



MEMORANDUM

DATE: November 4, 2010

TO: Transportation Commission

FROM: Philip Harris, AICP, Senior Transportation Planner
Transportation Department
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SUBJECT: Sound Transit East Link SDEIS release (*memo only*)

Purpose

Sound Transit will be releasing the East Link Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement (SDEIS) on Friday, November 12th, 2010. The release will be followed by a 60-day public comment period. There will be an open house and public hearing at Bellevue City Hall on November 30th, 2010.

Background

Sound Transit has been working for several years to develop the East Link light rail project and the City has been involved throughout that process to represent Bellevue's interests. The voter approved project will connect Bellevue with Overlake, Mercer Island and Seattle, as well as areas in north and south King County when it opens in 2020/21. Sound Transit is responsible for project development and delivery and is currently focused on completion of environmental review and preliminary engineering. The City is actively involved and seeks to influence the alignment and design to reflect City goals and objectives.

Sound Transit's April 2010 revised preference is largely consistent with the City's in the Bel-Red Corridor and downtown Bellevue. In Bel-Red, the preference is the D2A alternative. In downtown, the preference is the C9T 110th Avenue NE tunnel alternative, with the C11A 108th Avenue NE at-grade alternative also advancing in case funding for the C9T alternative does not materialize. In South Bellevue, the Sound Transit Board identified the B2M option as their preferred alternative as a means of achieving \$75-100 million in cost savings over the B3S alternative, which was Sound Transit's previously identified Preferred Alternative. The Bellevue City Council's July 2010 revised preference in South Bellevue is the B7 modified option with a NE 2nd Street tunnel portal.

On July 22, the Sound Transit Board updated the preferred alternative by selecting specific design options for the 112th Avenue SE corridor. For a connection to the C9T 110th Tunnel option, light rail will travel on the east side of 112th Avenue SE from Bellevue Way to SE 6th Street, with a station at SE 8th, then cross over to the west side of 112th to connect to a tunnel portal on the south side of Main Street. For a connection

to the C11A 108th At-Grade option, light rail will travel from the east side of 112th Avenue into the center median near SE 15th Street, travel in the median to SE 6th Street where it will cross to the west side of the street and continue to an at-grade alignment and station on the south side of Main Street between 110th Avenue NE and 108th Avenue NE.

Sound Transit is currently focused on completion of two major phases of project development, environmental review and preliminary engineering (PE). The SDEIS to be published will reflect the new Downtown and 112th Avenue alignments and the retained cut alignment that separates the light rail guideway from NE 15th Street in the "Spring District" development area surrounding the proposed 120th Avenue NE station in the Bel-Red corridor developed subsequent to the publication of the initial DEIS in December 2008. The SDEIS will also include updated conceptual designs for the B7 alignment, reflecting the widening of I-405 and recent development along 118th Avenue SE, and updated noise analysis.

Next Steps

The Final EIS (FEIS) is anticipated to be published in Spring 2011. All alignments will be included in the FEIS, including responses to comments received during the DEIS and SDEIS public comment periods. The final alignment will be identified in the Record of Decision (ROD) published by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), expected in Summer 2011.

Concurrent with the environmental review process, Sound Transit is advancing preliminary engineering on the preferred alternative in an effort to deliver the project by 2020/21 as described to voters in the ST2 ballot measure. Because the alignment will not be final until the ROD is published, Sound Transit takes the risk that the preferred alternative advancing in PE may change. PE to approximately 30% design is expected to be completed by the end of 2010.