

CITY COUNCIL STUDY SESSION ITEM

SUBJECT:

East Link: Review Sound Transit Board of Directors Locally Preferred Alternative

STAFF CONTACT:

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FISCAL IMPACT:

N/A

POLICY ISSUES:

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 the 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).

On February 23rd, 2009 the Council selected a preferred East Link alignment and recommended it to the Sound Transit Board of Directors for its consideration. On May 14, 2009 the Sound Transit Board of Directors was scheduled to identify a Locally Preferred Alternative for the East Link project. The Board's choice, and all other alternatives that have been studied to date, will continue to be evaluated in the East Link Final Environmental Impact Statement that is expected to be complete in late summer 2010. Concurrently, the Locally Preferred Alternative will be advanced through preliminary engineering, which will also be complete by summer 2010.

DIRECTION NEEDED FROM COUNCIL:

- Action
- Discussion
- Information

BACKGROUND/ANALYSIS:

The Bellevue Council recommended its preferred East Link light rail transit alignment and station locations to the Sound Transit Board of Directors on February 25, 2009. This recommendation was based on extensive review and discussion in late 2008 and early 2009, including seven Council meetings. This decision making process included the following major components:

1. Technical information provided by the Draft Environmental Impact Statement;
2. Review of city policy that provided guidance for the development of light rail in Bellevue; and
3. Consideration of public input provided at Sound Transit and Council public hearings to help understand public preferences and considerations.

Council's preferred alternative was detailed in a letter to the Sound Transit Board of Directors.

During the May 18, 2009 Council meeting staff will summarize the May 14, 2009 Sound Transit Board of Directors' Locally Preferred Alternative decision. This summary will compare the Bellevue City Council and Sound Transit Board of Directors preferences. Additionally, staff will discuss anticipated next steps for the project, through issuance of the Final Environmental Impact Statement in late summer 2010.