

CITY COUNCIL STUDY SESSION ITEM

SUBJECT:

East Link Project Update

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POLICY CONSIDERATION:

The general policy guidance below informs the City's work on this final design phase of the East Link Project.

Comprehensive Plan Policies:

The Comprehensive Plan contains a body of adopted policy, which emerged from the Light Rail Best Practices work, to frame the City's role in light rail project development, including advancing the City's land use and transportation objectives and minimizing neighborhood and environmental impacts.

MOU with Sound Transit:

The City and Sound Transit entered into an Amended and Restated Umbrella Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in May 2015 that defines City contributions to a downtown light rail tunnel and includes terms for both agencies regarding the Operation and Maintenance Satellite Facility (OMSF); project coordination; 130th Avenue NE parcels; permitting, project certainty and mitigation; and, conveyance of property between the agencies.

Light Rail Overlay District:

In addition to collaborating with Sound Transit within the framework of the MOU, the City is the permitting agency for East Link within Bellevue. The Council-adopted Land Use Code (LUC) Part 20.25M defines development standards and design guidelines that shape staff's feedback on design issues. The LUC provisions also establish the permitting process for East Link utilizing the Light Rail Permitting Citizens' Advisory Committee (CAC).

DIRECTION NEEDED FROM COUNCIL:

- Action
- Discussion
- Information

Sound Transit will provide an update on the overall status of the East Link and OMSF projects and provide follow-up from the July 28, 2015 Council presentation. Information will be provided for:

- Operations and Maintenance Satellite Facility (OMSF) update
- Integrated project schedules (including OMSF)
- Sequencing of work between contract packaging (including I-90)
- I-90 Independent Review Team (IRT) range of outstanding issues
- Tunnel Segment update, including construction timing and proposed work hours
- South Bellevue Park and Ride

City staff will provide an update on:

- Bellevue Way maintenance of traffic during construction
- Construction outreach and public relations campaign mid-bi budget discussion

City staff will also seek input from Council on development of principles for the Transit Oriented Development (TOD) surrounding the Spring District/120th and Bel-Red/130th Stations.

BACKGROUND:

In April 2015 the Sound Transit Board adopted the \$3.6 billion baseline budget for East Link. Approval of the baseline budget allows Sound Transit to move forward to the construction phase of the project.

Operations and Maintenance Satellite Facility

In June 2014, the Sound Transit Board identified a preferred site for a new light rail yard for storage and maintenance of a portion of the system’s light rail fleet, called the Operations and Maintenance Satellite Facility (OMSF). The preferred site was one of four studied through the environmental review process, and is centered on the former International Paper site adjacent to the Eastside Rail Corridor and 120th Avenue NE in the City’s Bel-Red area. According to Sound Transit, the facility is needed to support the expansion of the light rail system to the north, south and east through the Sound Transit 2 package of system expansions. Three of the four sites studied are in Bellevue’s Bel-Red area.

The City believed that comprehensive resolution of issues for both East Link and OMSF were intrinsically linked and needed to be viewed as one project that must be addressed together. The Amended MOU outlines terms surrounding the potential OMSF site in Bellevue in the event that the Sound Transit Board ultimately elects to site it in Bellevue.

PROJECT UPDATES:

Sound Transit Updates

Sound Transit will be present to provide an update on the Operations and Satellite Facility (OMSF) and the overall East Link status.

Operations and Maintenance Satellite Facility (OMSF): The Link Light Rail OMSF Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) will be published by Sound Transit on September 25, 2015 and by the FTA on October 2, 2015. The final EIS evaluates four alternatives:

- Preferred Alternative (BNSF Alternative)
- BNSF Modified Alternative
- SR 520 Alternative
- Lynnwood Alternative
- The Sound Transit Capital Committee will discuss the EIS alternatives on October 8, 2015 and the full Board will consider selecting the project to be built on October 22, 2015.
- If the selected OMSF site is in Bellevue, the Amended MOU specifies certain actions by the City and Sound Transit within 30 and 60 days of the ST Board decision, and design elements that will be included.
 - Within 30 days the City will initiate a code amendment process to consider allowing the OMSF under a Process II permit (given the schedule above, November 21, 2015).
 - Within 60 days Sound Transit and the City will initiate a market analysis to consider future TOD for Phase 1 of the preferred site (given the schedule above December 21, 2015).
- This summer Sound Transit also issued a Request for Expression of Interest (RFEI) to potential contractors and developers to inform how TOD can best be delivered. Sound Transit will discuss the information received, if it informed project delivery, and how the information will be utilized moving forward.

East Link and OMSF Integrated project schedules: Information will be provided on the project scheduling and sequencing of work, including the OMSF and the I-90 crossing. Updates on the various segments from I-90 to Redmond will also be provided.

I-90 Independent Review Team (IRT): Council has requested an update on the locations identified for temporary replacement parking, the transit routing modifications that will be necessary to serve them, and options to reduce the length of time the facility will need to be closed for construction.

A combination of existing park and ride capacity and new leased stalls are anticipated to meet the needs during construction. Balancing the safety during construction for users and workers, serving transit routing needs, and completing final construction all must be considered in options for opening the garage early. Sound Transit will provide an update on the locations determined for the temporary replacement parking and any opportunities to open portions of the South Bellevue garage early.

City Updates:

Bellevue Way Maintenance of Traffic During Construction: Constructing light rail adjacent to Bellevue Way and the Mercer Slough requires construction activities that will impact the east side of Bellevue Way. Staff from both agencies have worked to balance environmental impacts (working near the slough), neighborhood impacts (construction adjacent to residential homes), traffic impacts (lane closures along a major arterial serving downtown) and construction methods and durations. While eliminating all impacts during construction is not possible, staff from both agencies have been working to minimize the overall duration and lane reduction impacts along Bellevue Way. It should be noted that minimizing the overall duration does not extend work hours, as a noise

mitigation plan will be required prior to execution of any work beyond standard City work hours. Staff will provide an update on the overall work activities and durations, as well as report what has been heard from recent stakeholder outreach. Staff will also discuss why flexibility and coordination will be important as East Link construction begins along with the myriad of other City capital projects and private development construction that will occur during the same time.

Construction Outreach and Public Relations Campaign – Mid-bi Budget Discussion: During the Amended MOU negotiations, City staff identified the need for a regional public relations and marketing campaign focused on the message that “Bellevue is open for business” through construction. This work element would supplement Sound Transit’s construction outreach program with broadened regional outreach addressing getting around downtown Bellevue and Bel-Red, for both visitors, commuters and residents. The funds associated with this work element were not included in the previous East Link work program.

Staff will present a draft scope of services and a range of costs. Staff is currently analyzing a number of scenarios with which to fund the marketing campaign. Based on Council input on the range of services, a final decision on a funding strategy will be presented to Council along with the City Manager’s Mid-Bi Budget Adjustments later this year.

Transit Oriented Development (TOD): The Amended MOU outlines design elements to support and complement the Bel-Red vision surrounding the Operations and Maintenance Satellite Facility (OMSF) which is in the walk-shed of the Spring District/120th Station. The Amended MOU also identifies the conveyance of parcels to the City near the Bel-Red/130th Station. The objective of development surrounding both of these stations is to establish mixed use, urban transit oriented development, housing affordability and amenities that support the Bel-Red vision.

Extensive outreach for both the Spring District/120th Station and the Bel-Red/130th Station have taken place over the past several years and through the Amended MOU and potential siting of the OMSF in the Bel-Red area. This outreach identified principles for development of these sites. In addition the Bel-Red Corridor Plan established planning principles for the corridor.

In addition to advancement of elements within the Amended MOU, Sound Transit has indicated they will seek to construct the OMSF site with a Design-Build contract. Principles for development of the TOD sites should be incorporated into the contract documents. On Monday, staff will introduce draft principles. Staff will be seeking Council input on the principles to carry forward for the TOD development at both the OMSF/120th parcels and the Bel-Red/130th parcels.

What’s Ahead – In the coming months the following items will return for Council discussion and feedback:

- November 2015 Spring Boulevard Zone 1
- Early 2016 (Q1) OMSF next steps (market analysis, development agreement)