



I-90 TRANSIT INTEGRATION OPEN HOUSE PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT SUMMARY

August 12, 2014

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BACKGROUND

Sound Transit and King County Metro are working together to provide fast and reliable connections between Seattle and the Eastside.

Providing effective and efficient transit connections is an important part of East Link's final design process. During this phase, project architects and engineers define the light rail system, determine the technical specifications for the stations, and develop plans to coordinate light rail with bus service. In order to integrate transit services, Sound Transit and King County Metro are working together to ensure riders can easily access and transfer between bus and light rail along I-90. Bus and light rail service will connect at regional transit hubs, including the Mercer Island and South Bellevue stations. Both transit agencies are considering factors such as station amenities and access, transit operations, bus routes and schedules.

By 2023, riders can anticipate integrated bus and rail service, improved customer experience, reduced travel time, and reliable, frequent service. There are multiple opportunities for the community to help influence design elements and stay informed as East Link and I-90 transit integration efforts move forward.

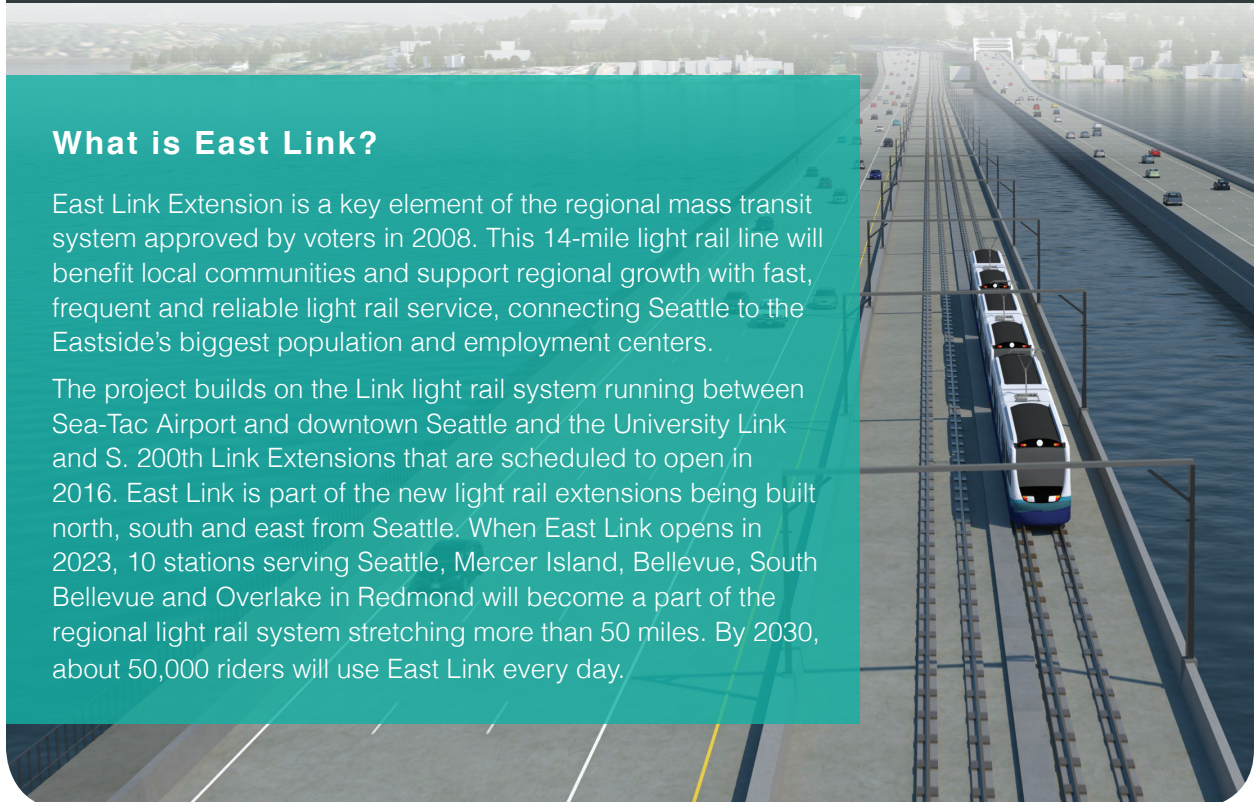
Integrated light rail and bus service will:

- Keep buses out of rising congestion
- Avoid duplicative service across Lake Washington
- Provide reliable travel times between Seattle and Mercer Island
- Provide potential savings in bus hours for reinvestment

What is East Link?

East Link Extension is a key element of the regional mass transit system approved by voters in 2008. This 14-mile light rail line will benefit local communities and support regional growth with fast, frequent and reliable light rail service, connecting Seattle to the Eastside's biggest population and employment centers.

The project builds on the Link light rail system running between Sea-Tac Airport and downtown Seattle and the University Link and S. 200th Link Extensions that are scheduled to open in 2016. East Link is part of the new light rail extensions being built north, south and east from Seattle. When East Link opens in 2023, 10 stations serving Seattle, Mercer Island, Bellevue, South Bellevue and Overlake in Redmond will become a part of the regional light rail system stretching more than 50 miles. By 2030, about 50,000 riders will use East Link every day.



I-90 TRANSIT INTEGRATION OUTREACH

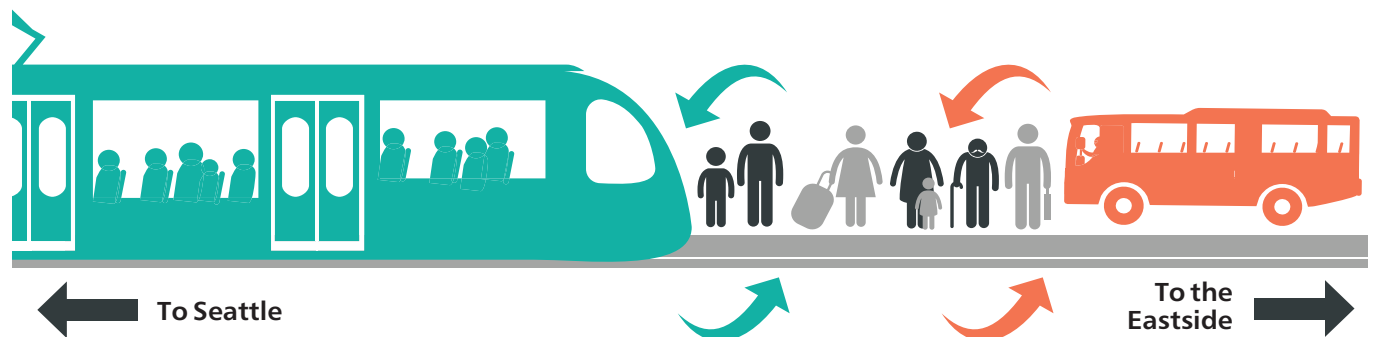
Open house overview

On August 12, 2014, Sound Transit and King County Metro hosted an open house to inform the community about the goals and planning processes over the coming years that will shape future transit service when East Link light rail opens in 2023.

The purpose of the open house was to share information about regional transit planning; present how design plans for Mercer Island and South Bellevue light rail stations will improve train and bus access; provide an update on the East Link project schedule, benefits, and design elements; and present and gather comments on plans for I-90 transit integration. The open house was held at the Issaquah Hilton Garden Inn from 6 to 8 p.m.

Approximately 75 people attended the open house to learn about the future of I-90 transit integration and provide comments. Attendees were greeted by project staff, asked to sign-in, and provided with a comment form. Display boards featured information about how our region is changing, how we are planning for the future of transit, and the final design process and current design plans for East Link, including the South Bellevue and Mercer Island stations.

Project staff were available throughout the meeting to answer questions and explain details to the public. King County Metro staff were available to answer questions and explain the bus route and impact details to the public. Attendees were encouraged to share their thoughts on the plans for I-90 transit integration. Sound Transit posted all meeting materials and an electronic version of the comment form on the East Link website following the open house.



NOTIFICATION

The open house was publicized through the following channels:

- Mail postcards to Eastside areas with affected transit routes, incorporating Sound Transit's park-and-ride license plate survey and the East Link mailing list (85,000+)
- Electronic invitation to Sound Transit East Link listserv (6,000), Sound Transit Rider 550 & 554 rider alert & King County listserv (12,000)
- Postings on Sound Transit and King County social media accounts
- Transit Centers (1,200 postcards distributed by hand to riders)
 - Issaquah Park-and-Ride
 - Issaquah Highlands Park-and-Ride
 - South Bellevue Park-and-Ride
 - Eastgate Park-and-Ride
 - Mercer Island Park-and-Ride
- Sound Transit and Metro joint press release
- Display advertisements in the following publications:
 - Bellevue Reporter
 - Crosscut.com
 - Issaquah Press
 - Korea Daily
 - La Raza
 - Mercer Island Reporter
 - Newcastle News
 - Phuong Dong Times
 - Russian World
 - Seattle Chinese News
 - Seattle Transit Blog



COMMENT SUMMARY

Sound Transit and King County Metro accepted public comments in person at the open house and by email and mail following the open house. Comments were also collected at the East Link Mercer Island 60 percent design open house and two drop-in sessions that followed the open house. These comments are also reflected in the Mercer Island 60 percent final design public involvement summary. A total of 33 comments were received through August 26, 2014 on I-90 transit integration. Comments received are organized by theme and transcribed below. While the majority of comments focused on I-90 transit integration, many people were also interested in East Link and provided questions and comments on project funding, alignment, station design, contracts and bids and construction. Other topics of interest included the Sound Transit long range plan update, overall Link system and Metro bus service.

What you were interested in:

- Service changes and bus frequencies serving Link stations with I-90 transit integration
- Travel times with integrated transit service
- Capacity on light rail with I-90 transit integration
- Bus-rail transfers throughout the Link system
- Increased I-90 Park-and-Ride service

General I-90 transit integration comments:

- [Support for I-90 Transit Integration efforts.](#)
 - You rock.
 - Thanks for your effort.
 - I support the effort as proposed. It reflects sound planning and great foresight.
- [Concern about transfer between bus and light rail service.](#)
 - Having to get in line for the bus, get off, and get in a line and wait for a train is not efficient. That will likely add about 15 – 20 minutes to my commute depending on how far I have to walk from the bus stop to the train and how long the line is and how long I have to wait for a train.
 - Your model suggested a 5 min transfer period during busy periods. This may be optimistic when anxious, schedule-conscious commuters fight their way through oncoming passengers racing to catch the next departure. The preliminary station design hinted of a solution. If buses stop to drop off passengers at one end and move empty to the other end to pick up passengers, you will achieve more unidirectional flow from bus to platform and from platform to bus. It is important to keep in mind that we are dealing with a transportation system where all modes of transportation play a part.
 - Many people drive to a P&R and take a bus to work in Downtown Seattle. With East Link, we will need to drive/take bus and then transfer to Link, and then might need to retake another bus to work, which I believe will discourage people from using public transportation.

- The nearest bus stop to my home is quite some distance, so I presently drive to a Park & Ride. I thus avoid having to make transfer once I get on the bus.
- I assume that the 554 bus to Seattle will no longer go all the way to Seattle – it will drop passengers off at the South Bellevue P&R or the Mercer Island P&R. Going into Seattle will be fairly efficient but coming back will be more of a problem unless I coordinate the time getting on the light rail with the bus schedule. Perhaps the number of bus trips can be expanded from the ½ to 1 hour service at present.

Interest in expanding light rail service:

- Demand for additional service across the region.
 - I am disappointed that there isn't a connection to Issaquah until 2023. Nice to look ahead – but 9 years? We really should push forward more quickly. It's more efficient to use my own car now.
 - We should be planning the light rail all the way to the Issaquah Highlands P&R. I would love that! That would be efficient.
 - I feel that the Light Rail should go to places like Shoreline, Tacoma/Fife, Bellevue, Everett, and so on.
 - Doesn't it makes sense to extend light rail across 520 bridge? Is it really faster for someone who lives in Redmond who wants to go to University District to take a bus south to I-90 to catch East Link to go into downtown Seattle, then back north?



General interest in East Link:

- [Comments on East Link light rail station design and amenities.](#)
 - Add artistic lighting on floating bridge.
 - The Rainier station needs elevators on both sides of Rainier Avenue. Passengers using this station access transit on both sides and having only an elevator on the east side is a serious inconvenience, especially if that elevator is out of service.
 - Train stations need bathrooms.
 - Provide better parking and access routes for bike riders.
 - I think your future plans should include a redesign of the station to have a central platform with rail tracks each side making the transfer easy.



Interest in fare payment options for light rail and bus:

- **Improving boarding efficiencies**
 - Consider adding BRT features such as off-board payment to speed up bus boarding. The large passenger volumes could take a long time to board via the front door.
- **Expansion of the ORCA program**
 - Other transit riders that have been delayed in receiving their senior Orca card because they have been told that they have to go to Seattle to get one. It would be more convenient if we could reload our existing Orca card at the Issaquah Transit Center.
 - Simplicity of using the Orca Card and expanding its pay options would make fare payment efficient.



Comments about bus routes:

- **Concern with existing bus system.**
 - Existing concerns with 554 bus – massive overcrowding, should have 15-minute headway throughout off peak to Seattle and peak from Seattle to Issaquah. Run 554 from S. Sammamish to reduce strain after bus cuts are implemented.
 - I think all buses that run on 90 should go to Downtown Bellevue.
 - Consider interim BRT upgrades for the 550, which is heavily used today and will probably get busier as time goes on.
- **Concerns about bus cuts and potential impacts to riders.**
 - Metro is proposing to, or is, taking away bus routes or reducing service on routes that currently serve the light rail stations.
 - Please retain direct buses to downtown along the I-90 corridor.
 - I don't believe anything said about improved bus service from your transit organization(s). The pending bus service cuts in September are going to be a nightmare for riders (I'm one affected). You encouraged people to take the bus. Now more riders dependent on the service will be denied even standing room and park and ride lots will be filled to overflowing earlier.

Comments about transit system demands:

- **Concern that East Link trains will be full, slow, or difficult to access**
 - Is there going to be space on the trains by the time they get to South Bellevue or Mercer Island?
 - You cannot eliminate I-90 bus trips into Seattle during rush hours. There is massive residential and commercial development going on in Issaquah (including the Highlands) and Bellevue is growing rapidly as well, so the demand for transit service will keep growing.
 - I don't believe that the trains will be able to transport all the people who are from the eastside all at once...I imagine I would have to wait for room on a train that will be full by the time I get to Mercer Island faster than getting on and off the bus.
 - The parking at Mercer Island will need to increase.
 - ...My main concern is the current light rail from the International Blvd. to downtown Seattle takes almost 1 hour, which is too slow. With this speed and too many stops, I came to the conclusion that the new Redmond to Seattle light rail might be slower than driving through 520.
 - Think of Seattle as an international city. What will we need to do to reach that level? If we want to attract more people and increase economic growth.

NEXT STEPS



- East Link is approaching 90 percent final design for all stations
- Attend upcoming 90 percent design milestone open houses in late 2014
- Learn about traffic impacts and mitigation plans during East Link construction for the 14-mile alignment
- Learn about traffic impacts and detours during construction on I-90, Bellevue and Redmond, including impacts to park-and-rides, and changes to transit service to accommodate construction
- The process for determining bus route changes will occur approximately 2 – 3 years prior to East Link opening for service
- Before any route changes occur, Metro and Sound Transit will develop recommendations and invite the public to weigh in

For more information, project updates, or to request a briefing, please visit the project website: [soundtransit.org/Projects-and-Plans/I-90-Transit-Integration](https://www.soundtransit.org/Projects-and-Plans/I-90-Transit-Integration).

To sign up for our mailing lists, visit:

Sound Transit: [soundtransit.org/subscribe-to-alerts](https://www.soundtransit.org/subscribe-to-alerts)

Metro: [metro.kingcounty.gov/signup/](https://www.metro.kingcounty.gov/signup/)

