

Regional Transportation Planning

Bellevue update on I-405 and SR 520 continued
collaboration

Bellevue update on Sound Transit 3 long-range Plan

Bellevue update on Metro's long-range Plan

DATE: May 11, 2015

TO: Mayor Balducci and City Councilmembers

FROM: Paula Stevens, Assistant Director Transportation Planning
Joyce Nichols, Director of Intergovernmental Relations

SUBJECT: Interstate 405 and State Route 520 Update

The Cities of Kirkland and Bellevue have worked cooperatively for many years to develop a vision and implement improvements for I-405 and SR 520 that would help relieve congestion, support mobility options and improve the safety and reliability of these two vital transportation corridors.

In 2005, Council approved an I-405 Corridor Implementation Interest Statement containing guiding principles and key implementation elements (see Attachment A). Similarly, Council, along with Kirkland and other Eastside communities, developed a Policy Interest Statement for the SR 520 corridor and bridge replacement improvements (see Attachment B). Both documents have informed Bellevue's longstanding priorities regarding funding and project implementation for these corridors.

More recently, the Eastside cities have joined coalitions of other stakeholders working with the state legislature to pass a statewide transportation package to address these corridor improvements. These efforts have spanned several legislative sessions, culminating in House and Senate proposals approved by each chamber in 2015. The proposals include funding for the region's highest transportation priorities:

- \$1.24 billion for the I-405 Bellevue to Renton widening project.
- \$1.6 billion for the SR 520 Seattle Corridor Improvements on the west end of the bridge project.
- \$40 million for a new interchange on SR 520 at 124th (House proposal only).
- \$2.8 million for the SR 520 bike path/trail project.
- \$1.8 million for the Mountains-to-Sound Greenway project.

The legislature was unable to finish its business during the regular session and is in special session at this time. Negotiations in Olympia are ongoing and no action is expected on a transportation revenue package until a compromise is reached on the Operating Budget. There is significant pressure on legislators from local governments, businesses, labor groups and various transportation and transit stakeholders to approve a package this session. (The good news is that we are hearing that the two Transportation Committee Chairs in the House and Senate are continuing discussions to reach a compromise on a revenue package.)

I-405 CORRIDOR IMPLEMENTATION INTEREST STATEMENT

Approved by Bellevue City Council on March 7, 2005

Background

The City of Bellevue is committed to supporting important regional transportation corridor improvements. I-405 has received notable legislative and funding attention in recent years due in part to Bellevue's continued advocacy. I-405 (between I-90 and SR 520) carries over 205,000 vehicle trips and 260,000 person trips each day. This section of I-405 was identified by the Governor's Blue Ribbon Commission on Transportation as one of the worst congestion choke-points in the state with over 26,000 hours of person delay every day.

Bellevue's May 2000 *I-405 Study/EIS Interest Statement* identified key principles that continue to be important as corridor improvements move from design to construction. These include: (1) advancement of Bellevue's Regional Transportation Vision (recently updated as Bellevue's Regional Mobility Interest Statement); (2) preservation of Bellevue's neighborhoods, and (3) advancement of action alternatives that include a broad array of facility improvements—general purpose widening, Bus Rapid Transit and demand management strategies.

The following principles represent a more refined articulation of the City's vision for I-405 implementation, with special attention to improvements in Bellevue's downtown that are of significant regional consequence.

Guiding Principles for I-405 Project Implementation

The Washington State Department of Transportation, in close collaboration with the City, should:

1. ***Maintain a Long-Term Commitment for Corridor Improvement:*** Continue to advocate for implementation of the I-405 Corridor Master Plan along the entire corridor in an effort to improve traffic congestion on this critical regional corridor. I-405 is among the state's most critical freight corridors, is among the most congested in the state and country, and serves as is the economic back-bone for East King County communities and is a critical link for regional commerce and mobility; and
2. ***Execute a Detailed Phasing Plan:*** Select a project phasing program that best minimizes traffic congestion based on analysis of regional system traffic shifts that would be created by regional corridor construction phasing scenarios and elimination of bottlenecks; and
3. ***Seek Early Right-of-Way Cost Savings Measures:*** Pursue long-term cost savings through early Right-of-Way purchases within the anticipated areas for reconstruction; and

4. ***Seek Discrete Projects that Uphold Sound Regional Planning:*** Ensure that projects implemented on I-405 between I-90 and SR 520 compliment the City's Downtown Implementation Plan and help fulfill the requirements and opportunities afforded by the State Growth Management Act and the Region's Destination 2030 Plan; and
5. ***Ensure Responsible Environmental Mitigation:*** In an effort to protect Bellevue's neighborhoods adjacent to I-405, ensure that all environmental impacts are mitigated responsibly under current state and federal law including and not limited to: noise, air and water quality.
6. ***Support Effective Regional Coordination:*** I-405 is one of several key corridors, including SR 520, I-90, the Alaskan Way Viaduct, SR 522 and SR 167, in need of significant investment in the Puget Sound area. Regional coordination and phasing of the projects to minimize impacts is imperative to keep the region moving as concurrent projects are constructed. The City strongly encourages the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) to advance appropriate projects along I-405 and I-90 in advance of other major corridors in order to mitigate impacts associated with the Alaskan Way Viaduct and SR 520 reconstruction projects. Traffic congestion impacts that would otherwise be felt in downtown Bellevue and cities to the south without such advanced mitigation would significantly affect the larger regional transport system.

Key Elements of Implementation

1. **NE 10th Access and Circulation.** It is Bellevue's highest priority to seek full funding for the NE 10th interchange and associated I-405 improvements in order to accommodate expected downtown growth and overall I-405 volumes. Improvements required to implement NE 10th will benefit the broader I-405 and SR 520 regional system.
2. **I-405 Downtown/Mainline Capacity and Management.** The City recognizes that future demand on I-405 is nearly evenly split between mainline traffic and those going to/from downtown Bellevue. It is imperative that mainline solutions be fully examined to keep traffic moving smoothly, especially at peak periods and with regard to SR 520 project mitigation. Further, the same rigor and deployment of traffic management techniques used for Access Downtown should be deployed for all I-405 mainline improvements in an effort to anticipate, manage and mitigate traffic volumes during construction.
3. **I-405 Improvements between SR 167 and I-90.** This segment of I-405 must receive priority funding to facilitate predictable regional travel in advance of other major corridor construction. The existing corridor is inadequate to handle general traffic and freight demand, which leads to safety and risk issues. Any regional corridor construction activity that will displace additional traffic onto I-405 will further exacerbate traffic congestion and safety issues associated with this corridor.
4. **NE 2nd Access and Circulation.** Pursuant to the I-405 Master Plan and Bellevue's Downtown Implementation Plan, the NE 2nd interchange must receive high priority for near-term implementation in order to mitigate expected travel growth in downtown Bellevue within the corridor generally. This additional access will allow for greater choice and distribution points for access to/from downtown.

SR 520 Corridor and Bridge Replacement Improvements
CITIES OF REDMOND, KIRKLAND, BELLEVUE, CLYDE HILL, MEDINA, YARROW POINT, & HUNTS POINT
POLICY INTEREST STATEMENT

October 2006

- The Cities of Redmond, Kirkland, Bellevue, Clyde Hill, Medina, Yarrow Point, and Hunts Point support multi-modal transportation solutions for the SR 520 Bridge and Corridor that include general purpose, HOV, high-capacity transit (HCT), bus transit and non-motorized improvements;
- SR 520 Bridge and Corridor improvements, construction phasing and funding must be coordinated with other regional transportation efforts underway, including development of Sound Transit Phase 2 and the Regional Transportation Improvement District investments, for a comprehensive system of multi-modal transportation improvements for the Eastside;
- The Cities of Redmond, Kirkland, Bellevue, Clyde Hill, Medina, Yarrow Point, and Hunts Point support the following options for the SR 520 Bridge and Corridor:
 - A 6-lane SR 520 Bridge Replacement and HOV option (two general purpose lanes and one new HOV lane in each direction)
 - A system of freeway-to-freeway HOV connections at SR 520/I-5, and SR 520/I-405
 - Direct transit access at 108th Avenue NE, provided that existing regional bus service levels are not impaired
 - A SR 520 Bridge and Corridor designed and sized to incorporate HCT, with adequate right-of-way to accommodate the required footprint of HCT and a re-constructed east high-rise that can structurally accommodate HCT
 - Retain bus transit flyer stops between the SR 520 Bridge and I-405 as long as HCT can be accommodated in the future
 - Bicycle/pedestrian path across the SR 520 Bridge and throughout the Corridor from I-5 to SR-202, providing a continuous, seamless bicycle/pedestrian path
- The Cities of Redmond, Kirkland, Bellevue, Clyde Hill, Medina, Yarrow Point, and Hunts Point encourage WSDOT, Sound Transit, the City of Seattle, the University of Washington and affected Seattle neighborhoods to reach agreement on design options and transit access that result in solutions that provide regional connections and enable the design and construction of the SR 520 Bridge and Corridor improvements to proceed without delay;
- The Cities of Redmond, Kirkland, Bellevue, Clyde Hill, Medina, Yarrow Point, and Hunts Point urge the WSDOT to meet the current schedule for SR 520 Bridge and Corridor improvements, with the Final EIS issued in 2007, a Record of Decision in 2008 and bid for construction in 2009;
- The Cities of Redmond, Kirkland, Bellevue, Clyde Hill, Medina, Yarrow Point, and Hunts Point are committed to working with WSDOT to minimize neighborhood impacts, including addressing Corridor bottlenecks and queuing of traffic onto local arterials;
- The Cities of Redmond, Kirkland, Bellevue, Clyde Hill, Medina, Yarrow Point, and Hunts Point will work with WSDOT to develop a construction mitigation plan that will minimize impacts to SR 520 users and affected neighborhoods; and
- The Cities of Redmond, Kirkland, Bellevue, Clyde Hill, Medina, Yarrow Point, and Hunts Point will actively assist in efforts to secure necessary funding for implementation of the SR 520 Bridge and Corridor improvements, and will continue to work together on planning for future HCT on the SR 520 Bridge.

DATE: May 11, 2015

TO: Mayor Balducci and City Councilmembers

FROM: Paul Stevens, Assistant Director Transportation Planning
Joyce Nichols, Director of Intergovernmental Relations

SUBJECT: Sound Transit 3

With the second phase of the regional high capacity network (i.e., ST2) well underway, Sound Transit is now planning for the third phase (ST3). Sound Transit has identified the following set of eight “core principles” that will guide the development and evaluation of a range of projects and scenarios for the ST3 system plan:

- Completing the Link light rail spine
- Ridership
- Connecting the region’s designated centers with high capacity transit (HCT)
- Advancing “logical next steps” projects beyond the spine; within financial capacity
- Integrating with other transit operators/transportation systems
- Multi-modal access
- Promoting transit supportive land use and transit-oriented development
- Socio-economic equity

During the remainder of 2015, Sound Transit will develop a draft list of potential priority projects for expanding the regional high capacity system and evaluate the effectiveness of various scenarios prior to Sound Transit Board adoption of the ST3 System Plan by June 2016. Bellevue and Kirkland staff, along with staff from other eastside cities, had several meetings with Sound Transit during the update of its Long Range Plan in 2014. Similar meetings are being scheduled this year to discuss and provide input to the system plan as it develops. There will also be opportunities for the public to comment on the draft list of potential priority projects this summer and the draft system plan in early 2016.

Attachment A is a draft interest statement provided to the Bellevue City Council in June 2014 regarding the Long Range Plan Update. The draft statement provides a summary of the projects that were considered important to include in the Long Range Plan Update – projects for the system plan must be part of the adopted Long Range Plan. The interest statement lists eight potential priorities for Bellevue, in no particular order, that were subsequently included in the Long Range Plan. The priorities articulated in the interest statement represent opportunities for collaboration between Bellevue and Kirkland to serve our mutual interests as well as the greater eastside. For example, I-405 bus rapid transit (BRT) would benefit cities along the entire length of the highway from Renton to Lynnwood. Also, regional express (REX) bus service will be important to connect regional centers to light rail but just as importantly link eastside cities and centers to each other.

City of Bellevue
Interest Statement Concerning Update to Sound Transit's Long Range Plan
(Early planning for future ST3 Program)

The City of Bellevue has long embraced and successfully advocated for a multimodal approach to addressing its regional transportation challenges. The regional network of highway, HOV, regional bus and future light rail serving our region and Bellevue must work in a highly integrated fashion to achieve system performance even as our area continues to grow.

Looking beyond the implementation of East Link to 2023 is an important question as Sound Transit updates its Long Range Plan. The City of Bellevue urges the Sound Transit Board to affirm its support of the following improvements serving the region (not in priority order):

1. **Build upon ST2 Light Rail Investments.** Bellevue strongly affirms its support for the extension of rail from Overlake to Downtown Redmond approved in ST2. The City also supports extensions to Tacoma and Everett in the future and applauds the Sound Transit Board for including these extensions in the Long Range Plan Update now underway.
2. **Sustain Regional Express Bus (REX) Service.** Sound Transit's REX service must provide a supportive role to all ST rail stations to maximize ST2 investments and provide high capacity transit (HCT) for high demand activity centers throughout the Sound Transit district.
3. **Advance Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Serving I-405 Consistent with I-405 Master Plan.** I-405 BRT has been partially implemented since the I-405 Master Plan was adopted in 2002. We look forward to forthcoming alternative analysis of I-405, the Eastside's "main street" and Bellevue urges the Sound Transit Board to place a high priority on this critical corridor given its tremendous multimodal potential.
4. **Provide High Capacity Transit Connecting Bellevue, Issaquah and Kirkland.** Bellevue supports the Sound Transit Board including this corridor for study that will articulate alternatives for optimal High Capacity Transit connections between these three eastside jurisdictions.
5. **Develop a Strategic Park and Ride Lot Expansion Plan.** Sound Transit should coordinate closely with other transit providers and WSDOT to ensure the entire HCT system has adequate and strategically placed park and ride lots at the outer edges of the region to intercept trips "upstream" in highly traveled corridors.
6. **Implement a Highly Integrated System.** The Long Range Plan should strengthen system integration and continuity among all transit providers through continued commitment to connecting our region's centers and providing appropriate feeder service to the regional rail spine. Bellevue's Transit Master Plan (Proposed Frequent Transit Network) is a critical component to improving future mobility for the eastside and as such it should be considered into the HCT corridors and other service improvements to optimize the effectiveness of the future HCT network.
7. **Include the Bellevue College [Regional] Connection in the Next Plan.** Bellevue supports the Sound Transit Boards inclusion of a revised 142nd Place SE transit corridor serving Bellevue College's 36,000 students. Eighty percent of the trips coming to the college originate outside of Bellevue and improving this corridor will provide significant operational reliability and travel time savings for transit. The City urges it be included as a priority project in the adopted Plan update.

8. **Consideration of Future Eastside Rail Corridor (ERC).** The City supports consideration of the corridor for long term passenger rail. While we believe this is a long-term option, it is critically important that planning for the ERC is consistent with Bellevue's 2013 ERC Interest Statement, particularly as it relates to long term implementation activities: *"Ensure affected local intersections and state highway interchanges along the corridor are carefully analyzed, planned and phased, especially where there are overlapping or competing interests for uses of the ERC right-of-way in highly constrained locations."*

DATE: May 11, 2015

TO: Mayor Balducci and City Councilmembers

FROM: Paul Stevens, Assistant Director Transportation Planning
Joyce Nichols, Director of Intergovernmental Relations

SUBJECT: Metro Long Range Plan

The King County Metro Transit Long Range Plan, scheduled for completion by the fourth quarter of 2016, will evaluate unmet transit service needs throughout King County as identified by the existing Metro Service Guidelines, as well as the service and capital elements of a future Metro transit network at various funding levels through 2040. The Plan will take into consideration the Puget Sound Regional Council's economic, growth management, and transportation plans. Metro is developing the Plan in coordination with local jurisdictions – including the cities of Bellevue and Kirkland – and regional transit agencies. Development of the Plan will be based on the principle that jurisdictions' comprehensive and transportation plans inform the Long Range Plan and the Long Range Plan informs jurisdictions' comprehensive and transportation plans.

In July 2014, the City adopted a Transit Master Plan (TMP) that has been a critical source of ongoing guidance for staff and Council as Metro updates its Service Guidelines and undertakes its Long Range Plan development process. The TMP is predicated on the concept of “abundant access”, intended 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 TMP provided the basis for Bellevue to advocate successfully to preserve routes 234, 235, and 245, which link Bellevue and Kirkland and were identified by Metro as service reduction candidates in September 2014.

Priorities for Bellevue include:

- A focus on frequent connections between all-day markets (i.e. major activity centers like Downtown Kirkland and Bellevue).
- Decoupling frequent transit network service (routes identified in the TMP) from coverage service to improve directness and travel time for core routes.
- Bus rapid transit on I-405.
- RapidRide-type service from downtown Bellevue to downtown Kirkland and from downtown Redmond to Factoria via Crossroads and Eastgate.
- Construction of the Bellevue College Connector capital project, which improves bus operations between Eastgate and Kirkland.