



Management Brief

DATE: November 18, 2013

TO: Mayor Lee and Councilmembers

FROM: Dave Berg, Transportation Department Director, 452-6468
Kim Becklund, Transportation Policy Advisor, 452-4491
Joyce Nichols, Intergovernmental Relations Director, 452-4225

SUBJECT: **Sound Transit Staff Presentation on Long Range Plan (LRP) Update and Planning for Future ST3 Ballot Measure**

In November 2012, the Sound Transit Board directed its staff to develop a planning process and budget request to proceed with ST3 planning, with a goal of a *potential* measure being placed on the ballot in November 2016. This planning process is now underway.

Part of this process involves updating the ST Long Range Plan. The “environmental scoping” comment period for the plan update runs from October 25 to November 25. Bellevue will have an opportunity to provide comments on its priorities and identify elements it wants included as part of the LRP update. This planning process is critical because projects must be included in the LRP in order to be considered as part of an ST3 ballot measure. Part of the work plan for this process will include Bellevue staff updating Council’s 2005 High Capacity Transit Interest Statement.

On October 28, staff provided Council with a management brief that contained a summary of the LRP update process, timeframe for action and opportunities for Council involvement in this process. A copy of that management brief is included as Attachment A. At the November 18 meeting, Sound Transit staff will provide an overview of the LRP update process and plans for ST3. Council will have an opportunity to ask questions and provide feedback on the process and plan update.

Attachment:

- A) October 28, 2013 Management Brief: “Sound Transit Update of Long Range Plan in Preparation for Future ST3 Ballot Measure” (with attachments).



Management Brief

DATE: October 28, 2013

TO: Mayor Lee and Councilmembers

FROM: Dave Berg, Transportation Department Director
Chris Salomone, Planning & Community Development Department Director

SUBJECT: Sound Transit Update of Long Range Plan (LRP) in Preparation for Future ST3 Ballot Measure

In order to keep you informed about the work being undertaken by Sound Transit to update its Long Range Plan (LRP) and the “**environmental scoping**” **comment period for the plan update which began October 25 and runs to November 25**, we are providing the following overview of how this process will lead to development of a future ST3 ballot measure and the next package of regional high-capacity transit (HCT) investments. In addition, we have included information about future opportunities for Council involvement in the update process.

Background

ST3 would be the third step in the capital expansion of Sound Transit’s regional HCT system. The first step was Sound Move, approved by voters in 1996, followed by ST2 which was approved in 2008. While Sound Transit does not have any more revenue capacity and will need to seek authorization to raise revenue from the State Legislature for ST3, the agency has begun the planning process that will eventually lead to placing another measure before voters.

In November 2012, the Sound Transit Board directed its staff to develop a planning process and budget request to proceed with ST3 planning, with a goal of a *potential* measure being placed on the ballot in November 2016. This planning process is now underway and involves a three-step approach:

- 1) **HCT Corridor Studies—2013-2014:** Developing a series of technical corridor studies that will analyze options for each corridor. One of these studies is the Central and East HCT Corridor Study, which includes the following five sub-corridor studies:
 - University District to Kirkland to Redmond (SR 520)
 - Ballard to University District
 - I-405 Bus Rapid Transit (BRT)
 - Eastside Rail Corridor
 - Kirkland to Bellevue to Issaquah

- 2) **Long-Range Plan Update and Environmental Review—2013-2014:** Updating the 2005 LRP, which provides a comprehensive view of HCT project and service needs in the Sound Transit district over the next 30-50 years. A programmatic SEPA environmental impact statement will also be prepared during this step of the process.

- 3) **New Regional HCT System Plan (ST3)—2015-2016:** Developing a list of investments to be included in a ST3 package that would be considered by voters. These projects would be selected from the list of projects included in the updated LRP.

Updating the LRP

The original LRP was established before the 1996 vote and served as the original blueprint for the system. The plan was updated in 2005 prior to passage of ST2 in 2008. The plan update process now underway will include a draft EIS by next summer and adoption of the final EIS by December 2014. An important step in this process is the “environmental scoping” for the LRP update. As noted above, this scoping period runs from October 25 to November 25, and will include six open houses around the region. During this period, the City will have an opportunity to provide comments on its priorities and identify elements to be included as part of the LRP update. **This planning process is critical because projects must be included in the LRP in order to be included as part of an ST3 ballot measure.**

The purpose of the scoping process is to seek input concerning potential changes to the current LRP for further study. While it is helpful to have conceptual ideas brought forward during the scoping period—not technical or route specific at this point—additional items can be included after the release of the draft EIS. The Sound Transit Board has made it a priority to complete all the lines in a future package of investments, and since Bellevue already has a rail extension project advancing, the extension of light rail from Overlake to downtown Redmond is automatically included in the next plan. The current LRP essentially covers Bellevue’s planning envelope for ST2/East Link and provides enough context to test scenarios that the City may wish to propose in early 2014 as part of the draft EIS process.

Bellevue staff will prepare a comment letter for the scoping process that outlines the City’s key HCT objectives based on Council’s HCT Interest Statement and will include information from the City’s Transit Master Plan and other work that is important to include in the LRP (e.g., I-405 BRT system work, future of the Eastside Rail Corridor and integration with I-405 operations, Eastside park and ride lots, and connectivity with neighboring cities). Although the interest statement was adopted in 2005, it has been revisited since then and many of the principles and elements are still relevant. Part of the staff work plan for this next phase, which is outlined below, includes drafting an updated interest statement.

Bellevue Staff Work Plan

The City’s Transportation and Planning and Community Development staff are developing a framework for identifying Bellevue’s future HCT network. Staff will draw upon technical work from the City’s recent update of the Transit Master Plan (TMP) that identifies bus transit demand in 2030 and the current HCT interest statement. Forecasted traffic and land use projections used for the TMP will provide a solid foundation for this work.

Staff will then develop a draft vision via two internal workshops and an accompanying series of measures of effectiveness to test the strength of the various service proposals for consistency with local land use plans, system performance, economic development strategies, and environmental impact and livability benefits. Staff anticipates completion of this technical work by the end of 2013 and will engage with Council soon thereafter.

Opportunities for Council Involvement in this Process

Sound Transit's work on the LRP update is scheduled to come forward in January with the draft EIS slated for completion in June. This is an ambitious work plan for the agency in an abbreviated period of time. We anticipate several Council study sessions will be needed in the coming months to ensure Bellevue's priorities and interests are addressed in a future ST3 ballot measure.

A draft timeline for the "Long-Range Plan and SEPA SEIS" process is attached to this update. As noted earlier, the first step in the process is the scoping comment period (October 25-November 25, 2013). This process will continue in phases throughout 2014. Staff will seek policy review and direction from Council at every step throughout the process. Once the scoping comment period ends, the next steps in the process include:

- o Identifying alternatives to study: December, 2013.
- o Draft SEIS process: January – June, 2014.
- o Draft SEIS comment period: July – August, 2014.
- o Final SEIS: September – November, 2014.
- o Adoption of the Updated LRP: December 2014.

Sound Transit staff are scheduled to make a presentation on the LRP update process at the November 18 City Council meeting. Council will have an opportunity to ask questions and provide feedback on the process and the plan update at that time. Bellevue staff will continue to provide briefing materials and updates for Council as this process moves forward.

Attachments:

- 1) City of Bellevue High Capacity Transit (HCT) Interest Statement, approved June 20, 2005
- 2) Draft Timeline for Long-Range Plan and SEPA SEIS

cc: Brad Miyake
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CITY OF BELLEVUE INTEREST STATEMENT FOR FUTURE HIGH CAPACITY TRANSIT

(Revised and Updated June 20, 2005 by Bellevue Council)

Introduction: High Capacity Transit is one of four elements of Bellevue's *Regional Transportation Vision* (in addition to Regional Bus, General Purpose, and HOV). Bellevue's *Regional Transportation Vision* was adopted in 1999 to articulate the City's investment priorities. These investments are considered essential to support economic development and livability for our region and City's long term growth. Bellevue's continued interest in high capacity transit as a component of a regional transportation solution is based upon the *Guiding Principles* listed below.

Context: Sound Transit is responsible for planning, building, and operating a high capacity transportation system for the urbanized portions of King, Pierce, and Snohomish counties. Sound Transit initiated planning for the second phase of Sound Transit investments in April 2004. The City will play an important role in helping to assess and direct resources to key new HCT projects.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES - FUTURE HIGH CAPACITY TRANSIT PROJECTS SHALL:

- 1. Measurably enhance Bellevue's place in the regional economy by better connecting urban centers.** Ensure that the HCT system supports the City's economic development goals by providing direct service to the City's major employment centers, particularly Downtown Bellevue.
- 2. Provide reliable, high-performance, attractive alternatives to SOV travel, especially during peak periods.** It is essential that HCT add new travel capacity within its own right-of-way in order to maximize speed and reliability for HCT service without adversely impacting other modes.
- 3. Recognize Bellevue's investment and preservation of its neighborhoods and minimize local impacts.** HCT planning should acknowledge and be consistent with planning that has been done to date, and should seek to maximize providing amenities to neighborhoods while also being sensitive to neighborhood and quality of life.
- 4. Provide ample opportunity for meaningful public involvement by residents, neighborhood groups, business leaders, and other informal and formal stakeholders.** Members of the community should have opportunities throughout the HCT planning and implementation process to help shape the ultimate configuration of an HCT system in Bellevue and throughout the Eastside.
- 5. Be consistent with regional and local land use and transportation plans¹.** Bellevue continues to play a critical role in local and regional planning that affects all aspects of our community—ensuring adherence to these efforts assists in incremental achievement of the City's land use and transportation Visions.

¹ Metropolitan Transportation Plan (Destination 2030) adopted by the Puget Sound Regional Council in 2002 and Vision 2020; (2) Sound Transit's 1996 Long-Range Vision; (3) Bellevue's Comprehensive Plan; and (4) Bellevue's Regional Transportation Vision and related Corridor Interest Statements.

6. **Recognize and be consistent with corridor work completed since the 1996 vote on Phase I (Sound Move²).** Strive to work within the parameters of the corridor plans completed to date, and control costs by strategically phasing HCT implementation to meet the ultimate solution on each corridor while getting the most out of these incremental investments. Implementation should remain flexible and adaptive to technological advances.
7. **Support Continued Adherence to Sound Transit's Sub-area Equity Financial Policy.** Bellevue supports the existing Sound Transit Financial policies related to sub-area equity, the principle whereby local tax revenues are used to benefit Sound Transit District's five subareas based on the share of revenues each subarea generates, and strongly urges the Sound Transit Board to continue to uphold this principle for current and future phases of HCT planning, funding and implementation.

I-90 CORRIDOR

The I-90 corridor is the City's first priority for HCT Across Lake Washington. Bellevue supports HCT development in I-90's center lanes as the appropriate near-term HCT corridor crossing Lake Washington to Bellevue and on to other points on the Eastside. This is consistent with planning efforts from SR 520/TransLake EIS, the 2004 Amendment to the 1976 I-90 Memorandum of Agreement, Eastside Transportation Partnership positions, Sound Transit decisions and numerous corridor analyses conducted over the last 15 years.

1. HCT System Characteristics

In keeping with the general principles above, the Eastside HCT system must:

- a. Operate in it's own dedicated right of way in order to provide the most efficient and reliable transit service; and
- b. Link the downtown Seattle central business core to Downtown Bellevue and Downtown Bellevue to the Overlake Transit Center first with a system that provides a seamless ride and identify a phased implementation plan to link other destination points on the Eastside (downtown Redmond, Kirkland, Totem Lake, Eastgate and Issaquah) giving priority to segments with the greatest ridership potential; and
- c. Consider whether the existing South Bellevue Park and Ride lot can be utilized to accommodate HCT, while also minimizing environmental and neighborhood impacts; and
- d. Utilize an alignment that efficiently connects the population and employment centers in downtown Seattle and downtown Bellevue; and
- e. Provide transportation capacity through a new HCT system, while maintaining general purpose lane capacity of surface streets from I-90 to Downtown Bellevue and support every reasonable effort to improve general purpose capacity as companion improvements to the system; and

² Including, for example, the FEIS/Preferred Alternative for I-405, I-90 Steering Committee's adoption of R8A as the Preferred Alternative for I-90 Two-Way Transit/HOV Project (addition of new HOV lanes to I-90's outer bridges), and TransLake/SR 520 EIS work still ongoing.

- f. Consider and compare aerial, at grade, and tunneling grade separation options for the system to identify the aesthetic, design, cost, operation and environmental aspects of each option; and
- g. Minimize environmental and noise impacts in order to protect Bellevue's residential and commercial neighborhoods within and surrounding potential HCT alignments and seek to provide neighborhood access to the HCT system; and
- h. Include station locations and access points to serve major retail, employment and residential uses in Downtown Bellevue, the medical institution district and along the corridor, striving to locate stations within a maximum walking time of 10 minutes from major high density land uses; and
- i. Include stations in the Bel-Red corridor as part of the alignment to the Overlake Transit Center in order to maximize ridership and system performance and to accommodate future land use and economic development in the Bel-Red/Overlake areas; and
- j. Provide reliable access to the system by ensuring that adequate existing and new park and ride lot capacity, neighborhood bus connections and local and regional express bus services are available.

2. HCT Alternatives

- a. In order to meet the general principles and system characteristics specified above, and to provide the best system continuity to riders, Bellevue supports Sound Transit advancing a light rail and a bus rapid transit alternative (calling out the incremental cost and impacts of converting bus rapid transit to light rail) along the same corridor into the project level analysis for the I-90 corridor.

520 CORRIDOR

- a. Bellevue supports inclusion of HCT on SR 520 as part of the Updated Sound Transit Long Range Plan.

I-405 CORRIDOR

- a. Bellevue supports HCT on I-405 serving Tukwila, Renton, Newcastle, Bellevue, Kirkland and Bothell as part of Sound Transit's Long Range Plan, including near-term implementation of a Bus Rapid Transit system (with access to the system at Downtown Bellevue and Factoria) as identified in the I-405 Corridor Master Plan.

Long-Range Plan and SEPA SEIS Timeline (DRAFT)

