Question #1: Please provide more information on current intermodal conflicts at the station, such as collision rates and other current barriers to access for different modes.

Answer #1:

During the Alternatives Analysis Phase of the project, the project team will establish baseline conditions at and around station areas. Data will be collected on traffic patterns in the area and how vehicles are accessing the station, as well as data on pedestrian and bicyclist access patterns. Additionally, the project team will look at transit use in the station area. A Baseline Conditions Summary will be developed that will identify station area access issues, needs and suggested improvements from the Sounder Stations Access Study and identify relevant local and regional transportation, land use and economic development goals and objectives.

Current barriers that likely exist today in the station areas include incomplete pedestrian networks like sidewalks and bike lanes. For example, the Lakewood City Council identified the need for completion of the street grid East of Bridgeport Way and on the North side of St Clare Hospital, and connections to the Springbrook neighborhood between 47th street and Bridgeport Way (page 48). Their comprehensive plan’s Transportation Element calls for adding curb ramps, crosswalks, lighting and other improvements along Kendrick Street, connecting the commuter rail station to Lakeview School (page 124). Similarly, page 187 of the Tacoma Comp Plan’s Transportation Element recommends completing sidewalks along S. 58th and S. 60th to connect to South Tacoma Way.

Other barriers may include infrequent transit from neighborhoods to the Sounder station or bus stops that offer inadequate weather and safety protections and are underutilized as a result.

Question #2: Please provide more detail on potential parking facilities that may be added to the station.

Answer #2:

The emphasis of the improvements will be on pedestrians, bicyclists and transit users. If additional parking is identified as a need, then the team will study options to increase parking. Options could include identifying and leasing underutilized parking lots in the area or it could involve the construction of an additional parking lot. However, it is unlikely that the demand for
parking would necessitate a multi-story parking structure and that type of investment will not be prioritized.

**Question #3:** The application states that the scope also includes “the development and implementation of an external engagement strategy, including public engagement activities for targeted outreach to underserved communities in the project area.” Please elaborate on this element and the purpose of this engagement as it relates to the project.

**Answer #3:**

The project team and consultants will create and implement a Public Involvement Plan describing the methods and tools to be used to engage the community and stakeholders during Phase 1: Alternatives Analysis. The plan will be updated at every Phase of the project and will be consistent with Sound Transit’s Title VI Program and SEPA and NEPA regulatory requirements.

The team will create a Stakeholder Advisory group to help inform the types of improvements to analyze and recommend for further study. The Stakeholder Advisory group will include community and business leaders including representatives from neighborhood groups and nearby social service providers.

For community outreach, two open houses will be held that will also have an online component to reach more community members. Material will be translated into multiple languages to make them more accessible. Additionally, project staff will be available at local fairs and festivals to provide project information to the community – both through Q&A and via printed materials.

The project will also focus outreach efforts to underserved communities including low-income communities, people of color, limited English proficiency persons, as well as immigrants and refugees. Specific outreach tactics are flexible and will be informed by stakeholder interviews. Outreach activities may include briefings to social service providers and community organizations and/or staffing informational booths.

**Question #4:** Please provide more information regarding how the improvements will connect to existing bicycle/pedestrian networks to provide safe access.

**Answer #4:**

The baseline data collected at the beginning of the project will identify and map out the existing pedestrian and bicycle networks serving the station(s) and any missing links. The team will develop a set of evaluation criteria to evaluate the performance and effectiveness of each set of Access Improvement Alternatives developed. Individual evaluation measures the team anticipates using will address the following categories:
• Effectiveness: The extent to which each alternative solves the stated access issues for the station area.

• Potential Transportation Impacts: Conduct qualitative impact of each alternative based on existing LOS and volume to capacity ratio (V/C) for five (5) locations. Future year over year analysis required for NEPA documentation, including full travel demand forecasting, will only be performed on the preferred alternative as part of Phase 2.

Regional and Local Planning Goals and Policies: Assess how each alternative supports, and is consistent with Sound Transit, regional, and local planning goals and policies via a high-level and concise analysis.
• Equity: Assess how each alternative benefits or burdens historically marginalized groups, including people of color, low-income people and immigrants. Benefits is primarily assumed to mean improved access to transit. One tool for analysis could be the Racial Equity Analysis Toolkit that Sound Transit is in the process of developing, as of January 2020.

• Capital and Operating Costs: Develop high conceptual-level cost estimates to estimate the range of cost in alternatives, including capital cost, right-of-way cost, offsite mitigation, and operating and maintenance costs. The Consultant will utilize recent cost information provided by Sound Transit for similar facilities and compare costs to available budgets for construction and operations. Identify cost risk factors such as hazardous materials, escalating materials cost, schedule and project delivery methods.

Environmental Existing Conditions: Assess potential impacts to the natural and built environment within the project study area of the Access Improvement Alternatives for the station area.

A number of locations where the pedestrian and bike networks could be improved at and around each station have been identified in local comprehensive plans, and the project team will likely either build on these findings, or identify the same shortfalls in their own assessment.

Examples are included in the responses to Question 1, above.