

**CITY COUNCIL STUDY SESSION ITEM**

**SUBJECT:**

Status report on the East Link project including: progress on the Collaborative Design Process; information about cost-savings ideas; the public open house on April 26, 2012; the immediate next steps; and the project timeline for 2012.

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**POLICY ISSUES:**

The City and Sound Transit entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in November 2011 that describes Bellevue's contributions to a downtown tunnel. The MOU also provides the basis for a Collaborative Design Process (CDP) that the City and Sound Transit jointly developed and agreed to in January 2012. The CDP provides the mechanism for the agencies to jointly pursue project cost-savings and to collaborate on other tasks to advance the project through the 60% design phase.

**DIRECTION NEEDED FROM COUNCIL:**

     Action  
  X   Discussion  
  X   Information

**BACKGROUND/ANALYSIS:**

The City and Sound Transit have been working for the past several months on the requirements of the MOU and the CDP. The purpose of this report is to provide Council with an update on the major work efforts and milestones leading into the public open house, early design work and value engineering exercise that are scheduled to occur during this quarter, as well as key tasks for the remainder of 2012. This report is for information only and there is no action required by Council at this time.

**MOU Commitments**

Key components of the MOU include creation of the CDP, the City's \$100M up front contribution, and the City's \$60M contingent contribution. The CDP is discussed in more detail in the following section. The City's up front and contingent contributions can be summarized as follows:

- \$100M Up Front Contribution
  - Made up of property and other contributions: actual cost to City will be less than the value to the Project
  - Not subject to a downward adjustment based on project cost savings or increased revenues
  - City-owned properties (at time MOU was signed) must be contributed even if City decides to terminate the MOU at Project Baseline Budget.
  
- \$60M Contingent Contribution
  - Subject to a permanent downward adjustment to \$0 with project cost savings in Bellevue identified by the time of the Project Baseline Budget
  - Subject to downward adjustment to \$0 (if any remaining at Baseline) based on actual construction costs of East Link based on the actual costs of “portal to portal” tunnel construction only
  - City contingent amount (if any remaining at Baseline) as the last source of money, after proportion of Sound Transit project budget and contingency, for portal to portal tunnel costs.

### CDP Progress

The CDP approved by the City and Sound Transit in January 2012 established a structure (see Attachment A) consisting of six Technical Working Groups, a Collaboration Team, a Steering Committee and a Leadership Group. The Technical Working Groups, Collaboration Team, and Steering Committee are comprised of staff from the City and Sound Transit. The Leadership Group is composed of three City Council members and three Sound Transit Board members. At this time, all of the Technical Working Groups have formed and are working on their assigned tasks. The Collaboration Team has been meeting weekly to review and direct the work of the Technical Working Groups and to coordinate the overall work effort under the CDP. The Steering Committee has met several times to provide guidance on policy issues, select a facilitator, and prepare briefings for the Leadership Group, City Council and Sound Transit Board. The Leadership Group has met to establish its ground rules and provide initial feedback on cost-savings ideas. The primary tasks of the CDP during the first quarter of this year have been establishing the organization described above and the cost-savings process.

### Cost-Savings Process

One of the primary, early tasks described in the MOU and the CDP is to identify project cost savings. The focus of the cost saving work being conducted under the CDP is to explore ways to reduce the East Link project costs. Project cost reductions within that portion of East Link within Bellevue translate to a reduction of the City’s \$60M contingent contribution . It is in the mutual interests of Bellevue and Sound Transit to identify more than \$60M in savings in order to offset upward pressure on costs (e.g. inflation, design modifications) prior to establishing the new project baseline cost at completion of 60% design.

Toward this end, City and Sound Transit staff met in an all-day workshop earlier this year to brainstorm a broad range of potential cost-savings ideas. In order to foster creativity and keep the focus on the project at hand, few limitations were placed on the brainstorming other than remaining within the existing alignment. In addition to staff input, the list included ideas from Council and Sound Transit Board members.

The Collaboration Team developed a set of functional criteria to evaluate the list. The Collaboration Team recognized that many of the cost saving ideas have potential impacts that are different or greater than the current design. However, the Team also acknowledged that

additional environmental analysis may be needed and mitigation would still be required per City, state and federal regulations. The highest ranked functional criteria were:

- Light rail transit mobility – ridership, capacity
- Urban development – quality and appropriate land use
- Access – to light rail from communities and business
- Noise and visual impacts
- Construction impacts
- Light rail operations – speed, reliability and flexibility
- Safety and security.

A four-day workshop involving a panel of independent cost-saving experts in structural and civil engineering, architecture, tunnel design, geotechnical engineering, construction and transportation planning and engineering was held to filter the list of ideas in accordance with the functional criteria listed above and to further develop them into concepts with potentially substantial cost benefits while still meeting the project criteria. The concepts developed by the panel were reviewed by the Steering Committee and categorized into three groups (see Attachment B):

- 1) Engineering modifications that can be evaluated in the early design work and incorporated into 60% design. These are ideas, such as column design, that would not affect or be noticeable to light rail users or from nearby properties;
- 2) Ideas that may affect the MOU project description and therefore require Council and Sound Transit Board action. These are ideas, such as relocating the downtown tunnel station, that require public review and input before determining whether individual ideas should be further evaluated and potentially advanced into 60% design; and,
- 3) Previously studied and rejected ideas where there has not been a significant change to support reconsideration or further evaluation. These are ideas, such as at-grade crossings, that are not being advanced into 60% design.

City and Sound Transit staff will provide the Council with a brief overview of the ideas in the first two categories and describe the third category in more detail during the Extended Study Session. The same type and level of information will be provided at the public open house on April 26.

It is important to note that the potential cost-savings ideas could have impacts that are different than previously analyzed and any impacts will require analysis and identification of appropriate mitigation consistent with City, state and federal requirements.

#### Public Open House and Additional Outreach

The City and Sound Transit will host a joint open house in the City Hall Concourse on Thursday, April 26, from 4 to 7 p.m. The purpose of the open house is to share the latest design options and cost-savings ideas for the East Link light rail project, and to get feedback from the public. There will be brief descriptions for each of the ideas in the three categories described above available to the public, with additional drawings describing the ideas in the third category that are the main focus of the open house. City and Sound Transit staff will be on hand to explain the information and answer questions. The public will have the opportunity to write their comments on the drawings and on comment forms. The information will also be posted on the agencies' websites after the open house and people can submit their comments via e-mail. Both Sound Transit and Bellevue have set up special e-mail boxes for the East Link project.

The feedback from the open house will help inform City and Sound Transit staff of other considerations important to the public as these concepts are further evaluated. Notification for the open house has included a postcard mailing to approximately 31,000 households within one-half mile of the entire alignment through Bellevue, electronic and print ads in the *Bellevue Reporter*, print ads in *La Raza* (Spanish) and *Seattle Chinese Post* newspapers, an article in the City's *Neighborhood News* electronic newsletter, electronic notices on local blogs, Bellevue and Sound Transit websites and e-mails to the Sound Transit and Bellevue East Link distribution lists.

Subsequent to the open house, the Public Outreach and Government Relations Technical Working Group will be conducting follow-up meetings with stakeholders to continue to respond to questions and share additional information as it becomes available. There also will be outreach on the design of individual stations (led by Sound Transit) at the 30%, 60% and 90% design milestones. In addition, City staff will be conducting outreach for the planning around the stations. Planning will be tailored to each station based on its unique characteristics, opportunities and issues. For example, Council has already determined through the Light Rail Best Practices policies that there is potential for transit-oriented development around certain stations, but not in the existing single family zones around the South Bellevue Park and Ride and the East Main Station (see Attachment C). The timing of this additional outreach has not yet been determined; however, it could begin as early as this fall and it will continue through the final design phase.

#### Code Amendment Work

The Code Amendment and Permitting Framework Technical Working Group is focused on identifying and recommending Land Use Code and Technical Code Amendments to Council that are intended to provide certainty and predictability in the permitting process, and to either reconcile or provide a process for reconciling code conflicts. In addition to this generally stated objective, the MOU specifically required the City to adopt code amendments by the end of 2012 that include a comprehensive and consolidated permit process for LRT, definitions necessary to accommodate light rail uses and related facilities, extended vesting of land use approvals, and an administrative modification process.

Early focus of this team has been on identification of code conflicts between the described project and applicable codes, analysis of cost savings ideas for additional or different potential code conflicts, and development of a code amendment schedule. Completion of this code conflict review work is anticipated in mid to late May. In June, a study session will be held with Council to describe amendments necessary to meet the obligations contained in the MOU and to solicit feedback on the framework proposed for incorporating amendments into the Land Use Code and other technical codes. Code drafting will progress in June and July with the objective of presenting draft amendments to Council prior to the summer break. Public outreach will be undertaken, and will culminate in a hearing before Council in the fall in order to reserve time for Council consideration, modification, and adoption of recommended code amendments prior to the year-end deadline.

#### Project Timeline

Sound Transit's consultant team will develop conceptual engineering design on the cost-savings ideas through the end of May in order to estimate savings. The conceptual engineering will also include environmental screening to gauge potential impacts. By late June, the City Council and Sound Transit Board are scheduled to identify which cost-savings concepts will be included in the value engineering process that will take place through July. The value engineering process

will include the entire alignment, with specific focus on more detailed design of the cost-saving concepts, as well as overall project constructability and contract packaging. The Design and Value Engineering Technical Working Group, which includes City and Sound Transit staff, will be involved in the value engineering process per the CDP.

Project work for the last half of this year will mark the beginning of the 60% design phase of the project, which includes further development of the preferred cost-saving measures, as well as the remainder of the entire East Link project. Additional environmental analysis, including mitigation, resulting from modifications to the project will be completed by the end of this year per the MOU.

The overall project timeline includes final design continuing through 2016, with property acquisitions occurring during 2014 to 2017 and construction commencing in 2015. The baseline cost estimate identified in the MOU is anticipated to occur early in 2014. The sequencing of construction (i.e. what facilities are constructed and when) will be determined as part of the 60% design work that is currently scheduled to be completed about the end of 2013. Passenger service is scheduled to begin in 2023.

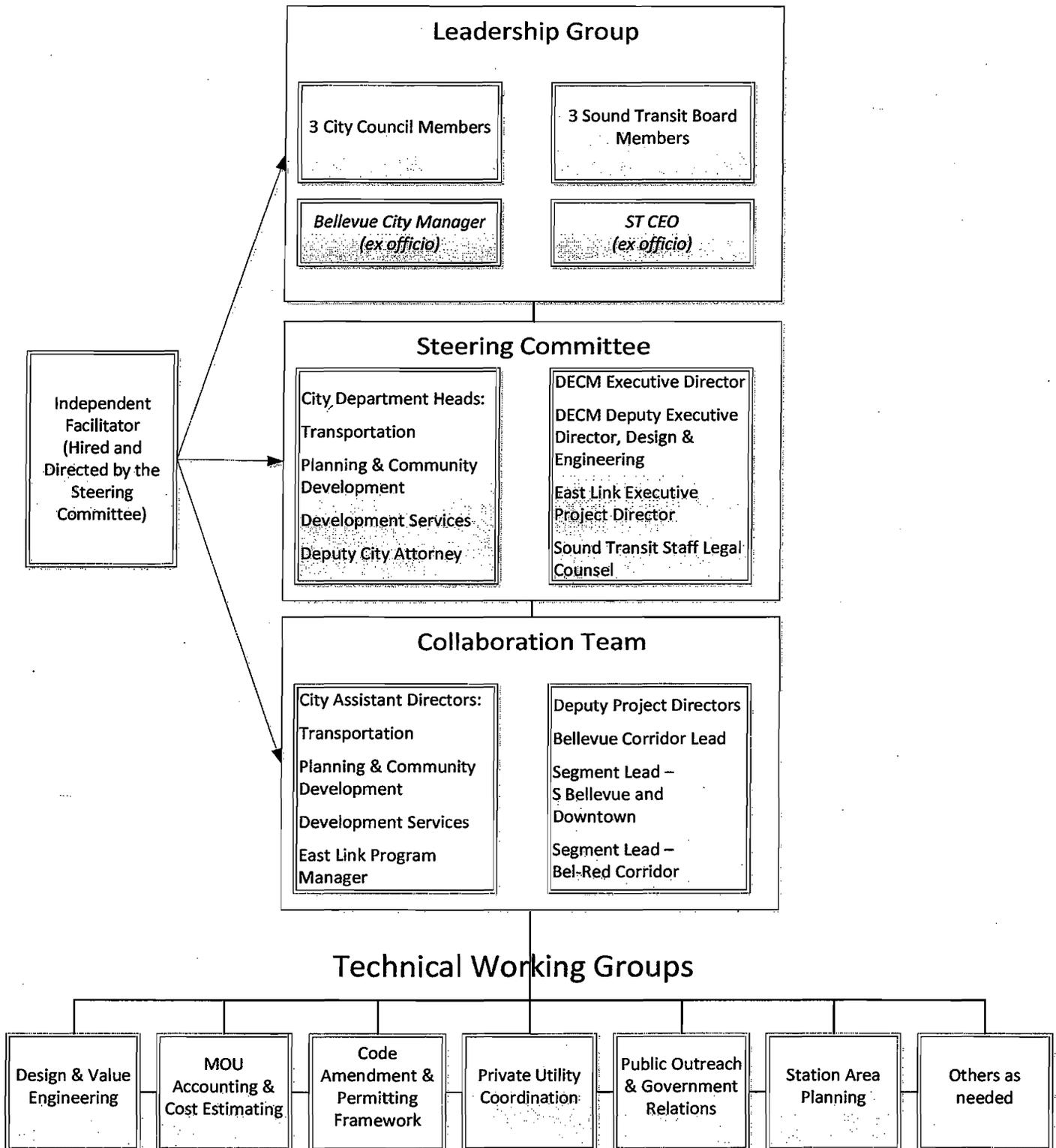
**RECOMMENDATION:**

This briefing is informational. There is no Council action required at this time.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

- A. CDP Organizational Chart
- B. List of Cost-saving Ideas
- C. TOD Potential Map

Figure 1: Collaborative Design Process Organization Chart



# LIST OF POTENTIAL COST-SAVING IDEAS

Attachment B

## IDEAS FOR FURTHER ENGINEERING REVIEW

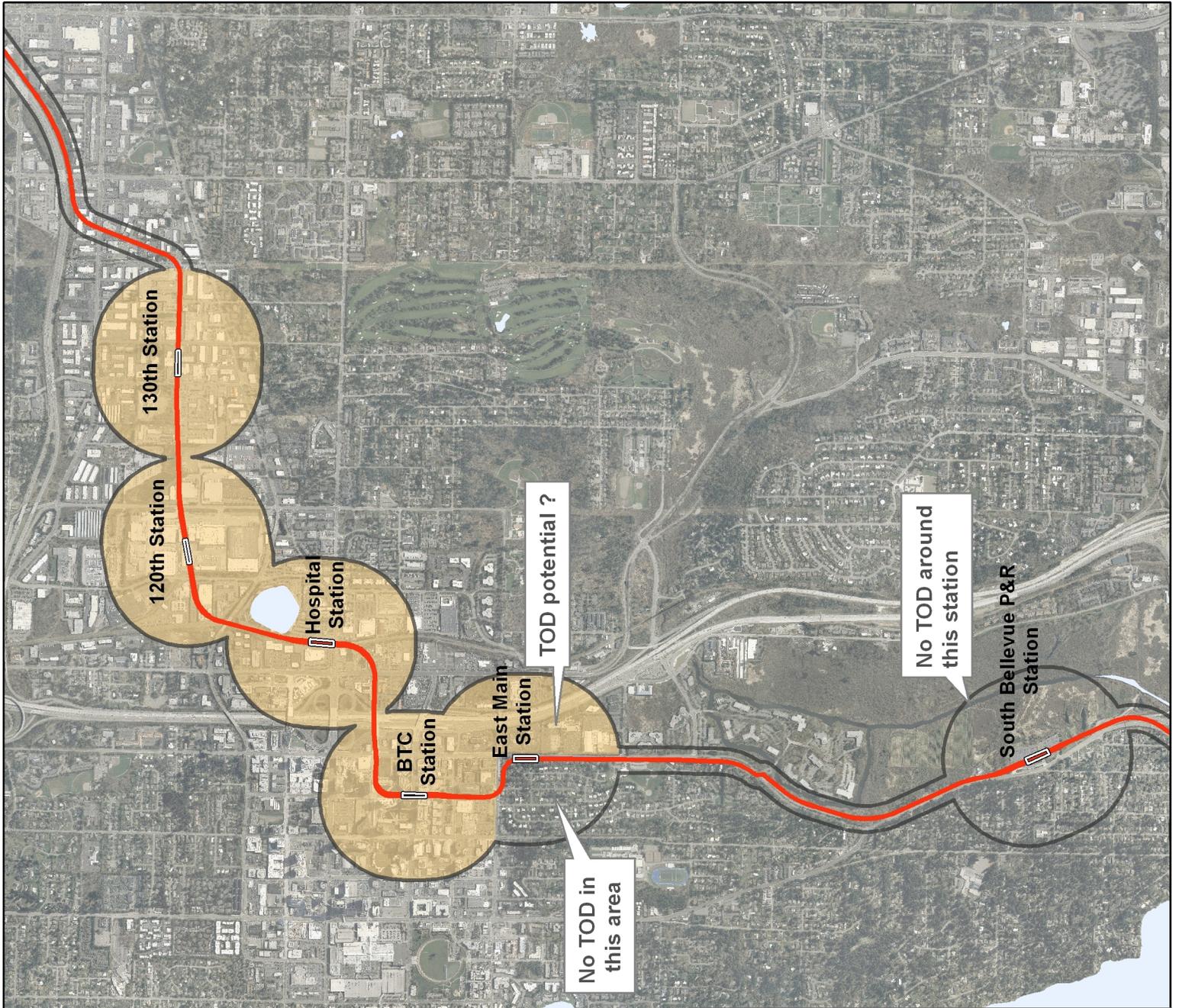
1. Tunnel design optimization
2. Tunnel station design optimization
3. Tunnel construction staging area
4. Elevated guideway design
5. Optimize 120<sup>th</sup> station design
6. Reduce stormwater vaults through use of low-impact development design
7. Expedite tunnel construction through additional road closures

## IDEAS THAT MAY AFFECT MOU PROJECT DESCRIPTION

1. Bellevue Way Alignment at Winters House
2. 112<sup>th</sup> Alignment at Surrey Downs Park
3. Downtown station design
4. Downtown tunnel design
5. NE 16<sup>th</sup> cross-section

## IDEAS PREVIOUSLY REVIEWED AND NOT SELECTED

1. South Bellevue alignment
  - a) Utilize Bellevue Way HOV ramps to exit I-90
  - b) At-grade center running alignment on Bellevue Way and 112<sup>th</sup>
2. 112<sup>th</sup> design modifications
  - a) At-grade crossing at SE 6<sup>th</sup>



**Legend**

-  Station
-  MOU Route Alignment
-  1/4 mi. radius at stations, 200' along guideway
-  TOD potential



1 inch = 2,300 feet

The information on this map is a geographic representation derived from the City of Bellevue Geographic Information System. The City of Bellevue does not guarantee that the information on this map is accurate or complete. This map is provided on an "as is" basis and disclaims all warranties, express or implied, including but not limited to warranties of merchantability, fitness for a particular purpose and non-infringement. Any commercial use or sale of this map or portions thereof, is prohibited without express written authorization by the City of Bellevue. The City of Bellevue is not responsible for any damages arising from the use of information on this map. Use of this map is at user's risk. Users should verify the information before making project commitments.