

**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 Segment B, South Bellevue, and Segment D, Bel-Red.

**STAFF CONTACT:**

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*Transportation Department*

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

N/A

**POLICY ISSUES:**

This update intends to inform Council of continued efforts to advance the design and complete environmental review of the South Bellevue and the Bel-Red alignments since the Sound Transit Board of Directors' May 2009 identification of a preferred alternative.

The Bellevue Council has adopted a body of light rail policy (including light rail best practices policies adopted by Council in August 2008, other Comprehensive Plan policies, and Council interest statements) that articulates community values related to the development of light rail in Bellevue. This policy body provides guidance and support for light rail transit investment in Bellevue and is complementary to the information provided in the East Link Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS).

The City Council has articulated its preferences and strong opinions regarding the East Link project through its communications to Sound Transit, amendments to the Comprehensive Plan, and other actions. These City actions provide the basis for addressing project issues cooperatively with Sound Transit.

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

### Segment B

As part of the DEIS review process, Council engaged in a detailed review of Segment B alternatives proposed in the DEIS. This review included impacts identified in the DEIS, additional city-produced traffic analysis comparing impacts and mitigation opportunities for the B7 alternative and the Bellevue Way alternatives, the transit integration plan outlining bus transfer opportunities with each alternative, a comparison of alignments to adopted policy direction, and public input. These elements provided a basis for Council deliberation of the Segment B alignments. In late February, Council communicated its preference to the Sound Transit Board of the B3 alternative modified to be side-running, with a continued interest in the B7 alternative in the event that B3 side-running is found infeasible. Council developed the B3 side-running alignment to serve the South Bellevue Park-and-Ride, avoid many of the undesirable impacts of other Bellevue Way alignments, protect neighborhoods, and potentially reduce costs and ease construction of East Link in South Bellevue.

The City has been participating in Sound Transit's design process to advance the B3 side running alternative, which is consistent with the Council's preference. On October 12, 2009 Sound Transit staff presented an update to Council on the preliminary engineering design process, including sharing initial design features for a South Bellevue side-running option.

The B3S design continues to be advanced by Sound Transit. Elements being analyzed include the design of the South Bellevue Station, traffic impacts and mitigation, Mercer Slough Park impacts and opportunities, sensitive areas impacts, accommodating the Winters House, noise analysis, and design variations suggested by the value analysis workshop held last October. The initial design concept, bringing the B3S alternative up to the equivalent level of other DEIS options, was shared last October, including a presentation to Council and a public open house at Bellevue High School. Sound Transit is now refining and advancing the design and will have an updated, more detailed design in March.

Concurrently, the City is conducting a conceptual engineering evaluation of a southbound HOV lane along Bellevue Way SE from I-90 to the Bellevue Way/112<sup>th</sup> Ave SE "Y" intersection. This HOV lane was discussed with Council during the Segment B discussions last winter as one of the potential traffic mitigation opportunities for the side-running light rail alternative. The conceptual engineering analysis will be available in March.

Sound Transit continues to review all East Link alternatives as it prepares the FEIS, including the south Bellevue B7 alternative. Some additional conceptual engineering has been completed regarding the B7 alternative to better reflect the south Bellevue I-405 widening project that was recently completed by WSDOT. This updated engineering will be reflected in the updated FEIS.

### Segment D

Last February, Council also carefully considered the Segment D alternatives and identified D2A as the preferred option. The D2A option was the most closely integrated and consistent with the City's vision for the Bel-Red Corridor. The Sound Transit Board advanced this option into the preferred alternative, and directed the City to work closely with Sound Transit staff on a 124<sup>th</sup> Station design variation of the station placed in a retained cut.

The Segment D design is on a parallel track with the Segment B design. The design was advanced to include the variations of the 124<sup>th</sup> Station in a retained cut, as well as a new variation locating the station slightly north in the Spring District site. These concepts were also

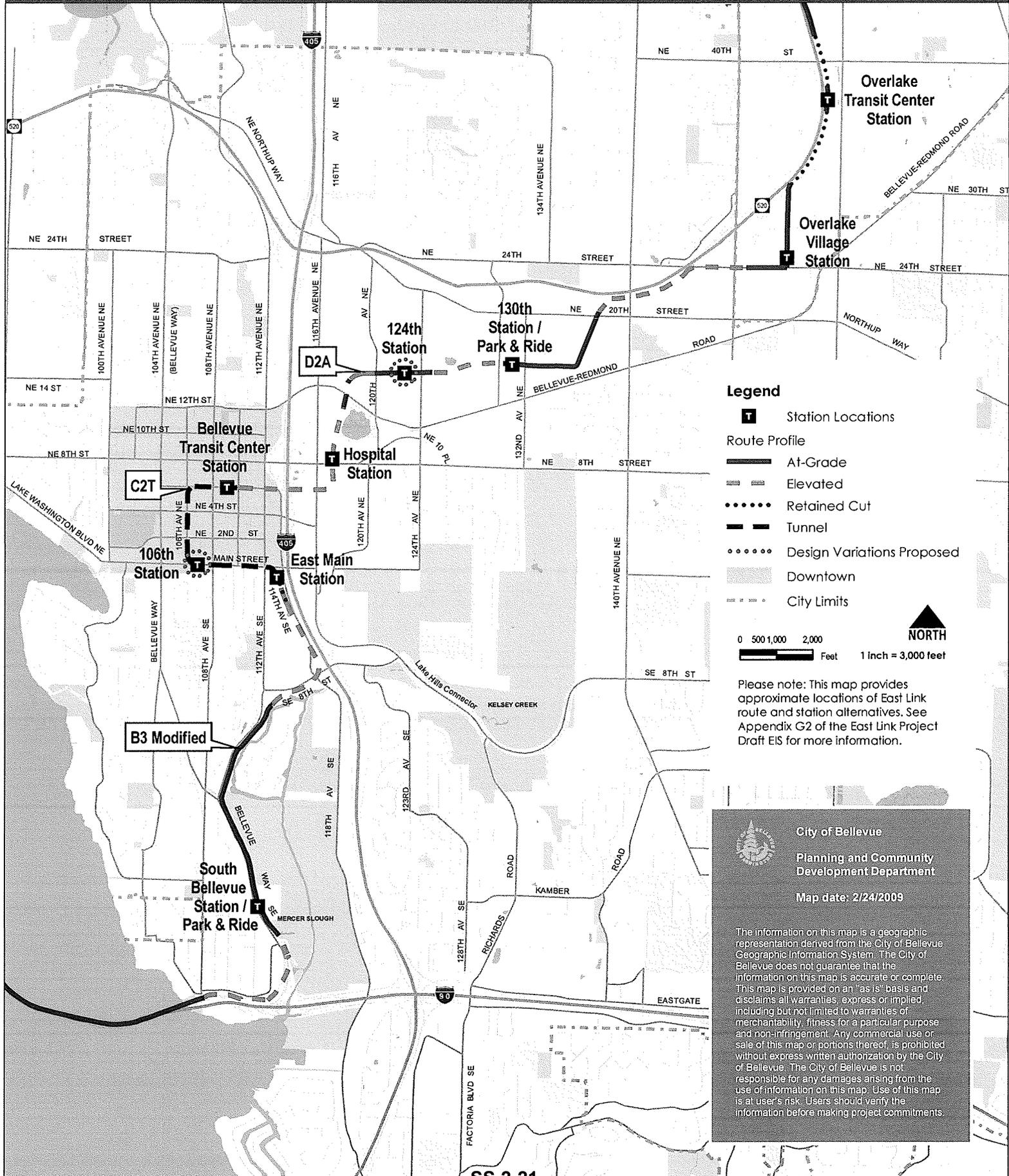
presented to Council and the public in October. The D2A alignment continues to be advanced by Sound Transit. Elements being analyzed include the 124<sup>th</sup> Station profile, 130<sup>th</sup> station design, integration with the City's NE 15<sup>th</sup> Street roadway design, integration with the multi-purpose trail identified in the Bel-Red Subarea Plan, and traffic impacts and mitigation. Sound Transit is now refining and advancing the design and will have an updated, more detailed design in March.

Staff will return to Council in the coming months, coordinating with the downtown analysis briefings, to share new information on Segments B and D as it becomes available.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

- 1) Bellevue's Preferred East Link Light Rail Route Map
- 2) Sound Transit's East Link Project Preferred Alternative Map
- 3) Segment B DEIS Alternatives
- 4) Segment D DEIS Alternatives

# Bellevue's Preferred East Link Light Rail Route B3 Modified-C2T-D2A



### Legend

- T Station Locations
- Route Profile**
- At-Grade
- Elevated
- Retained Cut
- Tunnel
- Design Variations Proposed
- Downtown
- City Limits

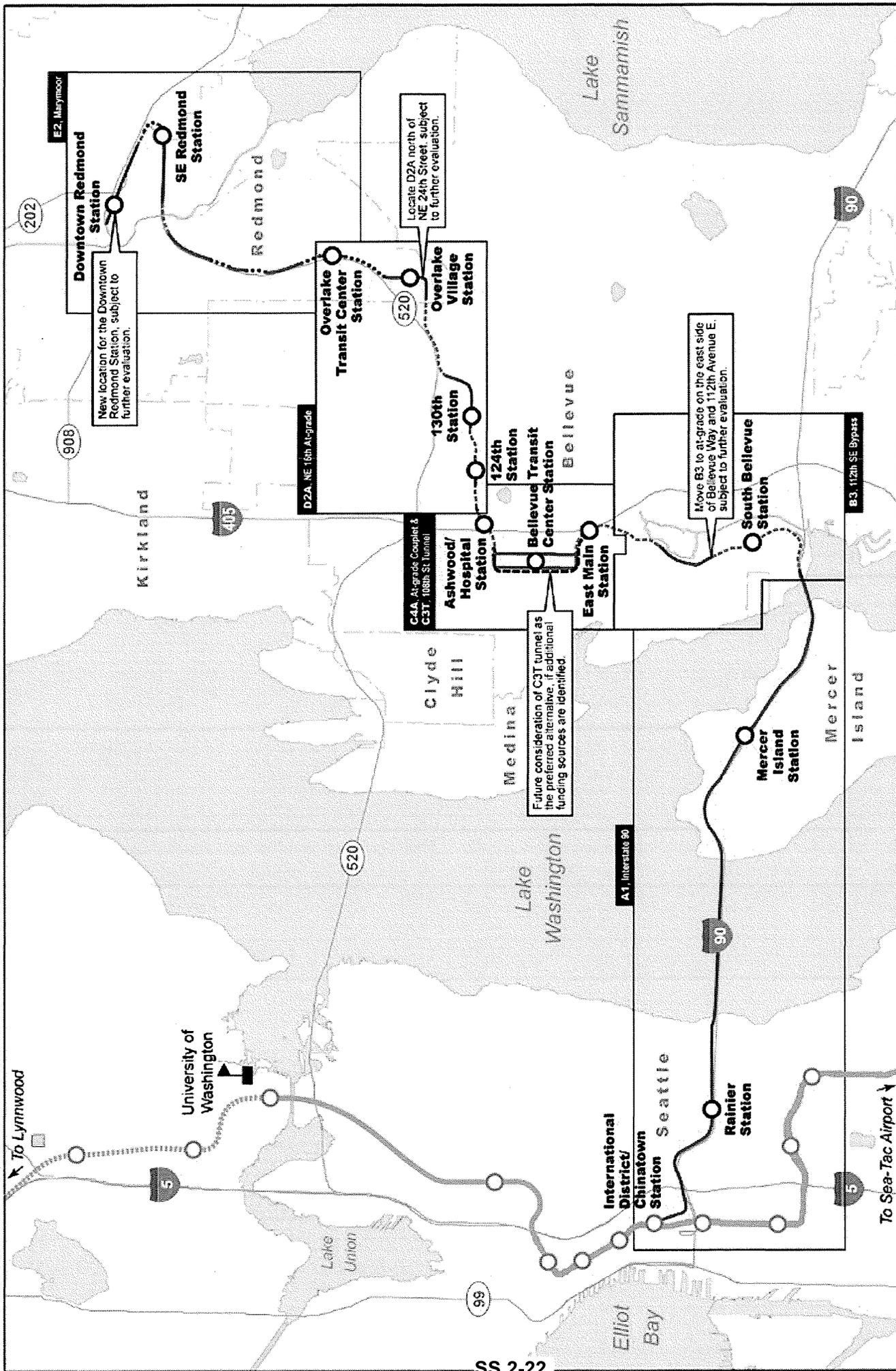
0 500 1,000 2,000 Feet  
1 inch = 3,000 feet

Please note: This map provides approximate locations of East Link route and station alternatives. See Appendix G2 of the East Link Project Draft EIS for more information.

**City of Bellevue**  
Planning and Community  
Development Department

Map date: 2/24/2009

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.



**City Limits**

**East Link Light Rail Alternatives**

**Route Profile**

- At-Grade
- Elevated
- Tunnel
- Retained Cut

**East Link Segment**

- Station
- Alignment and Station
- Central Link Extension

**Central Link Light Rail**

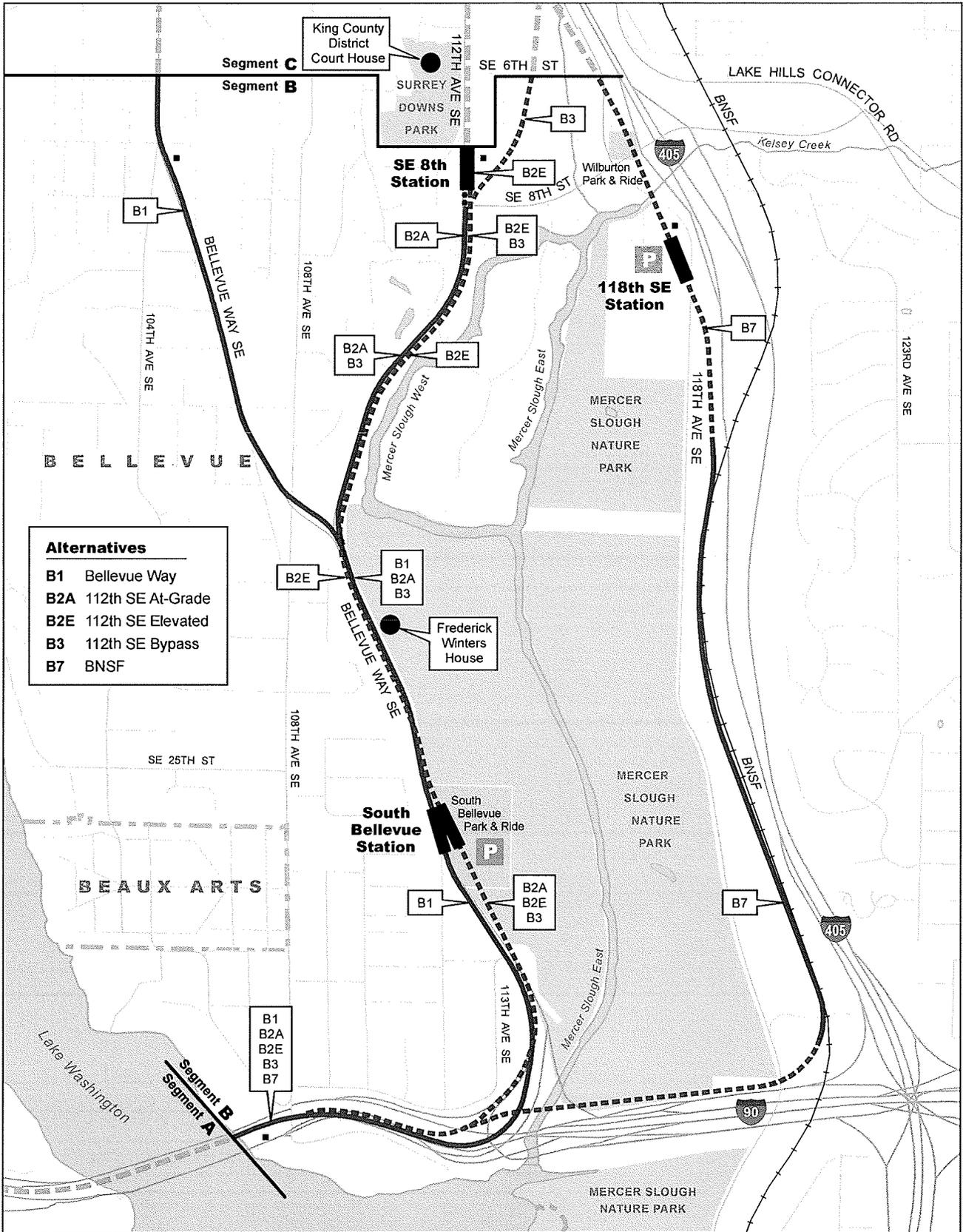
- Central Link
- Alignment and Station
- Central Link Extension

**East Link Project Preferred Alternatives**

*East Link Project*

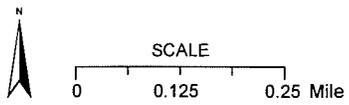
Scale: 0, 0.5, 1 Mile

North Arrow



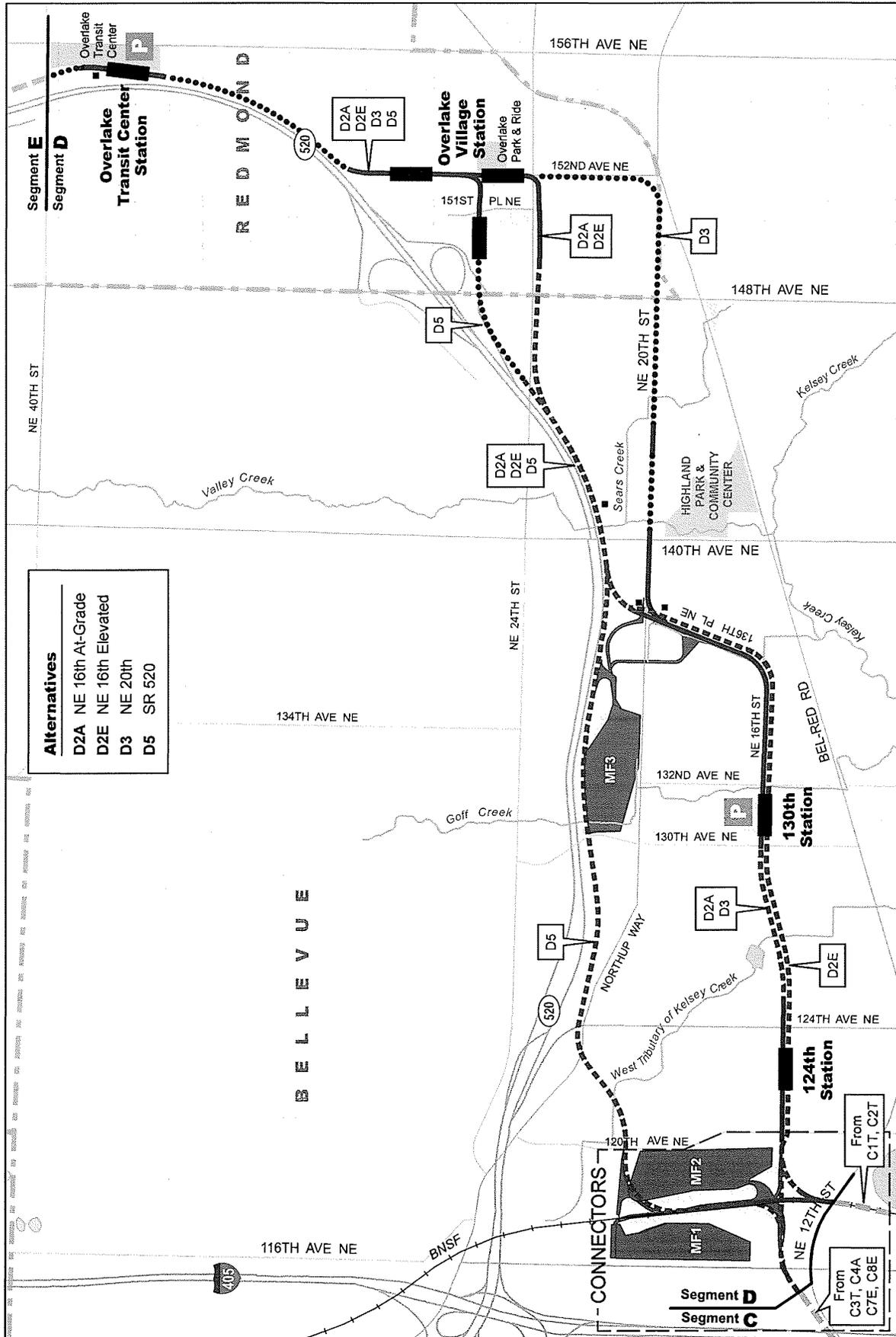
Alternatives	
B1	Bellevue Way
B2A	112th SE At-Grade
B2E	112th SE Elevated
B3	112th SE Bypass
B7	BNSF

- At-Grade Route
- - - - - Elevated Route
- Retained-Cut Route
- Tunnel Route
- Adjacent Segment
- Traction Power Substation
- Station
- P New and/or Expanded Park-and-Ride Lot
- A | B Segment Limit



Source: City of Bellevue (2005) and King County (2006).

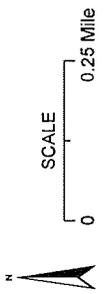
Exhibit 2-14  
**Segment B, South Bellevue Alternatives**  
*East Link Project*



Alternatives	
D2A	NE 16th At-Grade
D2E	NE 16th Elevated
D3	NE 20th
D5	SR 520

Source: City of Bellevue (2005), City of Redmond (2005), and King County (2006).

**Exhibit 2-16**  
**Segment D, Bel-Red/Overlake Alternatives**  
 East Link Project



- At-Grade Route
- Elevated Route
- Retained-Cut Route
- Tunnel Route
- Adjacent Segment
- Traction Power Substation
- Maintenance Facility and Access Track
- Station
- New and/or Expanded Park-and-Ride Lot
- Segment Limit