

November 22, 2006

Sound Transit

Sounder Train: Tacoma to Lakewood

AIA Recommendations for the Sounder Train route:

The AIA committee of architects met recently to discuss and evaluate the various options now under consideration, including two Sound Transit options and two AIA architect alternatives. Sound Transit staff and engineers met with architect representatives and City of Tacoma personnel over the last two weeks in two design sessions to review the architects' proposals.

The concepts that Sound Transit indicated that they are reviewing include:

1. Sound Transit Alternative 2 ( South Tacoma Way with a modified Hood Street loop road)
2. Sound Transit Alternative 3 (through Star Ice)
3. AIA Alternative B (grade separated over Pacific Avenue and south of South Tacoma Way.
4. AIA Alternative F (transition to 27<sup>th</sup> Street in a rail line trench)

After extensive discussion, the **AIA recommends**:

1. **AIA Alternative F** as the unanimous choice for the rail route. Cost may be an issue and would require working with potential funding partners to accomplish the goals of this alignment (This may include the City, State, Federal, and other possible partners).
2. That if cost becomes insurmountable, given a reasonable amount of time to secure additional funding, the architects would consider supporting **Sound Transit Alternative 3**. There are a number of urban design factors that are listed in the design criteria section following which may adjust this alternative.
3. That the other two concepts, Sound Transit Alternative 2 and AIA Alternative B, were unacceptable solutions. They would pose too great of an impact on the urban area around Pacific Avenue and 26<sup>th</sup>/South Tacoma Way.

A number of **design criteria** shaped the discussion which led to the above conclusions:

1. The selected alternative needs to effectively respond to the six community goals listed in the concept reviews. (These were submitted at the City Council Study Session.)
2. The urban grid must be maintained to provide future opportunities for development, particularly along the property edge relationships along existing rights of way.
  - a. When the road is lowered, no retaining walls should be used, but instead the grade should slope away from the edge of the right of way.
  - b. When the road is raised, retaining walls should be used to provide the maximum opportunity for future development adjacent and connected to the street and sidewalk.
3. The historic Old 99 Highway (South Tacoma Way and 26<sup>th</sup> Street) needs to be maintained as a key arterial in the area.
4. The design must contribute to the City and the neighborhoods affected by the solution, providing maximum opportunity for future adjacent uses.
5. The air rights over the tracks should be preserved for future development by adjacent property or to provide the opportunity to link uses over the track.
6. The concept should provide a future opportunity to lower the track behind Freighthouse Square and at D Street to provide an easy future grade separation at D Street.
7. The design should use innovative structural solutions that respect the consequences of the construction of the track route through the urban area.
8. A “Design Review Board” should be established with members from the City, the neighborhood, Sound Transit, AIA, and others as deemed appropriate to review the Sounder and urban design solutions.
9. The AIA is committed to continue to work with the City, Sound Transit, and the neighborhood to suggest and develop urban design solutions for the area around the selected route of the Sounder Train.

The AIA appreciates the opportunity to collaborate with the stakeholders on this significant element that will affect the south downtown area for generations. Thank you.