

CITY COUNCIL STUDY SESSION ITEM

SUBJECT:

East Link: Cost Savings Work Plan Findings.

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POLICY ISSUES:

The City and Sound Transit entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in November 2011 that defines City contributions to a downtown light rail tunnel. The MOU also provides the basis for a Collaborative Design Process (CDP) that was further defined and agreed to in January 2012. The CDP provides the mechanism for the City and Sound Transit to jointly advance the design of the East Link Project through the 60% design phase and identify cost savings to offset part of the City's tunnel funding contribution.

Earlier this year, the Council identified cost savings options for design refinement and impact analysis in a joint agency work plan. The findings of this work plan are now available for review and consideration of which cost saving options should be advanced for further design and environmental analysis. Narrowing the options creates the opportunity to provide more certainty to the community and facilitates efficient use of final design and staff resources. The decision can be informed by the adopted body of City light rail policy, summarized in the attached principles (Attachment A), including:

- the ability of the options to conveniently serve destinations,
- accommodating the long-term multi-modal transportation system,
- optimizing ridership,
- consideration of construction impacts and risk,
- protecting environmentally sensitive areas, and
- advancing the long-term land use vision for south Bellevue, Downtown, and Bel-Red.

DIRECTION NEEDED FROM COUNCIL:

- Action
- Discussion
- Information

Sound Transit and City staff will present the September 2012 Cost Savings Work Plan Findings to the City Council for information and discussion.

On October 15, City staff will provide a report on the outreach effort and input from the community and a recommendation by the joint CDP Steering Committee on which cost savings ideas to advance for further design and environmental analysis. Staff will seek Council direction on the narrowing of the options as recommended by the CDP Steering Committee in advance of the October 25 Sound Transit Board meeting. On October 25, the Board will also be asked for direction on the CDP Steering Committee’s recommendation.

BACKGROUND/ANALYSIS:

Cost Saving Work Plan

The City and Sound Transit have been working since the beginning of the year to identify and evaluate potential cost savings measures that hold promise to reduce the cost of the East Link Project. This effort is consistent with the MOU, the subsequent CDP, and Council direction. A particular focus of the cost savings effort has been to reduce overall East Link Project costs in Bellevue in order to reduce or eliminate the City’s contingent \$60 million tunnel funding contribution, as detailed in the MOU.

In Spring 2012, the City and Sound Transit identified a range a potential cost savings options for consideration by the community, City Council, and Sound Transit Board. After extensive public engagement, the City Council and Sound Transit Board identified a subset of cost saving ideas for further advancement and clarified the design objectives to be pursued for each area. This direction is contained in the Sound Transit and City of Bellevue Cost Savings Work Plan (Attachment B).

Since June, Sound Transit and City staff have advanced design on the selected cost savings ideas, conducted a preliminary screen of environmental impacts, and developed Rough Order of Magnitude (ROM) cost estimates for each of the cost savings ideas. This analysis is contained in the *Cost Savings Work Plan Findings Advancement of Options September 2012 Report* (provided under separate cover). This report is available to the public online at: <http://projects.soundtransit.org/Projects-Home/East-Link-Project.xml>.

Public Engagement

In September and October, the City and Sound Transit are conducting public outreach to share the findings of the Cost Savings Work Plan and seek feedback on the ideas. Outreach efforts include small group meetings with affected property owners, stakeholders, and community leadership and three public drop-in sessions, each focusing on a different cost savings area (Bellevue Way, 112th Ave SE, and downtown). A summary of the outreach plan is provided in Attachment C.

Next Steps

Later in October, the City Council and Sound Transit Board will be asked to endorse moving forward on those options that the agencies believe best meet the shared project goals and could be incorporated into the East Link Project. The CDP Steering Committee will prepare a recommendation for City Council and Sound Transit Board consideration, based on the shared project goals of both agencies, the technical findings of the work plan, and input from the community. **The direction requested in October is a narrowing of cost saving ideas to advance for further analysis; it is not a final decision and does not alter the East Link Project as approved by the Sound Transit Board or as agreed to in the MOU.** The next phase of review includes additional engineering and environmental analysis consistent with requirements under NEPA and SEPA. This analysis will be available in Spring 2013, at which point the City Council and Sound Transit Board will be asked to make a final decision on any changes to the East Link Project description.

Timeline for Narrowing Cost Saving Options

- On October 1, Sound Transit and City staff will present the findings of the Cost Savings Work Plan to the City Council.
- **On October 15, City staff will provide a report on the outreach effort and input from the community and seek Council direction on the narrowing of the options as recommended by the CDP Steering Committee.**
- On October 25, the Sound Transit Board will also be asked to provide direction on the narrowing of the options as recommended by the CDP Steering Committee and the City Council.

RECOMMENDATION:

This briefing is informational. No Council action is requested at this time.

ATTACHMENTS:

- A. Bellevue Light Rail Transit Principles (2009)
- B. Sound Transit and City of Bellevue Cost Savings Work Plan
- C. Fall 2012 Cost Savings Work Plan Outreach Summary
- D. September 2012 Cost Savings Work Plan Findings (under separate cover); available online at: <http://projects.soundtransit.org/Projects-Home/East-Link-Project.xml>

**EAST LINK LIGHT RAIL
Bellevue Light Rail Transit Principles
Winter 2009**

The following principles summarize the existing body of City policy relating to high capacity transit. These summary principles incorporate multiple policies that more specifically articulate the City's objectives and vision.

Connect “somewhere to somewhere” by conveniently serving the places where people live, work, and play:

- Maximize user convenience
- Connect destinations in Bellevue and to other regional activity centers
- Advance Bellevue's land use vision for each area
- Provide benefits, including access, to existing residents and businesses

Policy basis: Comp Plan TR 71, 75.25, 75.5 75.6 & 75.30; Light Rail Best Practices (LRBP) Guiding Principle #1; LRBP Land Use Best Practice A; LRBP Elevated, At-Grade & Tunnel Best Practice A.

Accommodate long-term, multi-modal transportation system development:

- Minimize impacts on street operations
- Meet regional transportation system needs, including allowing for regional transit connections
- Allow for functional multi-modal operation of local street network
- Advance the land use vision for each area

Policy basis: Comp Plan TR 75.5, 75.8 & 75.27; LRBP Elevated, At-Grade & Tunnel Best Practices B, C, D; Future HCT Interest Statement (June 2005); Regional Mobility Interest Statement (Nov. 2004).

Optimize ridership:

- Generate strong daily ridership
- Optimize convenience for riders
- Connect to available or planned pedestrian and bicycle connections, transit service, and park-&-rides
- Provide a competitive travel time to be an attractive alternative to single occupant vehicles

Policy basis: Comp Plan TR 69, 75.1, 75.5, 75.6 & 75.25; LRBP Elevated, At-Grade & Tunnel Best Practice E; Future HCT Interest Statement (June 2005).

Consider construction impacts and risk:

- Duration of construction
- Impacts to street operation
- Risk factors
- Property impacts (number, types, acres)
- Staging areas (displacements, surrounding land use, number, size)
- Ability to mitigate impacts

Policy basis: Comp Plan 75.1, 75.8 & 75.35; LRBP Guiding Principle #3; LRBP Construction Impacts & Mitigation Best Practice B.

Protect environmentally sensitive areas:

- Avoid environmentally sensitive areas
- Minimize and mitigate impacts

Policy basis: Comp Plan TR 75.1 & 75.11; LRBP Land Use Best Practice A.

Advance the long-term land use vision (Subarea Guidance):

South Bellevue (Segment B)

- Protect and enhance the character and livability of existing neighborhoods
- Minimize impacts to wetlands and other natural resources
- Provide local access for Bellevue neighborhoods

Policy basis: Comp Plan TR 75.1, 75.7, 75.9; LRBP Guiding Principle #4; LRBP Land Use Best Practice A; LRBP Elevated, At-Grade & Tunnel Best Practices A, B, C, D, E, F; Regional Mobility Interest Statement (Nov. 2004).

Downtown Bellevue (Segment C)

- Locate stations in proximity (i.e. 10 minute walk) to existing and planned employment concentrations
- Promote superior urban design integration within established urban context
- Avoid, minimize, and mitigate impacts to businesses and residents during construction
- Avoid, minimize, and mitigate impacts to street network operations

Policy basis: Comp Plan TR 72, 73, 75.1, 75.6, 75.7, 75.8; LRBP Guiding Principle #4; LRBP Land Use Best Practice A; LRBP Elevated, At-Grade & Tunnel Best Practices A, B, C, D, E, F; Regional Mobility Interest Statement (Nov. 2004).

Bel-Red (Segment D)

- Support compact, livable, mixed use neighborhoods
- Provide multi-modal transportation options
- Promote economic & environmental sustainability
- Develop NE 16th as multi-modal corridor that includes HCT

Policy basis: Comp Plan TR 75.1, 75.6, 75.7 & 75.10; LRBP Guiding Principle #4; LRBP Land Use Best Practice A; LRBP Elevated, At-Grade & Tunnel Best Practices A, B, C, D, E, F; Regional Mobility Interest Statement (Nov. 2004).



Exhibit A

Sound Transit and City of Bellevue Cost Savings Work Plan

This joint work plan identifies Cost Savings ideas for further development. It is not a final decision, and in no way alters the East Link Project as approved by the Sound Transit Board and reflected in the Record of Decision issued by the Federal Transit Administration and the Federal Highway Administration, but rather is an indication that the ideas have sufficient merit to continue to invest resources to review. The next phase of review, including additional engineering design and impact and mitigation analysis consistent with requirements under NEPA and SEPA, will occur in the latter half of 2012 and into 2013.

A final decision to incorporate any one or more of these Cost Savings Ideas into East Link would not occur until this additional review is complete; and only after the Sound Transit Board and the City Council determine, in light of the cost savings available and the impacts on the Project and surrounding neighborhoods (including ridership, system impacts, noise, traffic and visual impacts) that these Cost Savings Ideas are consistent with the shared Project goals.

Winters House

Advance for further development options that replace the retained cut by the Winters House with an at-grade light rail alignment.

Design options: If the City Council in July 2012 decides to include a Bellevue Way HOV lane in the City's Transportation Facilities Plan environmental review and continues to make progress towards implementation, then study shifting Bellevue Way west with the cost of the project addressed as set forth in Section 7.2 of the MOU (Idea 1a). If not, then study relocating the Winters House. (Idea 1b)

Other design considerations:

- Noise and visual mitigation for increased length of above grade guideway
- Reduce the added length of elevated guideway
- Optimize the access location for the blueberry farm and Winter's House
- If alternative 1a advances, it should include an HOV lane

Advantages to this approach:

- Lower cost and risk
- Better LRT profile for operations
- Potentially overall reduction in cost and construction impacts for the City and Sound Transit if Bellevue Way HOV lane and LRT construction properly sequenced

112th

Advance for further development an at-grade alignment the length of 112th with a crossing from the east to the west-side at SE 15th below a new road overpass (Idea 2b). No further development of the MOU option of an elevated fly-over at SE 15th and to the extent possible the retained cut at SE 4th.

Design options: Continue to study location for optimal access to the Surrey Downs neighborhood including options from 112th which do not require a gated crossing with bells.

Other Design considerations:

- Work with the community on a package of changes in park use, neighborhood traffic control, other measures to mitigate change in access

- Reduce the height of the reconstructed 112th Ave SE over light rail by depressing light rail tracks to the extent prudent given soil conditions
- Use landscaping to screen the road overpass and LRT
- Noise mitigation for at-grade LRT
- Evaluate pedestrian access to the E. Main Station from the neighborhood and kiss-and-ride access from 112th

Advantages to this approach:

- Responds to Leadership Group criteria for 112th with respect to cost, visual, noise, and avoidance of retained cut
- Lower cost and risk
- Provides grade separated LRT operations

Downtown Station

Advance for further development both a Tunnel Station and the NE 6th Station to refine and better distinguish the difference in potential cost savings.

Design issues to examine with Tunnel Station:

- Optimize configuration to minimize impacts to surface traffic while retaining entrances north and south of NE 4th
- May involve stacked tunnel with one entrance setback from street and mitigation for loss of turn pocket south of NE 4th or further optimization of PE design with mezzanine

Design issues to examine with NE 6th Station:

- Reach agreement on impacts to City Hall and damages payment prior to further design
- Determine acceptability of design deviation (curve at 110th/NE 6th)

Advantages to this approach:

- Allows limited additional time to vet actual cost differences. Relocating the Station to NE 6th should only be advanced further if it has substantially more savings as it has operational and ridership impacts.

Public Outreach for Phase 2 of Cost Savings Concepts – Summary

Objectives:

- Provide updated cost and technical information on cost saving concepts to area-specific stakeholders and the broader community;
- Solicit feedback on refined and optimized concepts for consideration by City Council and Sound Transit Board;
- Layout a general schedule for the public on the range of decisions (e.g. cost savings, HOV lane, code amendments) and opportunities for public input over the next 6 – 9 months.

Timeframe:

Immediate focus on the *Cost Savings Work Plan Findings* being available to the public and options to be further consideration by the Sound Transit Board and City Council. The window of time for public review and comment: October 1 – October 15. That makes early communication with the key stakeholders critical.

Approach:

The limited scope and condensed schedule for this immediate phase of the cost savings work requires a more focused effort on the area-specific stakeholders while maintaining opportunities for broader community input.

Three Types of Public Meetings:

1. Stakeholder Leadership Briefings
2. Broader Stakeholder Briefings
3. Public Drop-in Sessions (South Bellevue, 112th Ave. & Downtown Bellevue)

Outreach Timeline:

1. Phone calls to leadership starting September 4th
2. Leadership briefings starting September 6th
3. Broader briefings starting October 1st
4. Public drop-ins starting October 2nd

Messaging:

Provide background on the Collaborative Design Process that the City of Bellevue and Sound Transit are undergoing, particularly with regard to cost savings ideas with direction from the City Council and ST Board.

Overall messaging for all stakeholder groups will provide information about what is being presented, opportunities for public input, how that input will be used, and next steps in the process including future opportunities for public involvement.

This is not the final decision point or the only opportunity. Convey longer range schedule through next spring that describes decision points (e.g. HOV, Cost Savings, environmental analysis, final design, code amendments), when they are anticipated to occur and opportunities for input.

ATTACHMENT D
(Under separate cover)

September 2012 Cost Savings Work Plan Findings