

CITY COUNCIL STUDY SESSION ITEM

SUBJECT:

- 1) Council direction on a City of Bellevue comment letter to the Sound Transit Board regarding the Sound Transit Phase 3 (ST3) System Plan project scope, and;
- 2) Council action on a joint Eastside Cities comment letter to the Sound Transit Board regarding ST3 System Plan project scope.

STAFF CONTACT:

David Berg, Director, 452-6468

Nancy LaCombe, Regional Transportation Projects Manager, 452-4382

Kate March, Transportation Policy Advisor, 452-2055

Transportation Department

Joyce Nichols, Director, 452-4225

Intergovernmental Relations

POLICY ISSUES:

How can ST3 best serve the future transportation needs of Bellevue and the Eastside?

Bellevue Future High Capacity Transit Interest Statement:

The City's 2005 "Future High Capacity Transit (HCT) Interest Statement" highlights Bellevue's role as an economic hub for the region and the Eastside in particular and supports expansion of the regional HCT network.

Bellevue ST3 Interest Statement:

The City of Bellevue has long embraced and advocated for a multimodal approach to addressing local and regional transportation challenges. The City's "Sound Transit Phase 3 (ST3) Interest Statement" continues support of a network of highways, high-occupancy vehicle facilities, express and local bus service, regional trails and future light rail serving our region and the Eastside must work as a highly integrated system to serve the needs of the growing population and to sustain a healthy economy.

Eastside Cities ST3 Joint Interest Statement:

The Cities of Bellevue, Issaquah, Kirkland, Redmond, Renton and Sammamish share regional transit interests in the ST3 System Plan. The "Sound Transit Phase 3 (ST3) System Plan Joint Interest Statement" calls for improved connection of regional growth centers on the Eastside and with the broader region.

DIRECTION NEEDED FROM COUNCIL:

- X Action
- X Discussion
- X Information

The purpose of tonight's briefing is to:

- Discuss the ST3 candidate projects scopes presented to Council at the December 14 Council meeting and provide direction on a comment letter to the Sound Transit Board.

- Present a joint Eastside Cities ST3 candidate project scope comment letter to the Sound Transit Board.

Sound Transit released its analysis for the ST3 candidate projects under consideration on December 4, 2015 and briefed Council on the Eastside candidate projects at the December 14, 2015 Study Session. At tonight's Study Session, Council will have a follow up discussion to the December 14 presentation and review a draft comment letter on the candidate projects for submission to the Sound Transit Board by the January 21, 2016 comment deadline.

BACKGROUND/ANALYSIS:

The second phase of Sound Transit's regional HCT network (ST2) is well underway. Council adopted a "Future HCT Interest Statement" (Attachment 1) in 2005. In 2013 and 2014, Sound Transit updated its Long Range Plan as a first step in preparing a new system plan of regional transit system projects (e.g. light rail extensions, commuter rail improvements, BRT and express bus service). The Long Range Plan is unconstrained in terms of time and budget, so it represents a list of all possible projects that could be included in any future system plan.

The Sound Transit Board adopted the Long Range Plan Update in December 2014 and directed Sound Transit staff to prepare a new system plan (ST3) that could be considered by voters in 2016. Council heard a presentation on the ST3 system planning process and draft project on June 8. Following this presentation, Council adopted a ST3 Interest Statement on July 13 (Attachment 2) and sent a ST3 comment letter to the Sound Transit Board (Attachment 3). Council adopted a joint eastside cities ST3 interest statement (Attachment 4) on July 14.

Sound Transit is considering a list of candidate projects for expanding regional HCT system for inclusion in the ST3 system plan. The Sound Transit Board prioritized this list (Attachment 5) at its August 27 meeting and directed Sound Transit staff to complete a technical analysis of the proposed projects related to costs, ridership and other factors, such as how each project addresses the following core priorities identified by the Sound Transit Board:

- 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;
- Integration with other transit operators/transportation systems;
- Multi-modal access;
- Promoting transit-supportive land use and transit-oriented development; and,
- Socio-economic equity.

On December 4, Sound Transit released completed analyses for the ST3 candidate projects under consideration. The Sound Transit Board will narrow this project list at its January 28, 2016 meeting and is requesting feedback on the scope of the candidate projects from local jurisdictions by January 21, 2016.

Using Council's ST3 Interest Statement as a guide, staff has prepared a draft comment letter on the candidate projects for Council review (Attachment 6). Additionally, staff from the eastside cities impacted by the ST3 candidate projects have worked together to develop a joint comment letter using the Eastside Cities ST3 Interest Statement as a guide (Attachment 7).

Following the January 21 local jurisdiction comment deadline, there will be a draft system plan issued for broad public comment in March 2016. The Sound Transit Board will adopt a Final ST3 System Plan in June 2016, which could be placed on the November 2016 ballot for a public vote on funding for the plan.

NEXT STEPS:

At your January 19, 2016 Council meeting, City staff will bring a revised draft City of Bellevue ST3 candidate project scope comment letter back to Council for action.

Sound Transit 3/Council Involvement Timeline	
ST3 Milestone	Council Involvement
January	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> January 28 Sound Transit Board narrows candidate project list for inclusion in the draft ST3 System Plan. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> January 21 Council comment letter to the Sound Transit Board on the ST3 candidate projects scopes.
February	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continued council presentations/discussions on ST3 policies and projects.
March	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> March 24 Sound Transit releases draft ST3 System Plan to the public for comment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continued council presentations/discussions on ST3 policies and projects.
April/May	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sound Transit public outreach on draft ST3 System Plan. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council comment letter to the Sound Transit Board on the draft ST3 System Plan.
June	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> June 23 Sound Transit Board adopts final ST3 System Plan. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council may choose to provide comment on the final ST3 System Plan in advance of a potential November 2016 public vote.
November Potential public vote on ST3 funding package	

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment 1 – Bellevue Future High Capacity Transit Interest Statement
 Attachment 2 – Bellevue ST3 Interest Statement
 Attachment 3 – Bellevue ST3 Letter to the Sound Transit Board
 Attachment 4 – Eastside Cities ST3 Joint Interest Statement
 Attachment 5 – ST3 Candidate Projects List
 Attachment 6 – Draft City of Bellevue Comment letter
 Attachment 7 – Draft Eastside Cities Joint Comment letter