

CITY OF BELLEVUE: FUTURE HIGH CAPACITY TRANSIT INTEREST STATEMENT

(Revised and Updated by Council June 20, 2005)

Introduction: High Capacity Transit is one of four elements of Bellevue's *Regional Transportation Vision* (in addition to Regional Bus, General Purpose, and HOV). Bellevue's Regional Transportation Vision was adopted in 1999 to articulate the City's investment priorities. These investments are considered essential to support economic development and livability for our region and City's long term growth. Bellevue's continued interest in high capacity transit as a component of a regional transportation solution is based upon the *Guiding Principles* listed below.

Context: Sound Transit is responsible for planning, building, and operating a high capacity transportation system for the urbanized portions of King, Pierce, and Snohomish counties. Sound Transit initiated planning for the second phase of Sound Transit investments in April 2004. The City will play an important role in helping to assess and direct resources to key new HCT projects.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES - FUTURE HIGH CAPACITY TRANSIT PROJECTS SHALL:

1. ***Measurably enhance Bellevue's place in the regional economy by better connecting urban centers.*** Ensure that the HCT system supports the City's economic development goals by providing **direct service to the City's major employment centers, particularly Downtown Bellevue.**
2. ***Provide reliable, high-performance, attractive alternatives to SOV travel, especially during peak periods. It is essential that HCT add new travel capacity within its own right-of-way in order to maximize speed and reliability for HCT service without adversely impacting other modes.***
3. ***Recognize Bellevue's investment and preservation of its neighborhoods and minimize local impacts.*** HCT planning should acknowledge and be consistent with planning that has been done to date, and should seek to maximize providing amenities to neighborhoods while also being sensitive to neighborhood and quality of life.
4. ***Provide ample opportunity for meaningful public involvement by residents, neighborhood groups, business leaders, and other informal and formal stakeholders.*** Members of the community should have opportunities throughout the HCT planning and implementation process to help shape the ultimate configuration of an HCT system in Bellevue and throughout the Eastside.
5. ***Be consistent with regional and local land use and transportation plans¹.*** Bellevue continues to play a critical role in local and regional planning that affects all aspects of our community—ensuring adherence to these efforts assists in incremental achievement of the City's land use and transportation Visions.

¹ Metropolitan Transportation Plan (Destination 2030) adopted by the Puget Sound Regional Council in 2002 and Vision 2020; (2) Sound Transit's 1996 Long-Range Vision; (3) Bellevue's Comprehensive Plan; and (4) Bellevue's Regional Transportation Vision and related Corridor Interest Statements.

6. **Recognize and be consistent with corridor work completed since the 1996 vote on Phase I (Sound Move²).** Strive to work within the parameters of the corridor plans completed to date, and control costs by strategically phasing HCT implementation to meet the ultimate solution on each corridor while getting the most out of these incremental investments. Implementation should remain flexible and adaptive to technological advances.
7. **Support Continued Adherence to Sound Transit's Sub-area Equity Financial Policy.** Bellevue supports the existing Sound Transit Financial policies related to sub-area equity, the principle whereby local tax revenues are used to benefit Sound Transit District's five subareas based on the share of revenues each subarea generates, and strongly urges the Sound Transit Board to continue to uphold this principle for current and future phases of HCT planning, funding and implementation.

▪ **I-90 CORRIDOR**

The I-90 corridor is the City's first priority for HCT Across Lake Washington. Bellevue supports HCT development in I-90's center lanes as the appropriate near-term HCT corridor crossing Lake Washington to Bellevue and on to other points on the Eastside. This is consistent with planning efforts from SR 520/TransLake EIS, the 2004 Amendment to the 1976 I-90 Memorandum of Agreement, Eastside Transportation Partnership positions, Sound Transit decisions and numerous corridor analyses conducted over the last 15 years.

1. HCT System Characteristics

In keeping with the general principles above, the Eastside HCT system must:

- a. Operate in it's own dedicated right of way in order to provide the most efficient and reliable transit service; and
- b. Link the downtown Seattle central business core to Downtown Bellevue and Downtown Bellevue to the Overlake Transit Center first with a system that provides a seamless ride and identify a phased implementation plan to link other destination points on the Eastside (downtown Redmond, Kirkland, Totem Lake, Eastgate and Issaquah) giving priority to segments with the greatest ridership potential; and
- c. Consider whether the existing South Bellevue Park and Ride lot can be utilized to accommodate HCT, while also minimizing environmental and neighborhood impacts; and
- d. Utilize an alignment that efficiently connects the population and employment centers in downtown Seattle and downtown Bellevue; and
- e. Provide transportation capacity through a new HCT system, while maintaining general purpose lane capacity of surface streets from I-90 to Downtown Bellevue and support every reasonable effort to improve general purpose capacity as companion improvements to the system; and
- f. Consider and compare aerial, at grade, and tunneling grade separation options for the system to identify the aesthetic, design, cost, operation and environmental aspects of each option; and

² Including, for example, the FEIS/Preferred Alternative for I-405, I-90 Steering Committee's adoption of R8A as the Preferred Alternative for I-90 Two-Way Transit/HOV Project (addition of new HOV lanes to I-90's outer bridges), and TransLake/SR 520 EIS work still ongoing.

- g. Minimize environmental and noise impacts in order to protect Bellevue's residential and commercial neighborhoods within and surrounding potential HCT alignments and seek to provide neighborhood access to the HCT system; and
- h. Include station locations and access points to serve major retail, employment and residential uses in Downtown Bellevue, the medical institution district and along the corridor, striving to locate stations within a maximum walking time of 10 minutes from major high density land uses; and
- i. Include stations in the Bel-Red corridor as part of the alignment to the Overlake Transit Center in order to maximize ridership and system performance and to accommodate future land use and economic development in the Bel-Red/Overlake areas; and
- j. Provide reliable access to the system by ensuring that adequate existing and new park and ride lot capacity, neighborhood bus connections and local and regional express bus services are available.

2. HCT Alternatives

- a. In order to meet the general principles and system characteristics specified above, and to provide the best system continuity to riders, Bellevue supports Sound Transit advancing a light rail and a bus rapid transit alternative (calling out the incremental cost and impacts of converting bus rapid transit to light rail) along the same corridor into the project level analysis for the I-90 corridor.

▪ **520 CORRIDOR**

- a. Bellevue supports inclusion of HCT on SR 520 as part of the Updated Sound Transit Long Range Plan.

▪ **I-405 CORRIDOR**

- a. Bellevue supports HCT on I-405 serving Tukwila, Renton, Newcastle, Bellevue, Kirkland and Bothell as part of Sound Transit's Long Range Plan, including near-term implementation of a Bus Rapid Transit system (with access to the system at Downtown Bellevue and Factoria) as identified in the I-405 Corridor Master Plan.