

February 27, 2017

## **CITY COUNCIL STUDY SESSION ITEM**

### **SUBJECT**

Access Bellevue Communications Plan

### **STAFF CONTACTS**

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### **POLICY ISSUES**

*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. The MOU also calls for outreach efforts including a neighborhood involvement process regarding traffic mitigation and a public relations/marketing campaign that messages "Bellevue is open for business" through construction.

## **DIRECTION NEEDED FROM COUNCIL**

### **ACTION**



### **DIRECTION**



### **INFORMATION ONLY**



City staff are returning to Council following the December 12, 2016 briefing with an update on the Access Bellevue communications plan. Staff will be requesting direction to return at a future meeting for authorization to transfer funding from Interlocal Project Contingencies (G-106) to East Link Analysis and Development (PW-R-159) for the East Link Public Relations campaign. Estimated costs were set aside in the Interlocal Project Contingencies pending more detail on the campaign. No additional funding is being requested.

### **Public Relations/Communications Plan**

#### **Background:**

Community stakeholders have raised concerns about the impacts to individual businesses adjacent to Sound Transit's construction activity, as well as the broader region. The concerns stem from the perception that Sound Transit's construction, as well as growth and construction projects elsewhere in Bellevue, may deter folks from coming to Bellevue for work, leisure, and other activities. Council directed staff to proactively address this concern through a broad public relations informational campaign. As a result, the MOU includes language for *"a regional marketing campaign focused on the message that "Bellevue is open for business" through construction."* Council also set aside funding under Interlocal Project Contingencies (G-106) until the details of the public relations campaign were identified and approved.

#### **Plan Development:**

A multi-departmental team, including the city's Economic Development group, developed a draft communications plan in September 2016. Input on the draft, named "Access Bellevue" was received by the Bellevue Downtown Association, Meydenbauer Center and Sound Transit (Outreach). The Access Bellevue Plan was also shared with the recently formed Access Bellevue Communications Committee, comprised of City, business and community stakeholders.

Observations about the Access Bellevue Plan included the viewpoint that information networks across a variety of platforms to a variety of consumers already exist; and that to be successful, the Access Bellevue Plan did not need to create a whole new network or messaging platform. Those involved with the Access Bellevue Plan acknowledged ground work done by Council and staff, along with collaboration with Sound Transit, which identified key traffic management strategies that will be implemented to minimize disruption.

The Access Bellevue Plan is intended to complement Sound Transit's on-going community outreach programs. Sound Transit's programs generally focus resources, outreach, and assistance to businesses immediately adjacent to construction, where localized access impacts may occur. The Access Bellevue Plan will enhance and extend Sound Transit's more localized efforts to ensure the information needs of the community are met during East Link light rail and surrounding major construction. The Access Bellevue Plan does not solely focus on East Link construction, but also coordinates communication related to East Link with construction of the City's roadway infrastructure projects and private development projects near the East Link alignment and throughout the City.

The goals of the Access Bellevue Plan are to effectively communicate construction information to those who live, work, and visit Bellevue; to promote Bellevue as accessible and thriving; to care for businesses, neighborhoods and travelers during construction; and to broadly promote various transportation options to/from Bellevue.

#### Council Feedback:

On September 6, 2016 staff provided a brief overview of the proposed plan, including project expenditures through 2016. On December 12, 2016 staff provided a more comprehensive overview of the proposed plan and outlined key funding for 2017-2020. It was at the December 2016 Council meeting that Council raised concerns about the proposed budget and the need for the expenditures at this time. Council requested staff to return with a more cost efficient plan for the next two years (2017-2018) and a clear understanding of what would be included as part of the Access Bellevue Plan..

#### 2016-2017 Public Relations Plan Information (Approved Funding in PW-R-159):

To date, East Link construction has been limited to early utility relocation (in BelRed and South Bellevue) and the beginning of the south portal tunnel construction. It is anticipated that construction of the South Bellevue Segment, the Downtown Segment and the BelRed Segment will all begin construction in 2017. Staff outlined major construction activities that will occur over the next two years, including other infrastructure work (120<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE, 124<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE, Spring Boulevard) that could affect the traveling public (see Attachment).

In order to communicate effectively about the ability to move around, to and from Bellevue, the following detailed strategies are proposed over the next two years:

- City-wide mailer (1/year)
- Business Forums (2/year)
- East Link/City Projects Open House (2/year)

The above strategies can be covered within the existing East Link funding (PW-R-159).

#### Additional Funding (Budget transfer from CIP Plan # G-106 – Interlocal Council Contingency):

East Link, coupled with City infrastructure projects and private development, will present a level of construction across Bellevue that the City has not experienced previously. Staff is requesting \$100,000 of G-106 funds budgeted for 2017 be transferred to PW-R-159 (East Link Analysis and Development). This will allow for the plan to be adaptive over time as construction becomes clearer, and would provide the ability to remain flexible in the ability for enhanced messaging quickly and potentially across additional medians (such as paid advertising). Additionally, staff would like the capability to utilize graphic support services.

The table below provides a summary of the 2016-2018 adopted budgets for public outreach funding in PW-R-159 and G-106, and staff's funding proposal for the program outlined above. G-106 was created in the 2015 mid-biennium discussions as a placeholder for public outreach pending Council approval. After transferring the funding from G-106 to PW-R-159, \$90,000 will remain in this biennium for G-106.

<i>Adopted Budget</i>							
<i>CIP Plan No.</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>2016 Budget</i>	<i>2017 Budget</i>	<i>2018 Budget</i>	<i>Expenditures to Date</i>	<i>Staff's Funding Proposal</i>	<i>Comments</i>
PW-R-159	East Link Public Relations/Outreach	\$75,000	-	-	\$4,800	\$70,200	Maintain existing budget allocation
G-106	Interlocal Council Contingency for East Link (Public Relations Placeholder)	-	\$100,000	\$90,000	-	\$100,000	Authorize transfer of 2017 budget in G-106 to PW-R-159
<b>Total Requested Funding for Public Relations Program</b>						<b>\$170,200</b>	

### **Options**

Final action is being not being sought tonight. Staff is seeking Council feedback on the updated Access Bellevue Plan. Upon direction from Council, staff is prepared to return at a future meeting to seek approval of the necessary budget adjustment to fund the effort.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

N/A

### **ATTACHMENT**

East Link/Bel-Red Construction 2017-2018

### **AVAILABLE IN COUNCIL DOCUMENT LIBRARY**

N/A