

CITY COUNCIL AGENDA TOPIC

Sound Transit Updates

Lacey Jane Wolfe, Intergovernmental Policy Advisor
City Manager's Office

Andrew Singelakis, Director
Transportation Department

Emil King, Director
Community Development Department

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**DIRECTION**

Sound Transit staff will provide updates on the 2 Line and Stride bus rapid transit. The City Council will also receive a briefing on the Enterprise Initiative, Sound Transit's response to an estimated \$35 billion revenue gap. Following Sound Transit's presentation, Bellevue staff will seek council feedback on the draft *Bellevue Guiding Principles for the Enterprise Initiative* (Attachment A).

RECOMMENDATION

Direct staff to prepare a letter to Sound Transit Board members based on *Bellevue Guiding Principles for the Enterprise Initiative* (Attachment A).

BACKGROUND/ANALYSIS**2 Line**

On Saturday, March 28, 2 Line service will begin across Lake Washington. Known as the Crosslake Connection, this final segment of the 2 Line will connect with the 1 Line at International District/Chinatown Station, creating a fully integrated regional light rail system. The 2 Line's final segment includes new stations at Mercer Island and Judkins Park in Seattle and completes the regional transit system expansion approved by voters in 2008 under Sound Transit 2 (ST2), extending the light rail system from 55 to 63 miles.

A ribbon-cutting ceremony is scheduled for March 28 at 9:00 a.m. at the Sam Smith Park – Judkins Park Station East Entrance. Additionally, the following activation events are planned in Bellevue:

- **South Bellevue Station.** Sound Transit is hosting an event that will include live music, vendors, Bellevue Fire Department "touch a truck," children's activities, and an outdoors focus.
- **Downtown Station.** The Bellevue Downtown Association (BDA) is hosting an event that will include live music, two food trucks, and vendors. City Hall will be open and there will be additional seating on City Hall Plaza.
- **Spring District Station.** Wright Runstad is hosting an event that will include live music, food trucks, vendors, and a petting zoo. Market Hall will be open with community vendors and partners.

- **BelRed Station.** This event will include live music, food truck, arts exhibition, workshops, and coffee at BelRed Arts District's studio space a short walk from the station.

Once the Crosslake Connection opens, the 2 Line will operate between Lynnwood and Redmond, complementing 1 Line service between Federal Way and Lynnwood. Service on both lines will run approximately 5 a.m. to 1 a.m., Monday through Saturday and 6 a.m. to midnight on Sundays. At the 2 Line stations, trains will run approximately every 8 minutes during peak periods and every 10-15 minutes during the remainder of the day.

Stride Bus Rapid Transit

Sound Transit's Stride bus rapid transit (BRT) will provide fast, frequent, and reliable bus service, connecting to Link light rail and communities north, east, and south of Lake Washington. Like light rail service, Stride is designed for convenient, rapid travel, featuring off-board fare payment and multiple-door boarding and exit. Stride was approved by voters in the Sound Transit 3 (ST3) program in 2016.

This high-capacity bus system includes new bus lanes and transit priority improvements, helping riders avoid traffic. The fleet size, speed, service frequency, and road enhancements will allow Stride to serve more riders than traditional bus service. Stride is designed to accommodate the region's growing population and meet the demand for reliable public transportation.

The Stride program will include three bus lines—S1, S2, and S3—replacing existing Sound Transit Express routes that were originally intended as interim service until regional BRT could be built.

- [S1 Line](#): Replaces Express 560 between Burien and Bellevue.
- [S2 Line](#): Replaces Express 535 between Bellevue and Lynnwood.
- [S3 Line](#): Replaces Express 522 between Seattle and Woodinville.

Stride buses will connect with Link light rail at Bellevue Transit Center, Tukwila International Boulevard Station, and Lynnwood City Center. These connections will provide new and convenient ways to reach destinations throughout the region.

The Stride bus fleet will be Sound Transit's first battery-electric bus fleet, offering a cleaner and more sustainable travel option. Stride buses will operate every 10 to 15 minutes, for 17 hours or more each day, seven days a week. During service, buses will be able to recharge their batteries at layover stations at the end of each route before returning to service.

In Bellevue, Stride S1 and S2 will serve the Bellevue Transit Center. The Transit Center will be upgraded as part of the Stride project and will include modifications to the roof canopy, removal of windscreens and some benches to improve circulation on the platform, and installation of ORCA card readers. Construction of these improvements is scheduled to begin later this year.

Between scheduled trips, S1 and S2 buses will use the layover on 110th Avenue NE adjacent to the Bellevue Library, where Sound Transit Express buses currently use layover space. A layover is a scheduled, stationary stop where a bus waits between trips. Inductive charging infrastructure will be installed in these on-street layover locations to allow Stride buses to recharge during layovers. Layover construction is scheduled to begin in 2027.

Enterprise Initiative

Sound Transit is facing an estimated \$35 billion funding gap driven by lower-than-expected revenues, rising construction costs, and continued uncertainty related to tariffs and federal funding commitments. In response, the Enterprise Initiative is a process to update the ST3 plan and the agency's long-range financial plan. By June, Sound Transit anticipates making decisions on potential cost-containment strategies, including project delays, scope reductions, and other adjustments. The Stride program is not impacted by the Enterprise Initiative because it was baselined prior to 2025.

The South Kirkland to Issaquah Link project—also known as the future 4 Line—is vulnerable to delays and scope reductions under the Enterprise Initiative. As described in the ST3 plan, the project would construct light rail service from the South Kirkland Park-and-Ride to Central Issaquah (see Figure 1). Within Bellevue, the project includes two funded stations: one near I-90 at Richards Road and another at the Eastgate Park-and-Ride. The ST3 Plan also identifies a provisional station at I-90 and Lakemont Boulevard. Provisional stations are not funded in the ST3 Plan and would require inclusion; funding must be secured in a future revenue package.

Under the planned operations, 4 Line trains traveling from Issaquah would serve East Main Station before interlining—or sharing track—with the 2 Line until Wilburton Station. At Wilburton, the 4 Line guideway would diverge to serve the South Kirkland Park-and-Ride.

Figure 1. South Kirkland to Issaquah Link Project Map



One issue under discussion will be Sound Transit’s subarea equity policy, which requires the agency to invest local tax revenues in projects and services within each subarea generally in proportion to the level of revenues each subarea generates. Bellevue and the Eastside benefit from subarea equity, while some Seattle representatives on the Sound Transit Board have expressed support for revisiting the policy.

Bellevue Guiding Principles for the Enterprise Initiative

Bellevue staff compiled existing council-adopted plans and policies to develop the *Bellevue Guiding Principles for the Enterprise Initiative* (Attachment A). Staff are seeking council feedback on this document. At the council’s direction, Bellevue staff will prepare a letter to Sound Transit Board members informed by these guiding principles.

POLICY & FISCAL IMPACTS

Policy Impact

Bellevue's *2024-2044 Comprehensive Plan* strategically centers growth in the city's mixed-use centers and calls for the city to "support planned growth and development with a bold transit vision that provides efficient, useful, attractive service for most people, to most destinations, most of the time, serving maximum ridership." The *Comprehensive Plan* also directs the city to "implement the Bellevue Transit Master Plan in collaboration with transit service providers and other partners to ensure that transit is an easy and attractive mobility option for those who live, work, visit, learn or do business in Bellevue."

The city's Eastgate and Factoria Neighborhood/Subarea Plans are currently being updated. The draft vision statements, available on the city's [Great Neighborhoods webpage](#), recognize transit as a key element in supporting the areas' future growth and development. Eastgate and Factoria are also designated draft countywide centers which are focus areas for future transportation investments that provide a mix of jobs, housing and services, and serve as focal points for local and county investment.

During development of the ST3 plan, Bellevue submitted several letters to the Sound Transit Board outlining the city's priorities, including subarea equity, high-capacity transit service to South Kirkland and Issaquah, and bus rapid transit.

Bellevue staff drafted the Bellevue *Guiding Principles for the Enterprise Initiative* based on the policy documents and correspondence listed above. Staff are seeking council feedback on this draft.

Fiscal Impact

There is no fiscal impact associated with directing staff to prepare a letter to Sound Transit Board members.

OPTIONS

1. Direct staff to prepare a letter to Sound Transit Board members based on *Bellevue Guiding Principles for the Enterprise Initiative* (Attachment A).
2. Provide alternate direction to staff.

ATTACHMENTS

- A. Draft *Bellevue Guiding Principles for the Enterprise Initiative*
- B. July 14, 2015 Bellevue Comment Letter to Sound Transit Board
- C. January 21, 2016 Bellevue Comment Letter to Sound Transit Board
- D. January 21, 2016 Joint Eastside Cities ST3 Letter
- E. April 28, 2016 I-405 Cities Coalition ST3 Letter
- F. May 2, 2016 Bellevue Comment Letter to Sound Transit Board

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N/A