

MEMORANDUM



Transportation

TO: Parks and Community Services Board

FROM: Tim Kariel, Project Manager, City of Bellevue Transportation Department

DATE: April 5, 2021

RE: East Link Update
(Information only; no Board action requested)

At the April meeting, I will provide an update on the progress of the East Link light rail project. This multi-billion-dollar project is being administered by Sound Transit and passes through the Cities of Seattle, Mercer Island, Bellevue, and Redmond. This project will transform public mobility in this region and has direct impacts to the Mercer Slough Nature Park, Surrey Downs Park, as well as several others. The project will create a new park at the corner of Main Street and 112th Avenue SE.

Background

The East Link line extends Sound Transit's light rail network from Seattle to Redmond. The \$3.7 billion project is funded from voter-approved taxes, federal FTA contributions, and smaller grants. The alignment through Bellevue was chosen as part of a joint effort by Sound Transit and Bellevue City Council. Some project details were a result of City requests, and the City contributed to East Link monetarily and through property conveyance.

Timeline and Schedule

Construction began in 2016, and the major civil contracts are slated to end in spring and summer of 2021. The following phase will be the installation of electrical, communications, and safety systems. During the systems phase, the City will be less involved because impacts to roads, parks, and utilities will be significantly less. Following the systems phase will be testing, when trains are run throughout the alignment, which will begin in mid-2022. The testing phase will verify all systems are functioning properly and will give Sound Transit's operators, maintenance staff, and security personnel an opportunity to become familiar with the new alignment. Revenue service is scheduled to begin in the summer of 2023.

South Bellevue Station

This station is elevated and is adjacent to a new 1500 stall parking garage. The station will take the place of the 550 stall South Bellevue Park and Ride and will be a regional transit hub with many bus lines serving the station. The Mercer Slough Nature Park trail system will adjoin the station, and the parking garage includes a Mercer Slough viewing platform. The garage will open in September of 2021 for Park and Ride users to access Metro and Sound Transit bus routes.

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Winters House and Blueberry Farm Stand

The light rail guideway runs within a trench close to the historic Winters House. Prior to construction, the house was carefully protected, and vibration monitors were installed to ensure that the house would not be damaged. In 2020 the most impactful civil work was completed, and the dust shield was removed. The contractor and the Parks Department will perform the final walk-through in the coming months to assess impacts to the house during construction; however, the house was inspected monthly by the City and no significant damage has been reported. The blueberry farm retail building project is being managed by the City's Parks Department and it is currently in the design stage. Winters House and the blueberry farm stand are scheduled to open to the public in 2023.

New Park at Main Street

The light rail alignment along 112th Avenue NE runs adjacent to Surrey Downs Park. The park has been reconfigured, with access from the Surrey Downs neighborhood rather than from 112th Avenue. As compensation for the lost park area, Sound Transit is constructing a new park at the corner of 112th Avenue and Main Street. The park will feature pedestrian and bicycle paths, and serves as a pedestrian connection between the neighborhood, light rail, and downtown Bellevue. The park is currently under construction and will be handed over to the City in mid-2021.