which includes a community center and affordable and supportive housing
- Also serves lower areas of SLU to the west
- Recommend siting and designing the station to include access from lower elevation near Terry Ave.
- Explore providing a public assisted hillclimb with the station between Terry and Boren



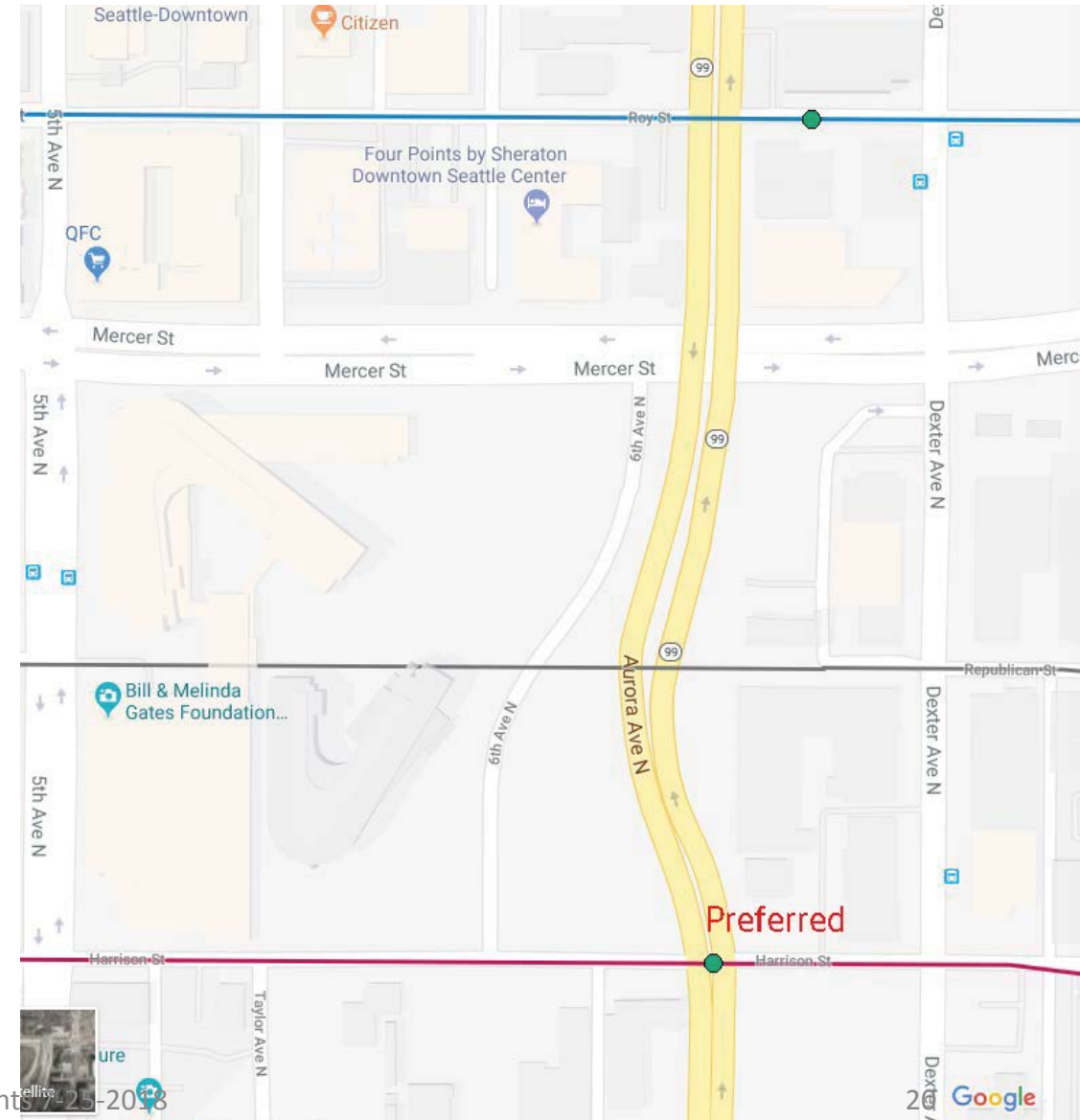
South Lake Union Station

Study (in order of preference):

Underground at Harrison on the west side of Aurora Ave N

Underground at Roy on the east side of Aurora Ave N

- North portal and reknitting of the grid in this vicinity included generous design of right-of-way to accommodate Harrison as a transit street
- Construction in Mercer would be increase congestion to even higher levels
- Roy will not connect across SR-99 and providing exits from a tunnel to both sides would be more difficult than locating at Harrison
- Zoning around Harrison would likely generate higher ridership
- Secondary preferences provide access to residents further north
- Provide east/west connectivity across SR 99 especially at Roy and other streets that will not be connected in the near future
- Study the additional complication and cost of running the tunnel between SLU Station and the Seattle Center Station diagonally instead of along just one road (mix and match)
- Provide and consider information on the future east west bus service along Harrison



Seattle Center Station

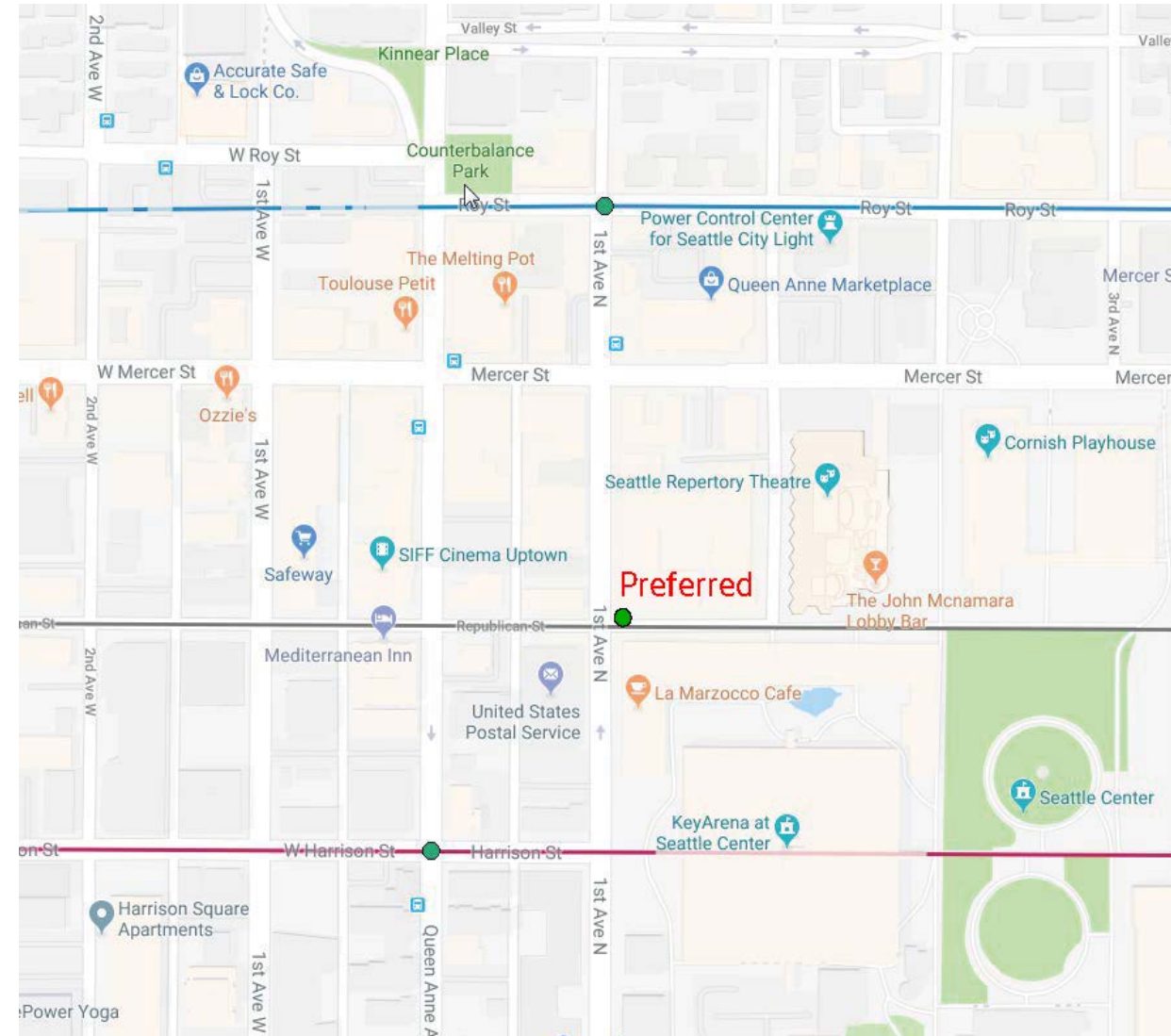
Study (in order of preference):

Underground at Republican and 1st Ave N

Underground at Roy

Underground at Mercer

- Harrison Street option is too far west given depth of tunnel under redeveloped arena.
- Consider universal accessibility between the station and the places that people will be trying to reach by light rail. This includes sidewalk grades and street crossings.
- It is not necessarily bad if people must cross Mercer and move through Uptown to access the station.

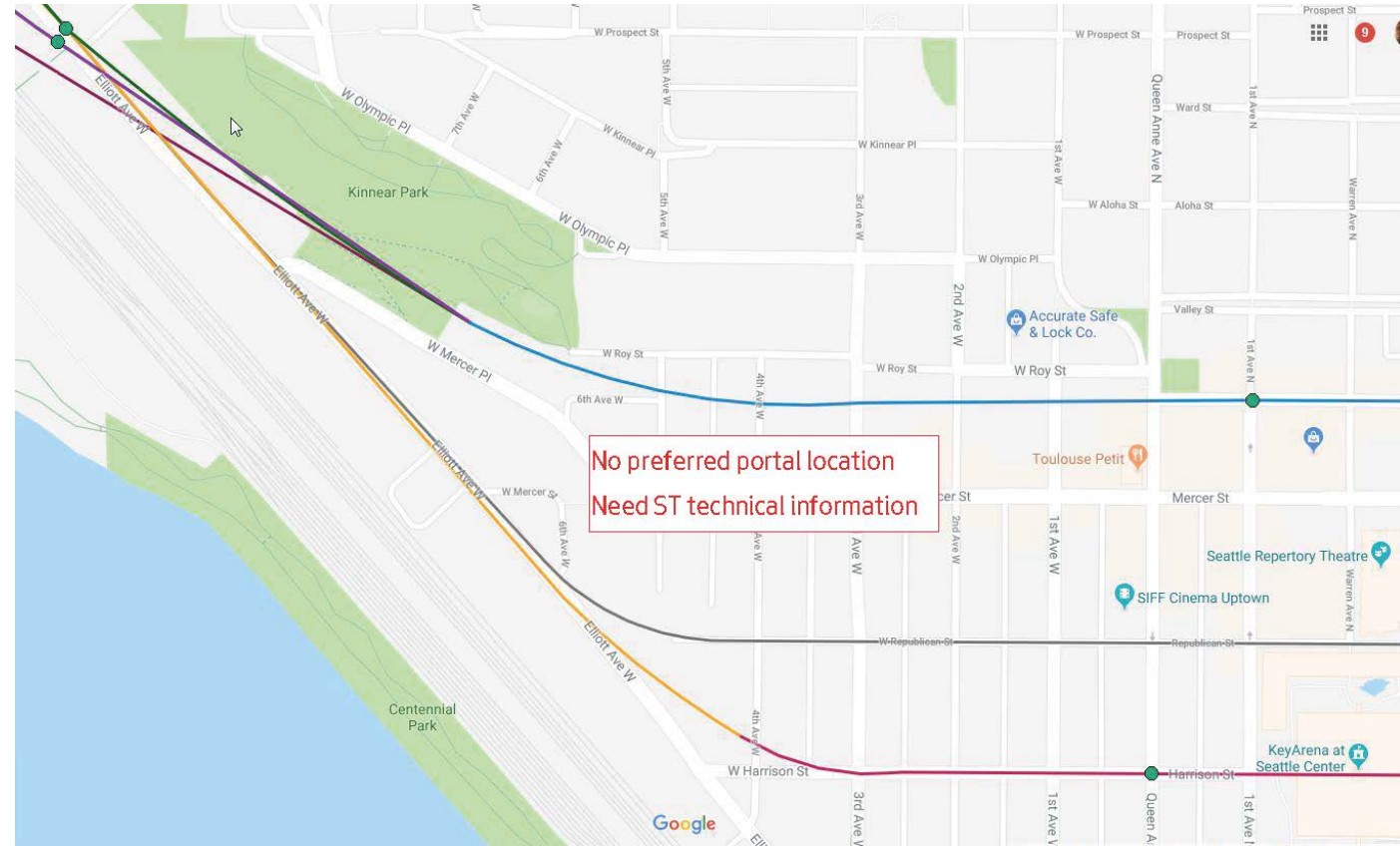


Seattle Center to Smith Cove Line

Study (in order of preference):

Tunnel under Republican and elevated along Elliott
All alternatives as needed to connect wherever the Seattle Center Station is located

- Need technical information from Sound Transit to gauge impacts of possible tunnel portal and guideway locations to buildings, park, and traffic

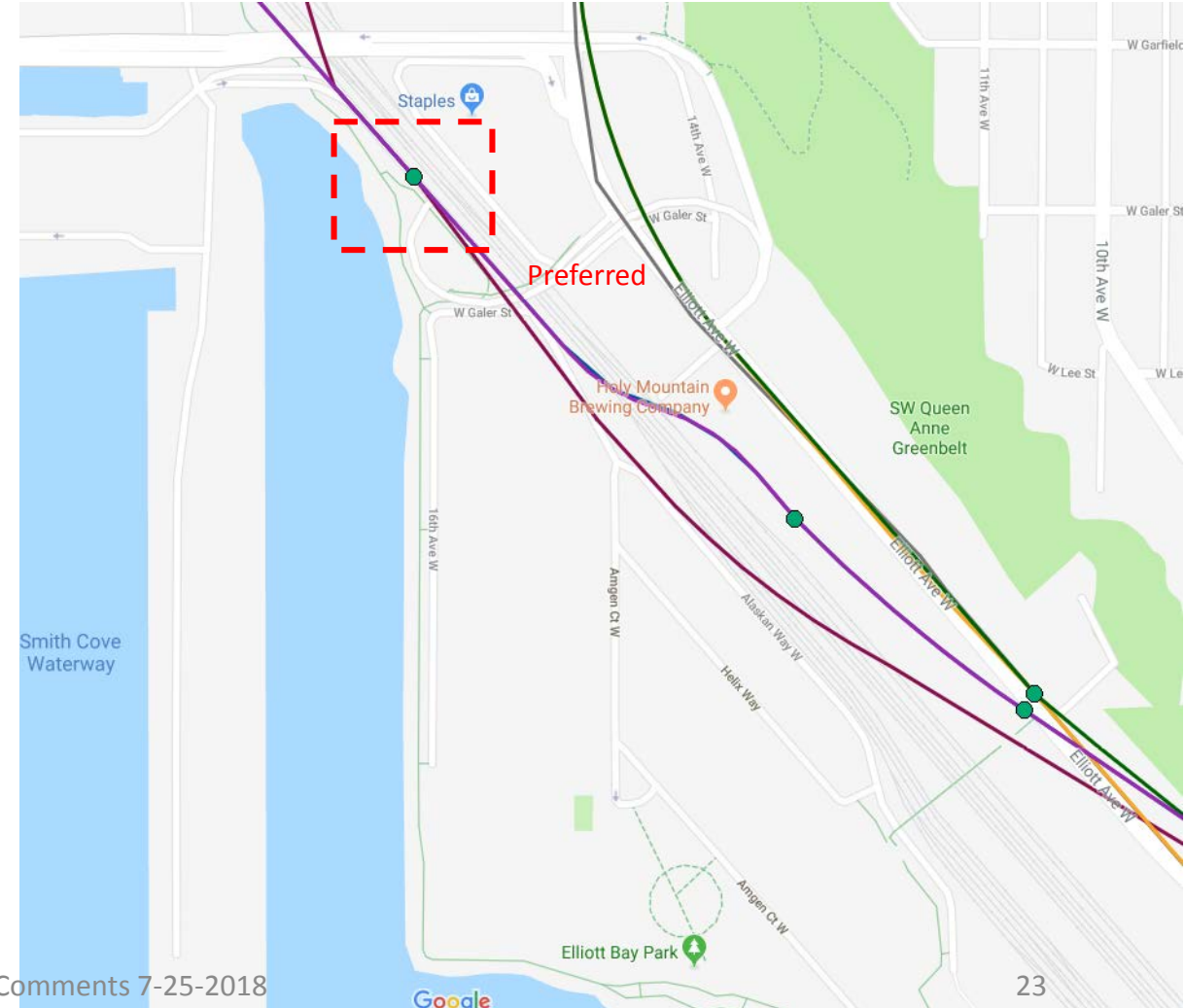


Smith Cove Station

Study, in order of preference:

- At grade at Alaskan Way W and North of W Galer St flyover
- Above grade at Alaskan Way W and North of W Galer St flyover

- Locate and plan the station to serve the cruise ship terminal
- Connect the station to the bike network
- Improve non-motorized connections from the station to Smith Cove Park and Expedia. Provide maps and diagrams to illustrate how the station connects to these community assets.
- Opportunities and likelihood of future residential and job density is higher to the north, including possible TOD at the Armory site
- Impacts to transportation of placing the line in 15th Ave are too high
- Locate station at grade so that the guideway can cross below the Magnolia Bridge
- Provide cost and visual analysis of alternatives for the line to cross below/above the Magnolia bridge. Include an alternative where the Magnolia bridge is removed.

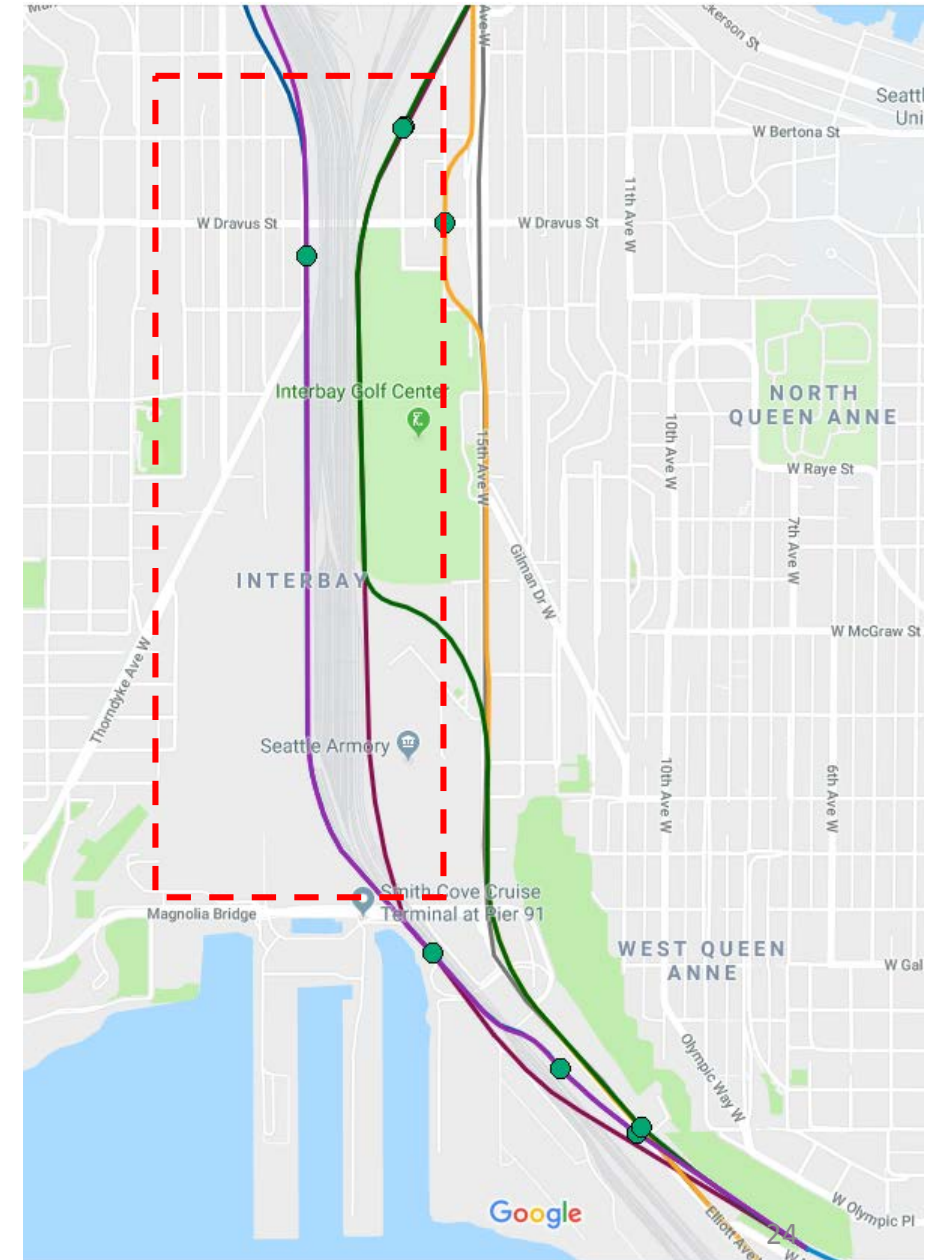


Smith Cove to Salmon Bay Line

Study (in order of preference):

- At grade, in a trench in or next to the BNSF right-of-way
- Elevated along the BNSF right-of-way

- 15th Avenue option poses too many impacts on transportation network
- Study placing the line at grade and/or in a trench along either side of the existing railroad right-of-way
- Fewer impacts by placing the line in the existing railroad right-of-way where surrounding areas are already impacted by trains
- Explore placing the line at grade, in a trench, as a more cost effective solution compared to an elevated guideway
- Provide grade separated crossings for east west cross streets
- Examine the possibility of making this a corridor for cyclists and pedestrians in addition to transit.
- Examine and update City plans for the non-motorized circulation network in this corridor.
- Study how the alignment will cross Magnolia Bridge
- Do not postpone City decisions about the future of the Magnolia bridge because the opportunities and imperatives for both the Smith Cove Station, Dravus Station, and guideways north of the Smith Cove Station are impacted by these decisions.

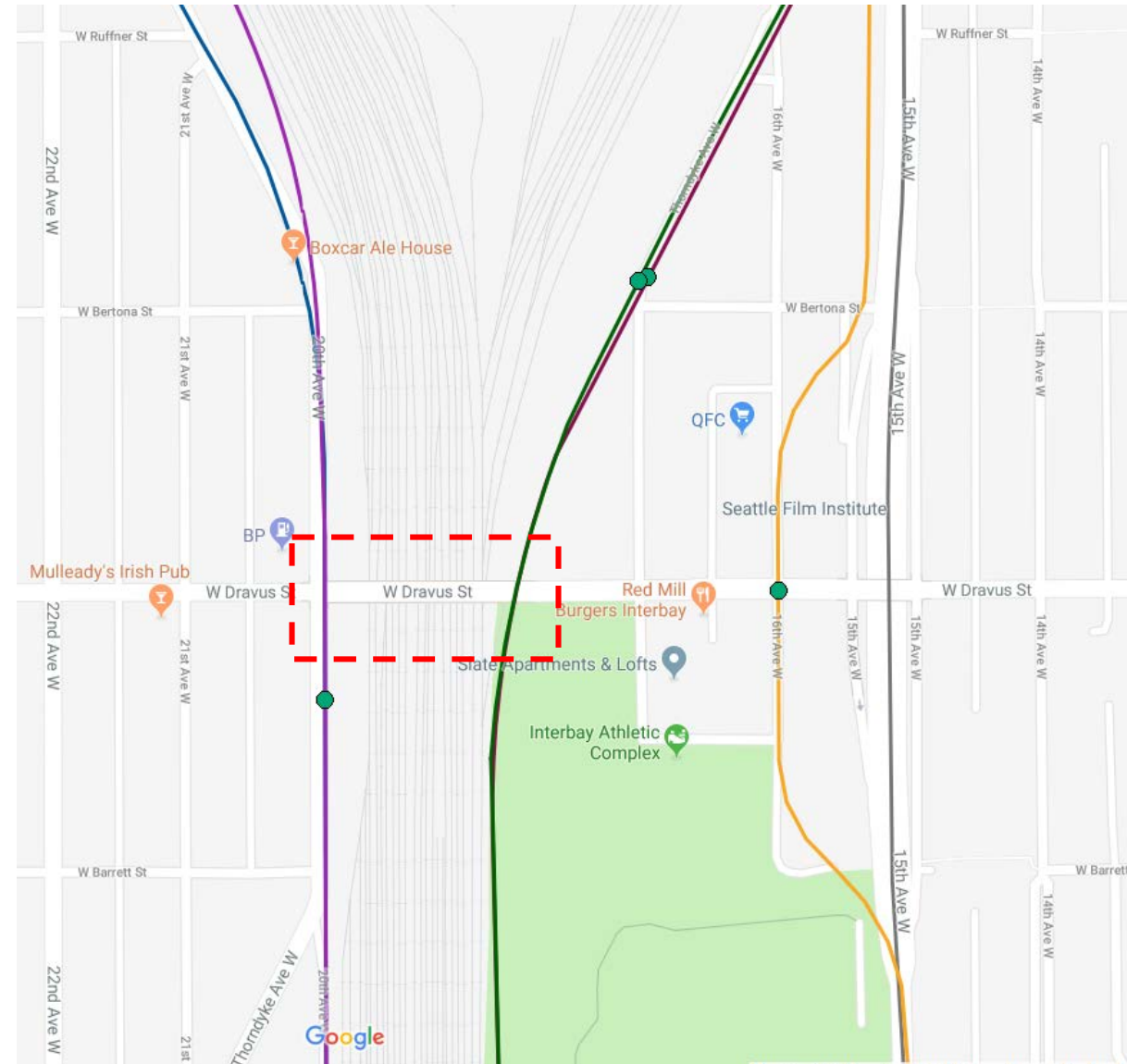


Dravus Station

Study (in order of preference):

- On Dravus in the BNSF right-of-way
- On Dravus between BNSF ROW and 17th Ave W

- Locate the station along Dravus and not a side street. Dravus provides the best access for all modes.
- Study locating the station in the railroad right-of-way in a trench below grade.
- Provide clear information on the determining factors and drivers for alternatives that Sound Transit finds most attractive.

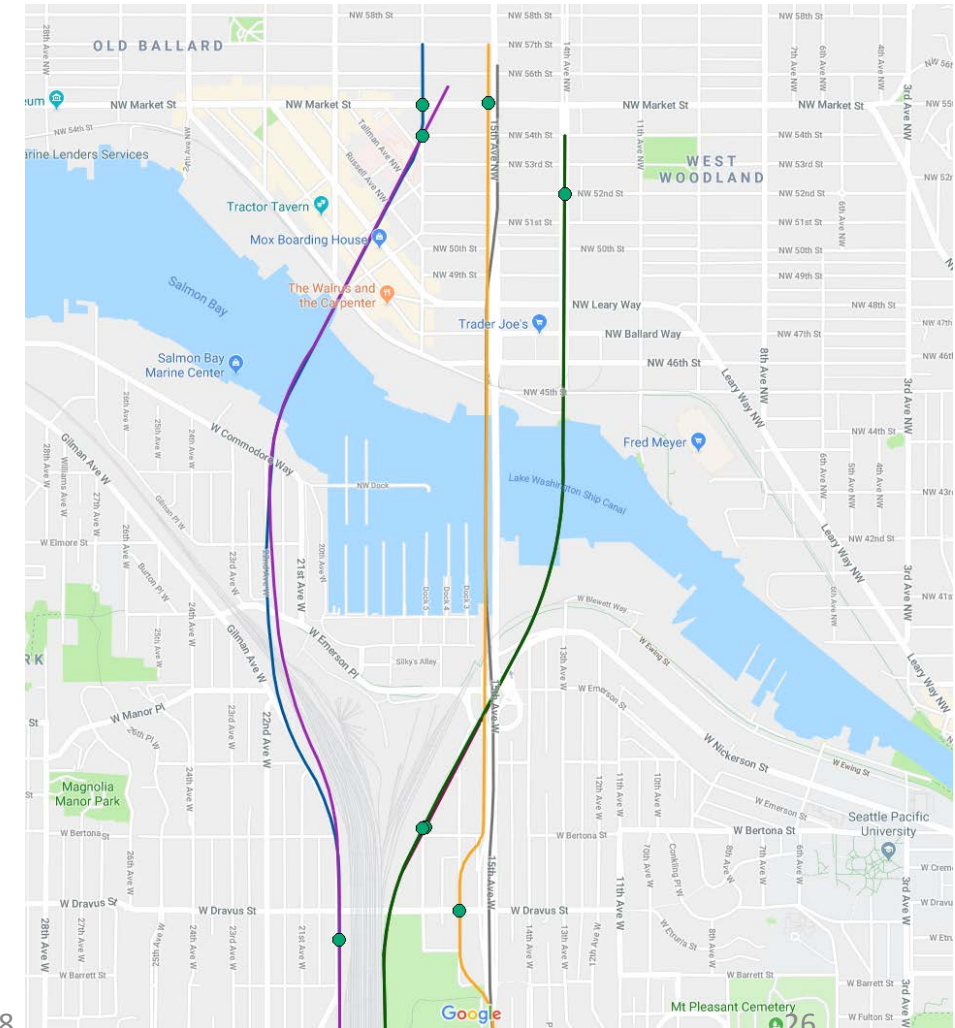


Dravus to Ballard & Salmon Bay Crossing

Study (in order of preference):

- Tunnel from Dravus Station to Market & 15th with underground station
- Tunnel from Dravus Station to Market & 17th with underground station
- Elevated line from Dravus to 15th & 54th or 56th with a new, multi-modal, fixed bridge in the current Ballard Bridge alignment and station above or at grade (new bridge carries current Ballard Bridge traffic, light rail, and non-motorized modes)
- Elevated line from Dravus to 14th & Market with a multi-modal, fixed bridge east of the current Ballard Bridge alignment (new bridge carries light rail and non-motorized modes)

- Sound Transit and the City should explore the idea of replacing the Ballard Bridge in conjunction with building a new transit bridge to consolidate construction disruptions and maximize investments
- A movable bridge is the least desirable alternative because of impacts to traffic and vulnerability to system disruption
- Any bridge type in any location should serve cyclists and pedestrians in addition to transit. The City should partner with Sound Transit in fully examining this idea.
- Any bridge type in any location should be complimentary to its surroundings and sensitive to its natural, cultural, and built context
- 15th and Market is good location for a station that can accommodate later system expansion
- Only a tunnel is acceptable in the core of Old Ballard because an elevated guideway would immensely impact the historic buildings and urban fabric
- In the 15th corridor, in a fixed or movable bridge scenario, study capturing the grade change heading north and placing the station at-grade at Market
- If a movable bridge is pursued provide the most technically advanced bridge to avoid service disruption
- If a fixed bridge is pursued consider visual impacts where bridge aligns in Ballard



Ballard Station

Study (in order of preference):

An underground station at Market and 15th

An underground station at Market and 17th

An above grade station at 15th and either 54th or 56th

An above grade station at 15th and Market

- 14th location is least desirable
 - Far from district core
 - Puts pressure to expand Urban Center eastward at the expense of industrial businesses and zoning, the rich urban fabric in this area, and public access to the water. There are better opportunities for Urban Center expansion to the north and west.
- 15th and Market are both good corridors for later system expansion compared to 17th, 14th, 52nd, 54th
- Station should be on or within a block of Market St. It is an important street for orientation and multi-modal connections.
- Consider TOD development along 15th south of Market St. An integrated station would have less impact to streets and the pedestrian experience.
- A below grade station would impact the right-of-way less and improve the developability of potential TOD.
- Consider that Market and 15th is transforming from auto-oriented to transit and pedestrian oriented. Potential for contributing to changing the nature of this location.
- Provide pedestrian crossings over 15th at all intersections near the station.
- SDOT should be analyzing short, mid and long term impacts and plans for the street grid in this area.

