

CITY COUNCIL STUDY SESSION ITEM

SUBJECT:

East Link: Review and discuss findings of the Downtown Bellevue Light Rail Alternatives Design Report.

STAFF CONTACT:

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FISCAL IMPACT:

N/A

POLICY ISSUES:

The City and Sound Transit have collaborated to evaluate four new alternatives for the routing of light rail through downtown Bellevue. Policy considerations related to each of the alternatives include location of stations in proximity to employment and residences, urban design integration, traffic operations, and construction impacts.

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.

The Sound Transit Board of Director's preferred alternative Motion of May 2009 includes several components that require City action by early 2010. For the downtown Bellevue segment, 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).

In October and November briefings, Sound Transit introduced additional downtown alternatives developed in response to revised financial forecasts and based on input from the at-grade peer review panel and the value analysis workshop. These new alternatives were a shorter downtown tunnel (C9T) and two shorter at-grade options (C9A and C11A), all exiting downtown and crossing I-405 at NE 6th Street. In early December, Council requested that Sound Transit also evaluate an elevated option along 114th Avenue Northeast (C14E). In mid-December, the Sound Transit Board directed staff to conduct additional evaluation of these four alternatives and articulated their intent to reconsider the downtown Bellevue preferred alternative by spring 2010.

In December and January, Sound Transit and City staff developed the *Downtown Bellevue Light Rail Alternatives Concept Design Report*. The effort included refining the alternatives, defining evaluation criteria, developing visual simulations and technical data, and compiling the report.

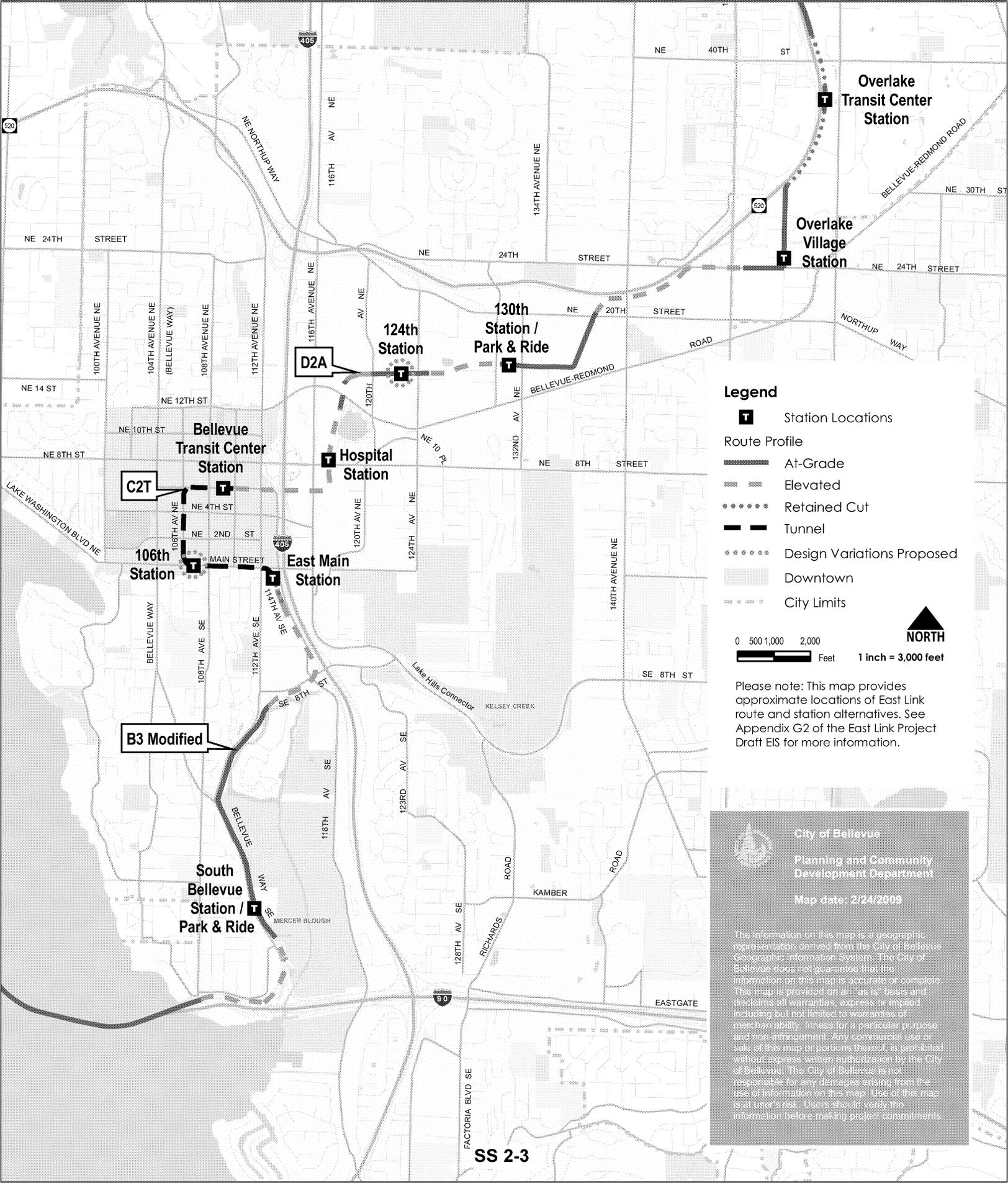
On February 11, the Sound Transit Board and the Bellevue City Council held a joint meeting to review and discuss the analysis contained in the *Downtown Bellevue Light Rail Alternatives Concept Design Report*.

Staff will provide a brief review of the February 11 presentation and request feedback from Council as to any additional information needs to be provided at a later date. Additionally, staff will propose an updated timeline for Council to consider public comment and provide input to the Sound Transit Board prior to their reconsideration of a new preferred alternative for downtown Bellevue.

ATTACHMENTS:

- 1) Bellevue's Preferred East Link Light Rail Route Map
- 2) Sound Transit's East Link Project Preferred Alternative Map

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



Legend

- Station Locations

Route Profile

- At-Grade
- Elevated
- Retained Cut
- Tunnel
- Design Variations Proposed
- Downtown
- City Limits

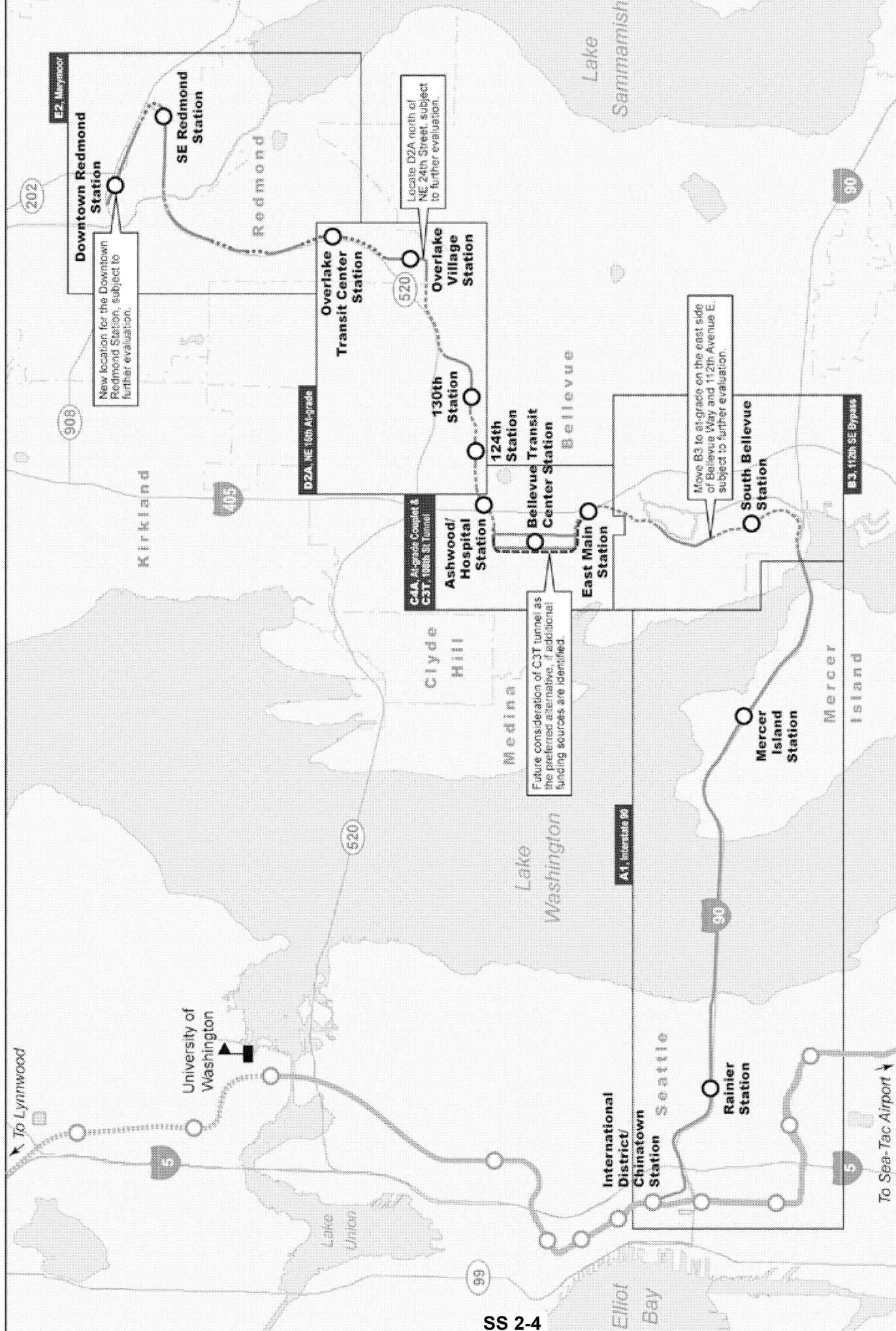
0 500 1,000 2,000 Feet
1 inch = 3,000 feet

NORTH

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.



SS 2-4

City Limits
 East Link Light Rail Alternatives
 East Link Segment
 Station

Route Profile
 At-Grade
 Elevated
 Tunnel
 Retained Cut

Central Link Light Rail
 Central Link Alignment and Station
 Central Link Extension



East Link Project Preferred Alternatives
 East Link Project