



International Special Review District

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ISRD 23/25

MINUTES FOR THE MEETING OF TUESDAY, March 11, 2025

Time: 4:30 p.m.

Place: Hybrid Meeting

Board Members Present

Eric Chan (EC)
Heather Hargesheimer (HH), Chair
Kyle Jacobson (KJ)
Adrian Lam (AL)
Gary Lee (GL)
Jade Yan (JY)

Staff Present

Rebecca Frestedt (RF)
Maribel Stephens (MS)

Absent

Samantha Wong (SW), Vice-Chair

Key

BM Board member
AP Applicant
SM Staff member

Chair Heather Hargesheimer called the meeting to order at 4:33 p.m.

ROLL CALL

031125.1 MEETING MINUTES

9/10/24	MM/SC/AL/KJ	5:0:1	Approve: AL, EC, GL, KJ, HH Abstain: JY
9/24/24	MM/SC/AL/EC	5:0:1	Approve: AL, EC, GL, KJ, HH Abstain: JY
11/26/24	MM/SC/AL/GL	4:0:2	Approve: AL, GL, KJ, HH Abstain: EC, JY
12/10/24	MM/SC/GL/AL	4:0:2	Approve: AL, EC, GL, JY Abstain: KJ, HH

031125.2 PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment at the meeting.

BOARD BRIEFING

031125.31 South Downtown Hub Plan

Presenters:

Leda Chahim, Deputy Executive Director-Government & Community Relations, Sound Transit

Sloan Dawson, Project Manager of South Downtown Hub project, Sound Transit

Emily Perchlik, Design Manager of South Downtown Hub project, Consultant

Lizzie Moll, Seattle Department of Transportation

Leda Chahim (LC) and Sloan Dawson (SD) introduced the project and the partnership with SDOT.

Lizzie Moll (LM), SDOT, spoke about incremental implementation and community involvement. Worked with community on visioning to create a well-designed transportation plan to serve the community and region, building upon past transportation plans.

SD said partnership between Sound Transit (ST), City of Seattle and King County emerged from ST Board resolution that identified the preferred alternative for the Ballard Lightrail extension that included the adjusted location of Midtown Station and Dearborn St stations. This emerged as a result of further studies from Draft Environmental Impact Study (DEIS) and concerns from community about impacts from construction duration and locations.

ST Board called for interagency partnership to look at how new locations interface with the neighborhoods that they will serve and to recognize past neighborhood planning processes.

SD described geographic boundaries and location of ISRD boundary. He said scope intends to create urban design framework and transportation, considering station locations and advancing community calls for activation of Union Station, and advance more detailed plans for the building with integration of plans for new stations and Sounder platform improvements. They are developing concepts for improving connections. He noted there is an opportunity to leverage improvements that the community has been asking for a long time.

SD went over timeline that showed major public engagement milestones, starting with a review of past plans with community partners to identify major goals and objectives into themes. Worked to translate community themes to develop project scenarios in inform concepts for station areas.

SD went over community engagement and outreach process and tools to help people visualize what's envisioned (see presentation slides for details). A major aspect of this is making everything available in multiple languages at workshops and maximize accessibility into the process. He acknowledged inconsistency in implementation across agencies and past harms.

SD summarized the development of eight Community Themes and Common Strategies (see detailed presentation slides).

AL asked how community input is being incorporated.

SD said the whole approach is asking community what they want to see and working to address that correctly. He spoke about ways in which alternatives have been introduced based on outreach and community feedback. In some instances, raised more questions to bring back to community at April workshop.

Emily Perchlik (EP) went over the first two workshops. The first focused on connections between neighborhoods. She spoke about overlay transparencies on a map to show adjustment and options at a given intersection. Discussions included improving connections at S. Dearborn and connections at BNSF railway and Sounder platform. She said overall there was support for converting 2nd Ave Ext to public space and calming traffic on S. Dearborn.

EP said the second workshop focused on placemaking, including Union Station activation, station entry and connections between 5th St., 6th St. and S. King St. There was interest in larger scale interventions, starting with smaller improvements. She described “features cards” that represent programming that people would like to see. There was a lot of focus on Union Station activation and also a lot of support for additional pedestrian lighting. (See presentation slides for more details.)

EP presented map of Inscape Arts and Cultural Center/INS Building and potential S. Dearborn Station options and preferences, including a proposal to realign streets to create more of a neighborhood hub and calm traffic. Zoning was not part of the discussion at this point. Participants identified affordable housing, parks and greenspace as top preferences. There was strong support for realignment of the streets S. of Dearborn to further align with the neighborhood and connect to entry to Chinatown neighborhood.

Synthesis and Next Steps

SD went over assembling concepts into planning scenarios, and further analysis that is needed to inform plans, such as traffic studies and potential traffic diversion into to the neighborhood. See presentation slides.

SD said traffic analysis and modeling suggested concept of converting 2nd Ave Ext into a “people street” wouldn’t necessarily cause gridlock, but included assumptions about King County Metro service that may differ from Metro’s future transit plans. Focus shifted on streetscape improvements and narrowing street, rather than closure.

Discussion of streetscape of 5th Ave S. and S. King Street and potential to support community uses, including festival streets and further refinement of S. Dearborn Street improvements.

Lizzie Moll (LM) mentioned team of City and ST staff meeting frequently to advance coordination and discuss trade offs of different concepts with a goal of developing and endorsing a plan later this year.

HH thanked the team for the detailed presentation and time spent putting it together.

There was question about the Board's role at this time. Discussion about the opportunity for Board members to provide feedback on scope to date and identify any items that are cause for concern or would further advance the goals of the District, example: pedestrian orientation and proposed uses.

KJ commented on the code reference to supporting foot traffic and discouraging auto-oriented uses. Mentioned potential conflicts between supporting pedestrian movement and impacting traffic flow.

SD said Sound Transit has shifted from full right-of-way to traffic calming and pedestrian interventions. People may love the idea of creating a plaza, but not support diverting cross traffic down through the neighborhood.

HH it is helpful to understand what ST is hearing from the community, how it informs concepts and planning and how decisions are being made, or not made.

EP referenced short or near-term goals and long-term strategies.

AL asked if discussion has informed decision-making on station location selection?

EP said that right now they are identifying elements that can happen prior to station construction and that won't be duplicative or create multiple disruptions to the neighborhood (like streetscape realignment).

AL said it wasn't clear from the presentation the differentiation between short term and near term projects. He asked how ST weighs the ownership of parcels that would be involved, since some would need to be acquired.

SD said identified parcels shown are areas that would be impacted during station construction. As part of this, if the station was to be located in either of these two areas, here's the footprint that would be impacted and how it would be integrated into the development.

JY referenced online versus in person responses and input. Interested in understanding where the numbers were coming from. Comment on the difference between survey and in-person responses. Not sure if the responses are as representative of the neighborhood and who is or is not able to make it to an event. They encouraged ST to capture as much representative input as possible.

EP said in-person responses were coming from a vision board at a past workshop and went over the participation numbers of different types of engagement.

HH appreciated variety of modes of outreach, large and small scale of meetings, including door to door. Emphasized the importance that people are being heard.

SD said they're never going to reach everyone in the neighborhood, but trying to reach a number of different modalities to get people to engage and to have input inform content.

Focus on not just quantity, but also quality. Open house content will be available to view through April in Union Station.

AL how did studies lead to option A of the preferred station location?

SD the station location decision of the ST Board preceded all of this. It's part of what prompted this work. Important to clarify that South Downtown Hub is a partnership that is distinct from the Ballard Link Extension. There are very strong opinions about where the station should be sited in the community and that's understandable. South Downtown Hub looks at supporting environment/context. This work has helped inform, for instance, where station areas can be located. All of this emerged from strong community reaction to draft Environmental Impact Study (DEIS).

HH importance of understanding what factors are a given and why?

KJ said in the future the Board will be looking at uses and finishes and shared JY's comments about input. Feedback from relatively small groups and influence these large decisions.

031125.4 Staff Summary and Board Business

There was no Board Business or no administrative reviews since the past meeting.

Adjourn at 6:24