

CITY COUNCIL STUDY SESSION ITEM

SUBJECT:

East Link Update: City staff will update the Council on the scope of analysis and a schedule for the coming months for several new downtown Bellevue East Link alternatives. The evaluation is being conducted to inform an anticipated late February/early March decision by the City Council and a March decision by the Sound Transit Board of Directors concerning a single preferred alternative for light rail routing and station locations for the downtown Bellevue (Segment C) portion of the East Link project. Subsequently, Sound Transit plans to complete environmental review for the project. A final East Link alignment alternative for downtown Bellevue and other East Link segments will be decided upon by the Sound Transit Board of Directors once the final environmental impact statement (FEIS) is published in late 2010.

This update will also provide an overview of recent City contracted efforts related to East Link.

STAFF CONTACT:

Goran Sparrman, Director, 452-4338
Bernard van de Kamp, Regional Projects Manager, 452-6459
Transportation Department

FISCAL IMPACT:

N/A

POLICY ISSUES:

This update intends to inform Council of continued efforts to evaluate downtown Bellevue light rail routing alternatives since the Sound Transit Board of Directors' May 2009 identification of a Locally Preferred Alternative.

As discussed during the November 16 Council meeting, new alternatives have been recommended for study in downtown Bellevue. A Sound Transit Tunnel Peer Review suggested consideration of a 110th Avenue NE tunnel alternative, named "C9T". Later, a Sound Transit Value Analysis workshop and the At-Grade Peer Review Panel both suggested new at-grade alternatives. Alternative C9A would be an at-grade alignment along 110th Avenue NE. Alternative C11A would be an at-grade alignment along 108th Avenue NE. An additional elevated alternative was also suggested along 114th Avenue NE by Councilmember Wallace.

On December 10, 2009 the Sound Transit Board of Directors directed Sound Transit staff to evaluate the following new downtown Bellevue East Link alternatives:

- **110th Avenue Tunnel (C9T)** - Beginning at the intersection of 112th Avenue and Main Street, C9T would be routed on the south side of Main Street to a tunnel portal just east of 110th Place. It would then enter a cut and cover tunnel under 110th Avenue NE. A subway station would be placed under 110th Avenue NE straddling NE 4th Street. The northerly tunnel portal would be located in the median of NE 6th Street between 110th Avenue NE and 112th Avenue NE. The line would then continue eastward elevated across I-405 on the north side of NE 6th Street

- The **110th Avenue NE at-grade alignment (C9A)** would follow the same path as the C9T tunnel alternative described above in an at-grade configuration. The station would be located on NE 6th Street between 110th Avenue NE and 112th Avenue NE.
- The **108th Avenue NE at-grade alignment (C11A)** would be routed on the south side of Main Street between 112th and 108th Avenues, with a station between 110th and 108th Avenues, then the median of 108th Avenue NE to NE 6th Street, then onto NE 6th Street with a station at the Bellevue Transit Center. After the Bellevue Transit Center station, the line would continue on NE 6th Street with an elevated crossing of I-405.
- **114th Elevated (C14E):** Beginning at 114th Avenue and Main Street, this alternative would be elevated over 114th Avenue NE to a station located on the west side of I-405 between NE 4th Street and NE 6th Street. This alternative would then cross I-405 in the vicinity of NE 6th Street.

Sound Transit and City staff briefed the Downtown community and Hospital District on these alternatives in early December.

Evaluation of these new alternatives will be largely complete by the end of January. The evaluation will include a screening level analysis of several key factors including: cost; ridership (walk catchment area, connections for transit patrons, and forecast ridership); traffic operations (traffic simulation and animation); visual and urban design to illustrate stations and structures; construction effects and risk; and an assessment of each alternative's consistency with city land use and transportation plans. Staff plans to discuss the results of this screening level analysis in detail with the City Council and the broader community in late January and early February. These discussions will take place in advance of Sound Transit Board of Directors decisions.

The Sound Transit Board of Directors will review the information in February and March before selecting one alternative as their downtown Bellevue preference. This preferred alternative will then be advanced for completion of preliminary engineering and into the final Environmental Impact Statement. A final decision for the downtown Bellevue segment and the rest of the East Link project will be made following issuance of the final environmental impact statement in late 2010.

DIRECTION NEEDED FROM COUNCIL:

- Action
- Discussion
- Information

BACKGROUND/ANALYSIS:

On February 23, 2009 the Council selected a preferred East Link alignment and recommended it to the Sound Transit Board of Directors for its consideration. This decision was made after several months of intense Council deliberation and extensive public input, and after two years of detailed project work and a year of policy deliberation through the Bellevue Light Rail Best Practices effort. On May 14, 2009 the Sound Transit Board of Directors identified a preferred alternative for the East Link project. This preference, and all other alternatives that have been studied to date, will continue to be evaluated in the East Link Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) that is expected to be complete in late 2010. Concurrently, the preferred

alternative will be advanced through preliminary engineering, which is also expected to be complete by late 2010.

The Sound Transit Board of Director's preferred alternative Motion of May 2009 includes several components that require City action by early 2010. The City is expected to:

- Develop a financing plan with Sound Transit for a downtown tunnel alternative;
- Join Sound Transit in a peer review of the downtown at-grade alternative (C4A Couplet);

Additionally the City is actively participating in preliminary engineering including:

- Jointly evaluating a south Bellevue B3 side running alternative (modified 112th Bypass Alternative), which is consistent with the Council's preference; and,
- Consider an alternative 124th station design.

On October 12, 2009 Sound Transit staff presented an update to Council on the preliminary engineering design process, including sharing designs for a South Bellevue side-running option ("B3S"), a recently developed 110th Avenue NE tunnel alternative ("C9T"), Spring District station design options, and a new D2A "north hybrid" at-grade alignment in the Bel-Red corridor. Council provided initial feedback on the design options and expressed strong support for continued analysis of the new C9T tunnel option.

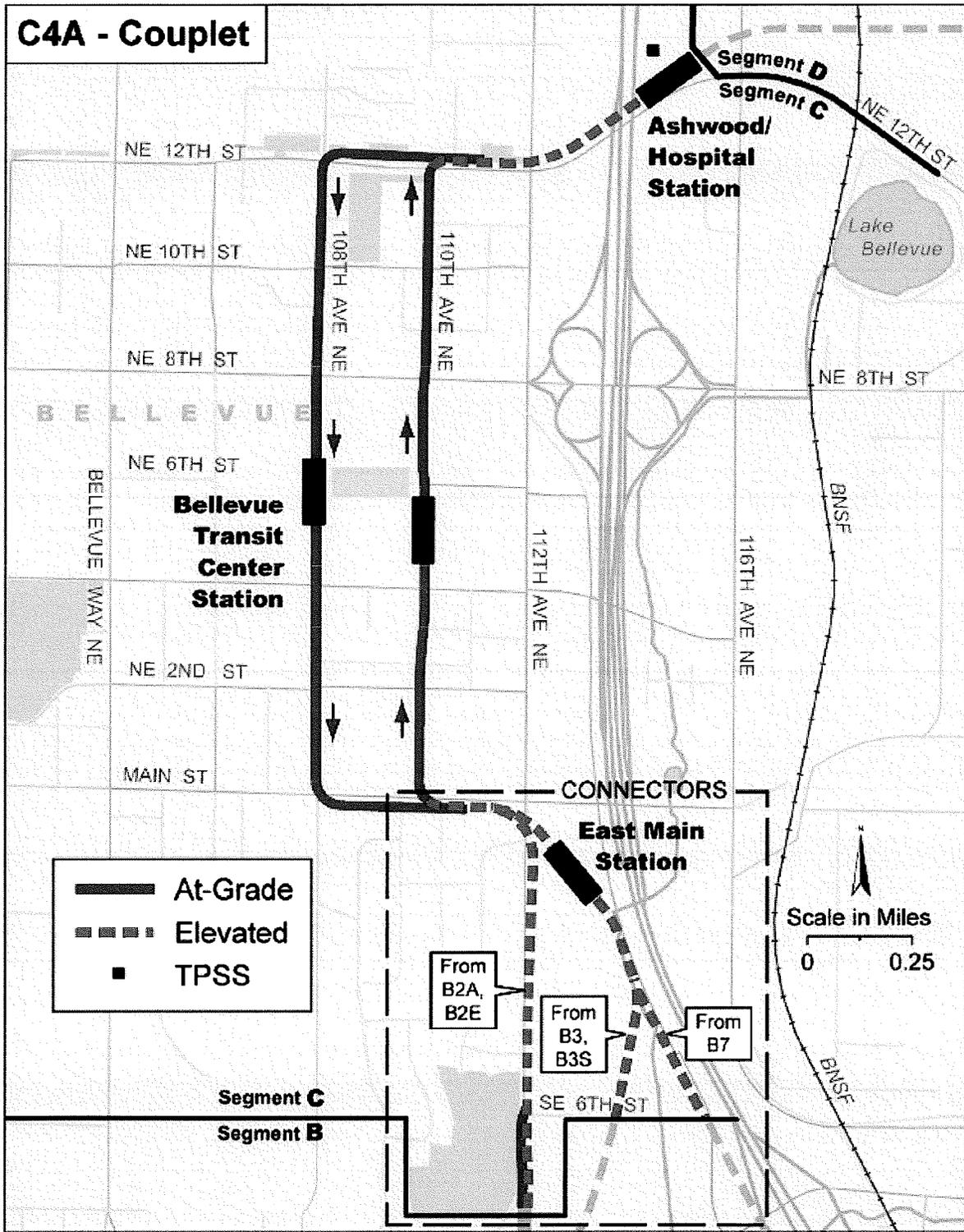
On November 16, 2009 Sound Transit staff presented an update to Council that provided a cost estimate for the 110th Avenue NE Tunnel alternative (C9T) and discussed two new at-grade alternatives (C9A and C11A described above). They also noted that a supplemental environmental impact statement is being considered for the project. The documentation required to complete environmental review of the project will be reassessed by Sound Transit and the Federal Transit Administration following the identification of the downtown Bellevue preferred alternative.

In early December Mayor Degginger requested that Sound Transit study the C14E alternative (Attachment 2). On December 10 the Sound Transit Board agreed to the request. Attachment 3 is a letter from Sound Transit to the City articulating their intent to study C9A, C11A, C9T, and C14E.

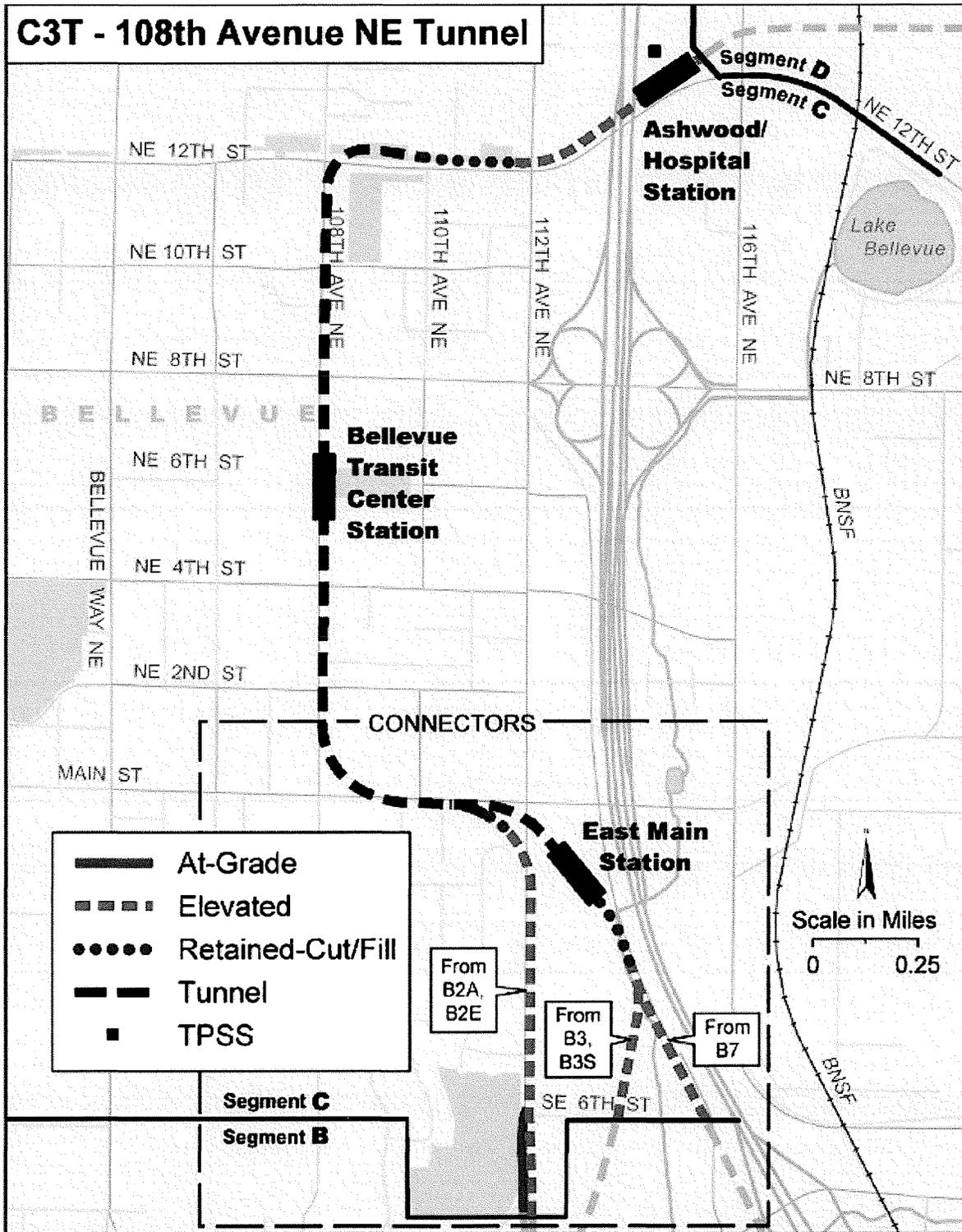
ATTACHMENTS:

- 1) Downtown East Link alignment alternatives map
- 2) Degginger-Earl December 3, 2009 letter
- 3) Sound Transit response letter to Bellevue's letter

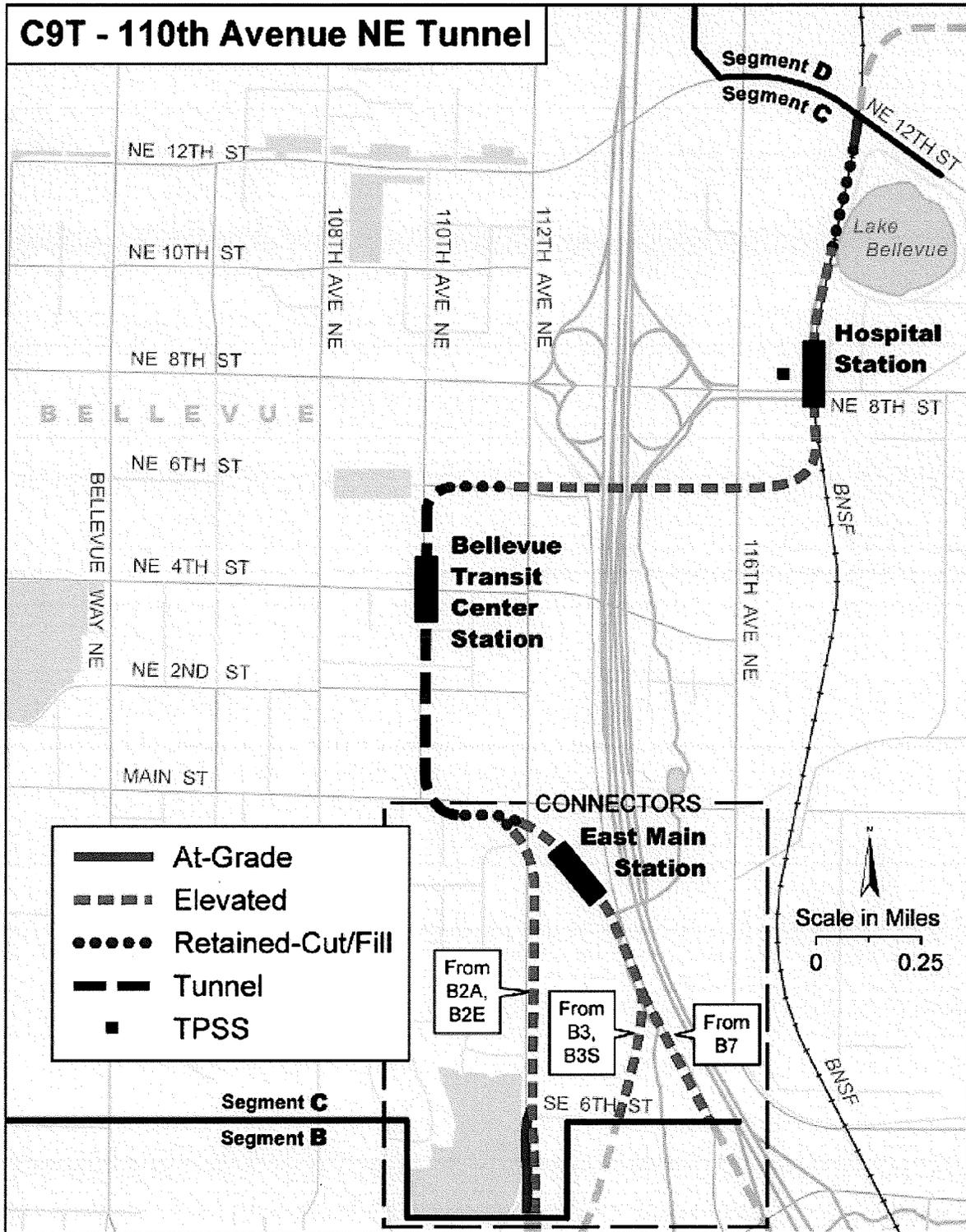
C4A – Preferred Alternative



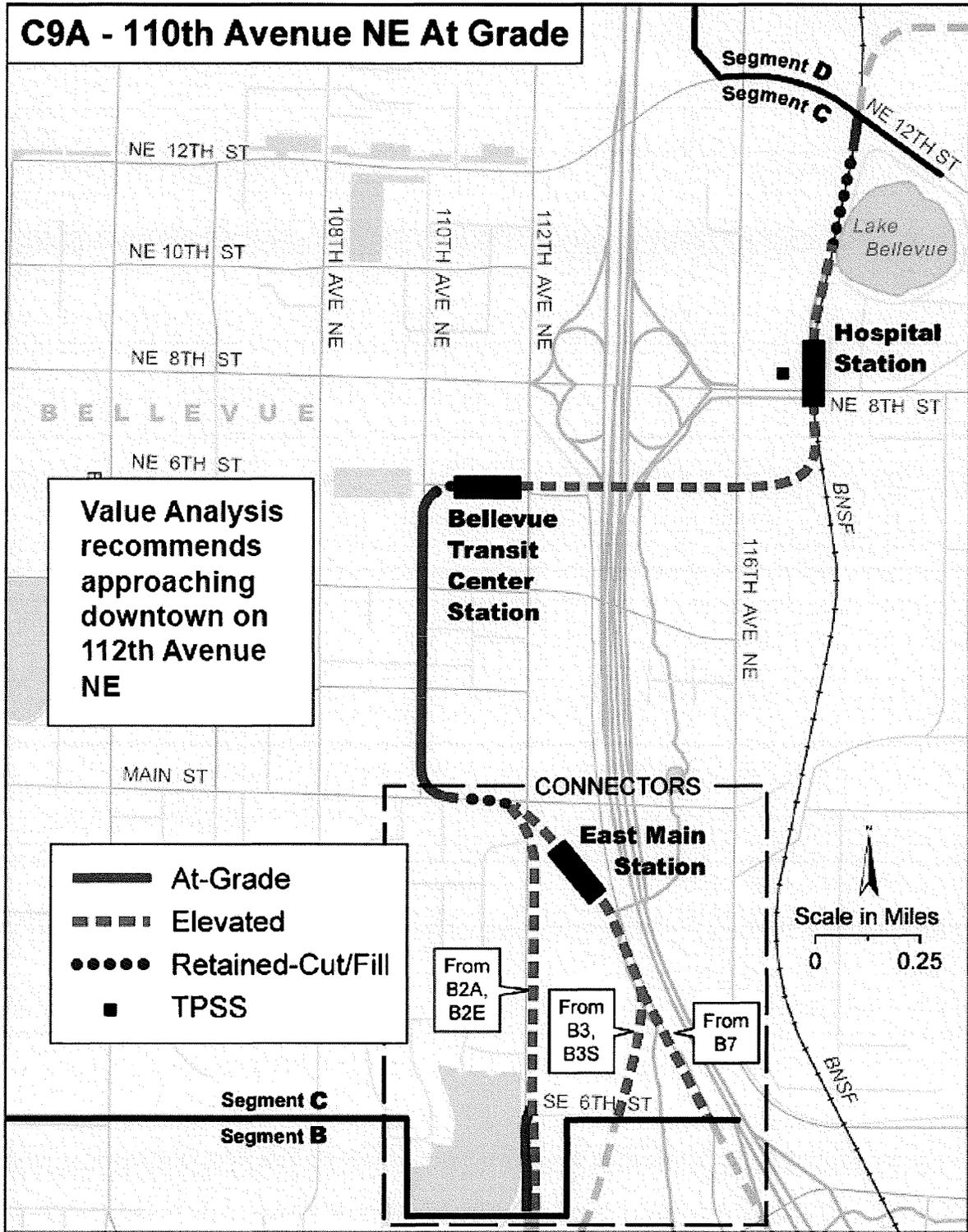
C3T – Future Consideration



C9T - 110th Avenue NE Tunnel



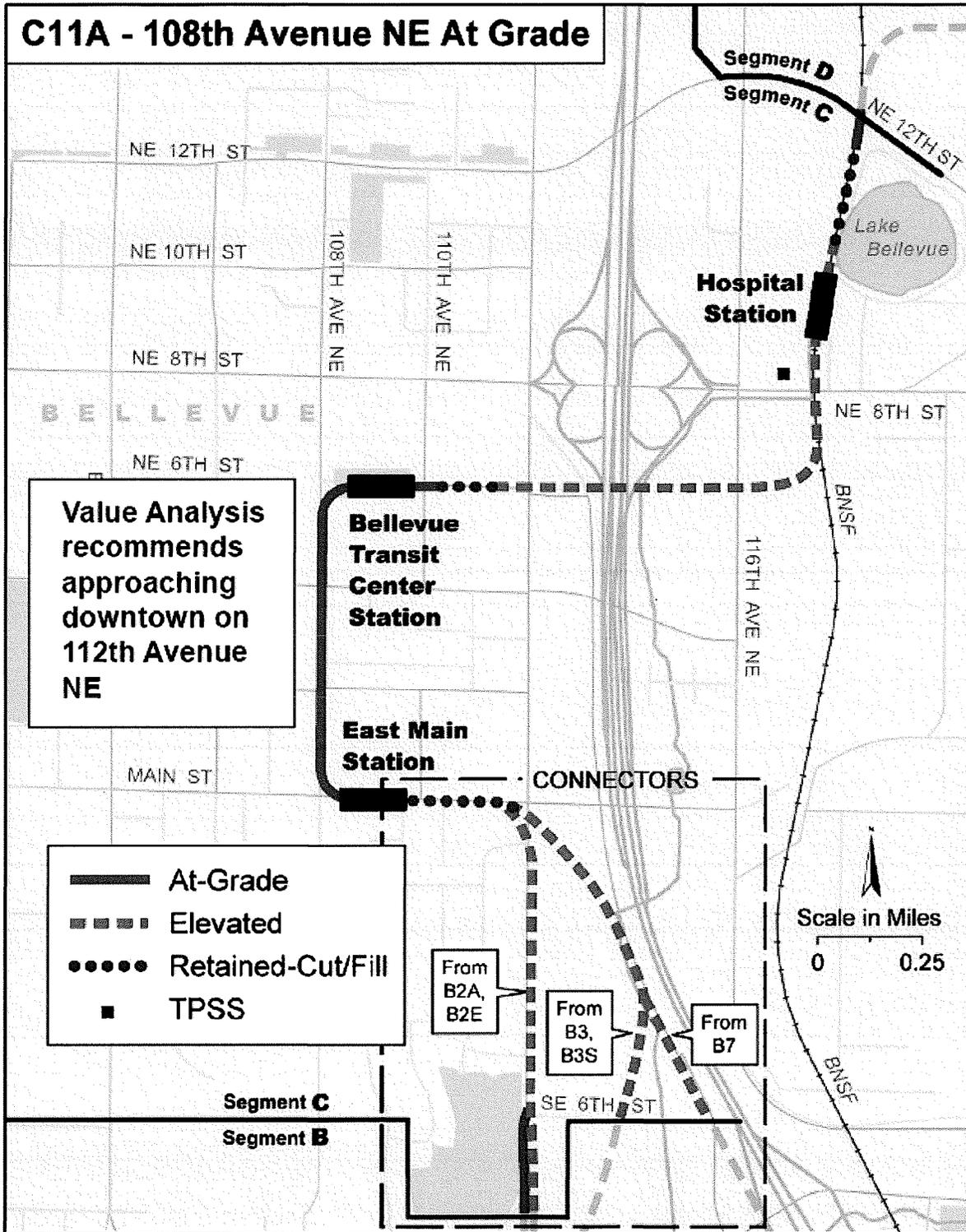
C9A - 110th Avenue NE At Grade



Value Analysis recommends approaching downtown on 112th Avenue NE

- At-Grade
- - - - - Elevated
- Retained-Cut/Fill
- TPSS

C11A - 108th Avenue NE At Grade



Value Analysis recommends approaching downtown on 112th Avenue NE

- At-Grade
- - -** Elevated
- Retained-Cut/Fill
- TPSS

From B2A, B2E

From B3, B3S

From B7

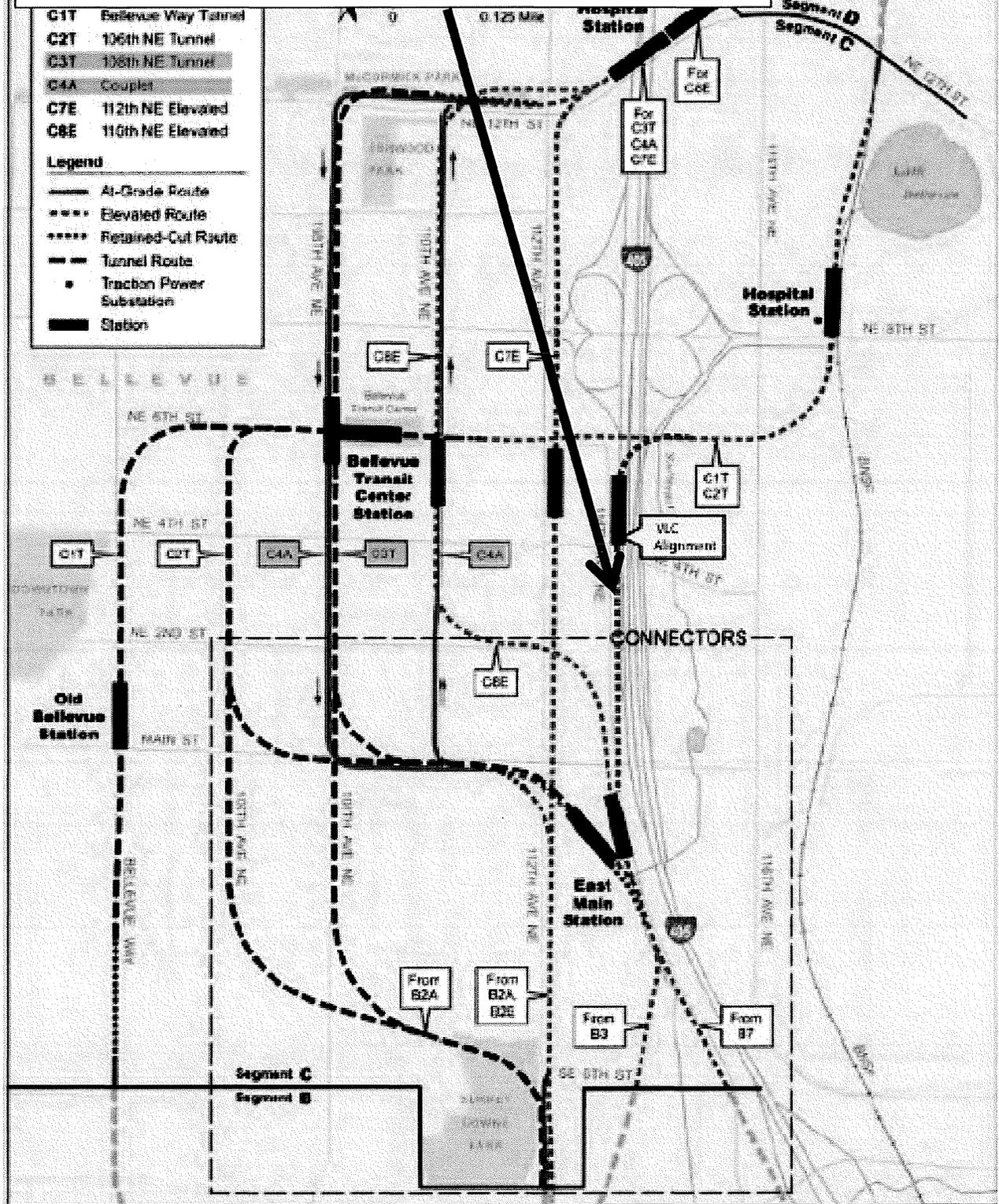
Scale in Miles
0 0.25

C14E - 114th NE Elevated with NE 6th St. Crossing

- C1T Bellevue Way Tunnel
- C2T 106th NE Tunnel
- C3T 108th NE Tunnel
- C4A Couplet
- C7E 112th NE Elevated
- C8E 110th NE Elevated

Legend

- At-Grade Route
- - - - - Elevated Route
- · · · · Retained-Cut Route
- - - Tunnel Route
- Traction Power Substation
- Station





City of
Bellevue

Office of the Mayor • Phone (425) 452-7810 • Fax (425) 452-7919
Post Office Box 90012 • Bellevue, Washington • 98009 9012

December 3, 2009

Joni Earl
CEO, Sound Transit
Union Station
401 S Jackson Street
Seattle, WA 98104

Dear Ms. Earl,

We are aware that Sound Transit has developed additional alignment options that have been communicated to the City and are the subject of additional outreach to the public in the coming weeks. These are C9-T, C9-A, C11-A and a modification of C7-E that would exit downtown Bellevue at NE 6th.

As you and I discussed earlier this week, it would be prudent for Sound Transit to also evaluate a 114th elevated alignment that was presented by Councilmember Wallace to look at cost, ridership, constructability, etc., in order to provide a comparison of this option with the alternatives previously identified by Sound Transit. Our Council would appreciate this additional analysis and ask you to do so.

Since the time that Sound Transit identified its locally preferred alternative earlier this year, the alignment options for Downtown have significantly changed. Given the changing nature of the options under evaluation by Sound Transit, it is appropriate for the City to extend the evaluation of potential funding options for a tunnel alternative to coincide with the timing of the evaluation process for the new options.

The City has not changed its position on the preferred alignment, but we agree that it is important for us to work with you to evaluate these new alternatives for the Downtown Bellevue segment so that the City, Sound Transit and the community can assess the new options. Your continued courtesy and cooperation is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Grant S. Degginger'.

Grant S. Degginger
Mayor

cc: Bellevue Council

City of Bellevue offices are located at 450 - 110th Avenue N.E.



December 10, 2009

Mayor Grant S. Degginger
City of Bellevue
Office of the Mayor
P.O. Box 90012
Bellevue, WA 98009-9012

Dear Mayor ^{Grant} Degginger,

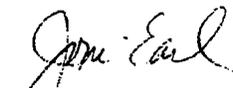
Thank you for your letter of December 3, 2009 regarding the evaluation of additional alignment options for the East Link project in downtown Bellevue.

The Sound Transit Board discussed your letter at their December 10th Board Meeting. The Board directed staff to evaluate as you requested the elevated alignment on 114th presented by Councilmember Wallace. Elevated on 114th (C14E) will be evaluated along with the new alternatives recommended for further evaluation by our recent expert reviews of the East Link project – 110th Tunnel (C9T), 110th At-grade (C9A), and 108th At-grade (C11A).

Regarding the evaluation by the City of additional funding sources for a tunnel in downtown Bellevue, the Board understood your desire to change the timing to coincide with the evaluation process of downtown Bellevue alternatives now underway. In order to have full information as the Board reevaluates the downtown Bellevue preferred alternative, the City should formally identify any additional funding sources by the end of January, 2010.

I'd like to thank you and your staff for their continued cooperation in working to develop the East Link project.

Sincerely,


Joni Earl
Chief Executive Officer

CHAIR

Greg Nickels
Seattle Mayor

VICE CHAIRS

Aaron Reardon
Snohomish County Executive

Claudia Thomas
Lakewood Councilmember

BOARD MEMBERS

Julie Anderson
Tacoma Deputy Mayor

Mary-Alyce Burleigh
Kirkland Councilmember

Fred Butler
Issaquah Deputy Council President

Richard Conlin
Seattle Council President

Dow Constantine
King County Council Chair

Dave Enslow
Summer Mayor

Paula J. Hammond, P.E.
Washington State Secretary of Transportation

John Marchione
Redmond Mayor

Joe Marine
Mukilteo Mayor

Pat McCarthy
Pierce County Executive

Julia Patterson
King County Councilmember

Larry Phillips
King County Councilmember

Paul Roberts
Everett Councilmember

Kurt Triplett
King County Executive

Peter von Reichbauer
King County Councilmember

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Joni Earl