

East Link Extension



March 28, 2013

Bel-Red Final Design Kick-off Open House Public Involvement Summary

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Background

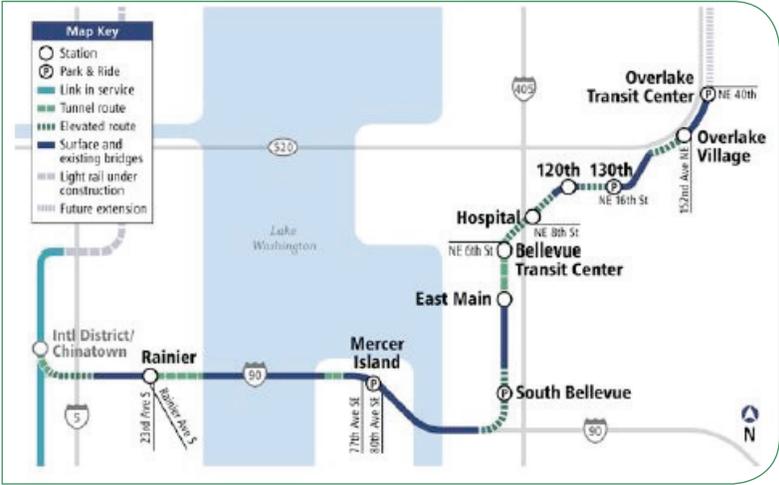
East Link Extension is a key element of the regional mass transit system approved by voters in 2008. This 14-mile light rail line will benefit local communities and support regional growth with fast, frequent and reliable light rail service, connecting Seattle to the Eastside's biggest population and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

The project builds on the Central Link light rail system running between Sea-Tac Airport and downtown Seattle and the University Link Extension that is 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 around 2023, 10 stations, serving Seattle, Mercer Island, Bellevue, Bel-Red and Overlake in

Redmond will become a part of a regional light rail system stretching more than 50 miles. By 2030, about 50,000 riders will use East Link every day.

In 2011, Sound Transit completed environmental review and received a federal Record of Decision to build East Link. East Link advanced to final design in 2012. During final design, project architects and engineers define the light rail system, determining the technical specifications for the stations, bridges, tracks and other elements as well as construction methods and sequencing. The Sound Transit art program, *STart*, also begins work to select station artists and artworks during final design. There are multiple opportunities for the community to help influence design elements and stay informed as East Link moves forward.



East Link Timeline



Overview

On March 28, 2013, Sound Transit hosted an open house to kick-off final design for the Bel-Red segment of East Link Extension. The segment runs from the former BNSF rail corridor, through Bel-Red corridor with stations at 120th and 130th, transitioning to the Overlake segment along SR 520. The meeting served to introduce Sound Transit's consultant team of engineers, architects and community outreach staff to the Bel-Red community; educate the community on the final design process, including what to expect and how to stay informed; provide an overview of the project schedule, benefits, and final design elements; and present and gather comments on design plans for the Bel-Red segment. The open house was held at the Highland Community Center in Bellevue from 4 to 7 p.m.

Notification

The open house was widely publicized through the following channels:

- Display advertisements in *the Bellevue Reporter*, *Seattle Transit Blog*, *La Raza*, *Seattle Chinese Post*, *Daily Journal of Commerce* and *BellevuePatch.com*
- Postcards mailed to over 10,000 eastside residents and businesses
- A press release to local papers and blogs
- Email notification to approximately 5,400 subscribers of the East Link Extension listserv, 850 subscribers of the Bellevue Gov Alert, neighborhood newsletter, and other agency or community group listservs
- Announcements on the Sound Transit and City of Bellevue project web pages
- Social media announcements pushed out to 3,257 Sound Transit Facebook fans and 7,933 Twitter followers.

Postcards mailed to over 10,000 eastside residents and businesses.



Open house overview

Approximately 115 people attended the open house to learn about design plans for East Link in the Bel-Red area and provide comments. Attendees were greeted by project staff, asked to sign-in and were provided with a Community Guide to Final Design, Bel-Red fact sheet and comment forms. Display boards and roll plots featured information about East Link, the final design process and design plans for the Bel-Red segment including the 120th and 130th stations and track.

An overview presentation was held at 5:30 p.m., followed by an opportunity to ask questions. Project staff members were available throughout the meeting to answer questions and explain design details to the public. Attendees were encouraged to share their thoughts on the design plans as well as permanent station names. All meeting materials and electronic versions of the comment forms were made available on the East Link project website following the open house.



Comment Summary

Sound Transit accepted public comments in-person at the open house, and by mail, email and electronically on the East Link website. The following section is a summary of verbal and written feedback collected at the open house as well as 13 additional post-meeting public comments received between March 28 and April 5, 2013. Transcribed comments are italicized below to highlight the tone of public feedback.

Bel-Red Segment Design

- Concern for safety and vandalism around the trench.
- General support for the project and final design process:
 - *You've made thoughtful progress—congratulations!*
 - *Make it come faster!!!*
- Interest in removing one of the Bel-Red stations.
 - *Eliminate one of the two stations—they are too close to one another to one another, and there is no reason to have 2 stations.*
 - *I don't think the 120th and 130th stations should be so close together.*

120th Station Design

- General support for station design and future transit-oriented development.
 - *Looks nice.*
 - *I like the idea of future TOD.*
- General interest in the design and look and feel of the retained cut alignment at 120th station.
 - *Make sure the retained cut segment doesn't look like a dark hole in the ground. Make it bright and well lit with nice art work.*
- Interest in canopy coverage and weather protection.
- Request for glass elevators to promote safety.
- Provide adequate seating and consider elderly passengers in design.
- Desire for parking:
 - *It should be re-designed to include a parking facility.*
 - *All stations must have ample parking for enhanced ridership.*
- Support for escalators:
 - *Both up and down escalators would be best at this location.*

130th Station Design

- General support for the station design.
 - *I like the connection with integrated artwork. ST does a great job at this. Keep up the good work.*
 - *Support for use of "Cor Ten" material and modern look of the station.*
- Interest in bike access and amenities.
 - *Since the station will be at grade, adding all the elements of bike-lanes, pedestrian walk-ways and vehicle traffic is perhaps trying to do too much on one right-of-way. Bike lanes could be accommodated elsewhere.*
 - *Have a secondary covered bike rack on the west side of the station. Does not need to be as substantial as the plaza, but gives overflow and options for both east and west.*
- One comment indicated that the station should be eliminated.
 - *This station should be eliminated. It is not necessary. Eliminating this station will reduce East Link costs and improve travel times on the line.*
- Overall support for the park-and-ride and a few concerns related to the facility.
 - *I like the big park-and-ride.*
 - *Good idea to have P&R facilities.*
 - Requests to expand the park-and-ride to accommodate more vehicles.
 - Concern that customers visiting nearby businesses will use park-and-ride.
- Interest in landscaping and restoration.
 - *Have some more interesting landscaping.*
 - Requests to provide more evergreen trees.
 - Support for greening/restoration/maintaining the character of the area.
- Interest in the City of Bellevue's plans for the 130th station area.
 - Positive interest in the city's plans for new development near 130th station.
 - *The City should encourage taller buildings on each side and four corners of this station*



General Comments

- Concern for safety and noise.
 - *I do NOT want a grade crossing at NE 20th St. At grade crossing at the bottom of a rail ramp from Overlake is a severe danger. The bells from this crossing will impact Bridal-Trails (noise).*
 - *I do not like the grade crossing at NE 20th Street. The down grade ramp from Overlake to 130th is dangerous. Crossing light bells are bad for Bridle Trails.*
 - Concerns about noise from bells in Lake Bellevue Village. Don't want bells. Nearness to lake allows sound to travel.
 - Concern about the noise issues experienced on the initial segment.
- Environmental Impacts.
 - Request to design light rail to withstand an earthquake. This region is prone to major earthquakes.
 - Concern for impacts to Kelsey Creek and Sturtevant Creek. Incorporate streams into design. Suggestion to look at the aerial photos of land before Safeway was built.
- Interest in City of Bellevue planned roadway improvements.
 - Concerns about extent of future eastbound 16th St. by adjacent property owners.
 - Interest in the City's development plan and vision for growth in this area.
 - Support for partnership between Sound Transit and City of Bellevue.
- Interest and concern related to how the project intersects with private properties, business impacts and the property acquisitions process.
 - Questions about how East Link will impact individual private properties.
 - Concern about business displacement and access to businesses.
 - *I would strongly encourage ST to keep the width of the Right-of-Way to a minimum, keeping intact, as much as possible, the existing businesses and lessening the disruption to the properties along the route.*



- *With the nearest future station more than six blocks away, there will be a continuous barrier to entry all along NE 16th and 136th Place except for right-in and right-out turning. This reduces the viability of existing businesses and any future uses as is planned for and projected by Bellevue's vision for Bel-Red Transformation. I request that maximum access be given at all reasonable crossings, especially at the turn at 136th and NE 16th.*
- *My fear is that the local small businesses are going to be forced out- the auto repair shops especially. Sadly, the city and Sound Transit will move forward with the plan that carries the most building density while ignoring nearby neighborhood opinions. PLEASE do not push out the local shops that are currently in this area (120th to 148th and Bel-Red to 20th).*
- **Concern about traffic congestion.**
 - *Since Sound Transit plans an 'at grade' crossing, the Level of Service (LoS) is degraded to a 'D'- only 'satisfactory' and traffic will have to wait on average 35-55 seconds to pass through the intersection and perhaps **an F or worse** during construction with lane closures.*
- **Operations and Maintenance Satellite Facility (OMSF) Project.**
 - *A Bel-Red rail-maintenance yard can be used by construction companies.*
 - *Thank you for eliminating Fred Myer site for maintenance yard.*
 - *If a maintenance yard must be built and it has to be in Bellevue, the land on 120th near the 520 makes sense. It is industrial now. It will bring more jobs to Bellevue.*
- **Miscellaneous**
 - *The connection to International District should allow a train to continue to the South straight to SeaTac to reduce the planned 50 minute travel time to the airport. Currently, bus 560 can get from South Bellevue to airport in about 40 minutes.*

- *Please hold these meetings at a site where there is adequate public transportation or adequate parking for the number of attendees.*
- *North/south access is a problem; I'm glad you are adding sidewalks/bike paths.*
- *Question about turn styles for ticket processing.*
- *Question about how Sound Transit handles fare evasion.*

Construction

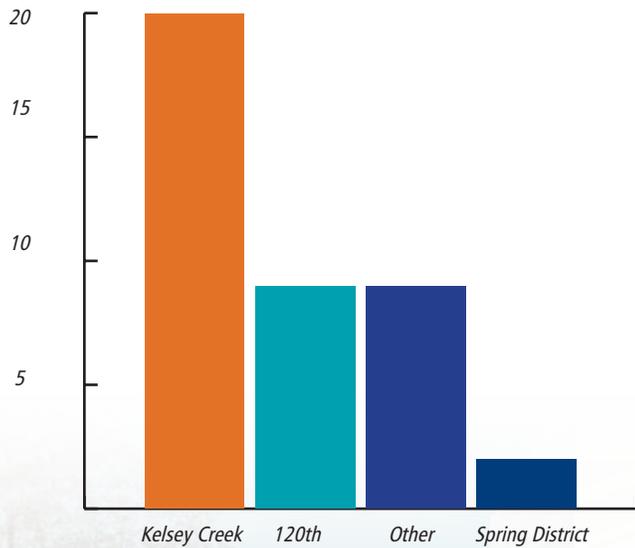
- **Concern about traffic during construction.**
 - *Concerned with traffic mitigation, business disruption during construction, length of construction timeline, and scope of right-of-way acquisition.*
 - *Maintaining traffic will be the key issue.*
 - *The traffic is already horrific during rush hours on Bel Red and 140th, 148th etc. I live off of 148th Ave NE (my only access to my street) and I truly fear that I won't be able to get anywhere when construction begins.*
 - *There are also schools and bus routes that need to be taken into consideration for safety.*
 - *Advance notice of any closures.*
- **General construction related comments.**
 - *...we are concerned that the disruption to the tenants will exceed their ability to recover, as many of the Rainier Valley business were severely disrupted, some never to recover and many at much less viability afterwards than before.*
 - *Make sure the hospital station construction doesn't disturb any of the businesses.*
 - *Maintain the access and fully mitigate the damage to the properties along Light rail, especially during construction.*
 - *Interest among the construction professionals in the number of contracts and sequence of construction.*

Permanent Station Names

A separate comment form was provided to gather input on permanent station names for the Bel-Red segment. Following the meeting, an online survey was posted to the project website and generated 32 responses, in addition to the five comment forms submitted at the open house. The following is a summary of public feedback on permanent station names.

What do you think the 120th station name should be?

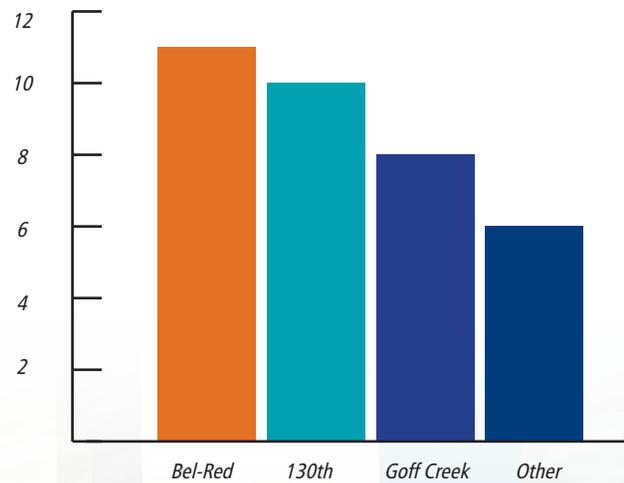
Approximately two-thirds of respondents indicated Kelsey Creek as their preferred permanent station name, followed by 120th Station. Other suggested names included: *Bel-Red*, *Japanese vegetable farm*, *Spring Station*, *Spring District*, *120th Avenue*, *120th/Spring District*, *Clancy* and *Overlake*.



What do you think the 130th station name should be?

The slight majority of respondents indicated Bel-Red as their preferred station name. Approximately 26 percent of respondents preferred 130th Station and 23 percent indicated *Goff Creek* as their top choice.

Other suggested names included: *Goff Creek/130th*, *Creek District*, *130th Avenue*, *Bridle Trails*, *Dempsey* and *Wilburton*.



Station naming generated widespread feedback:

- Support for location based names:
 - *Select a name that actually can be located on a street map by someone not familiar with the City.*
 - *Number street names are best because they identify their location.*
 - *To well acquainted residents most of these names provide NO information about where they actually are. The creeks suggested run too far to be specific, as do the street names-- 120 and 130th. Not helpful at all! How about being specific--NE 130 & cross street # nearest to that station .*
 - *Don't name the 120th Street Station Kelsey Creek Station because it is too far from the Kelsey Creek Park.*
 - *I think relating a station name to geographic features is a great idea. Helps people better connect to the natural world. When those features are streams it reminds people that they live in a watershed and fish habitat. I would think it would be better from a real estate development perspective, too*
 - *Cross-streets are best!*
- General feedback on station names:
 - *Let it have some character!!*
 - *120th Ave was originally Clancy Ave. 130th Ave was originally Dempsey Rd. "Bel-Red" covers a larger area than either station. Kelsey Creek doesn't flow near either station. "Goff Creek Station" sounds harsh to the ear.*
 - *Stations should be more than just numbers.*
 - *It's 120th and 130th Avenue, not Street, I believe.*

Next Steps

Sound Transit will incorporate public comments to the extent possible while working to advance design of the Bel-Red segment to 60 percent completion. The next opportunity to provide formal public comment will occur at the 60 percent design milestone which is anticipated in the second half of 2013. Please continue to visit the project website for the latest news:

www.soundtransit.org/eastlink

For more information or to request a briefing for your organization, please contact Sound Transit Community Outreach staff at eastlink@soundtransit.org or 206-398-5470.

