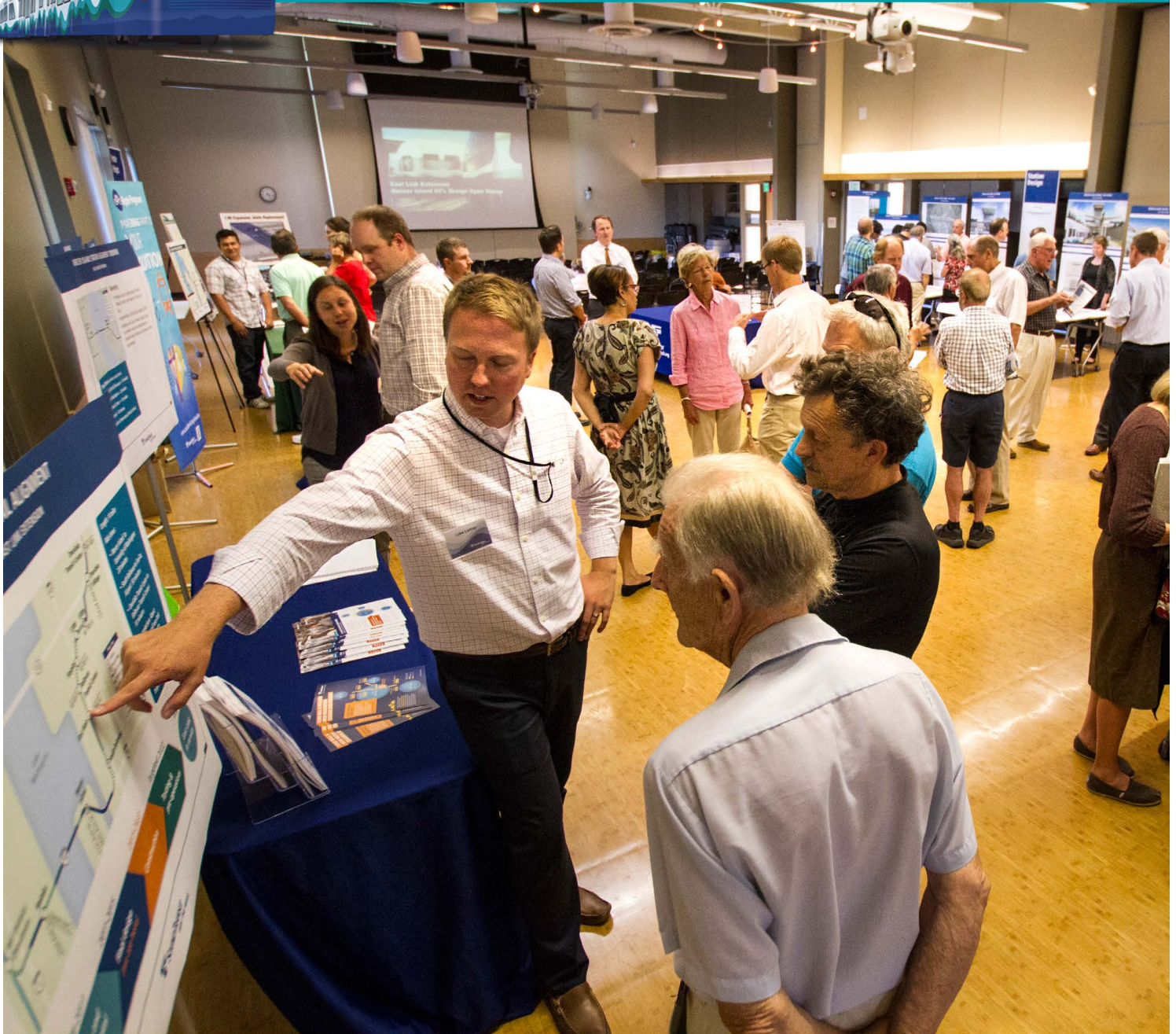


East Link Extension



July 10, 2014

Mercer Island 60% Design Open House Public Involvement Summary

Table of Contents

- 1 Background
- 2 Overview
- 2 Notification
- 3 Open House Overview
- 4 Comment Summary
 - 4 Mercer Island Station Design
 - 5 Construction Impacts
 - 5 Transit Integration
 - 7 Permanent Station Naming
Comment Summary
- 8 Next Steps
- 8 Stay Involved

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 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 around 2023, 10 stations serving Seattle, Mercer Island, Bellevue, South Bellevue 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.



East Link is advancing in final design. During this phase, 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. Sound Transit hosted a public meeting in July 2013 to share design plans for Mercer Island and we have since advanced design to approximately 60 percent completion. There are multiple opportunities for the community to help influence design elements and stay informed as East Link moves forward.

East Link Timeline



I-90 Segment: Mercer Island

Light rail travels east from Seattle across Lake Washington on the I-90 floating bridge. Light rail serves Mercer Island with a station in the center roadway of I-90. Riders will enter the station at 77th Ave. SE or 80th Ave. SE, in close proximity to the Mercer Island Town Center and Park-and-Ride lot.

Notification

The open house was publicized through the following channels:

- Display advertisements in the Mercer Island Reporter, Bellevue Reporter, Korea Daily, La Raza, Seattle Chinese News, and in the Seattle Transit Blog
- Postcards mailed to over 15,000 residents and businesses
- Sound Transit press releases
- Email notification to approximately 6,000 subscribers of the East Link Extension listserv
- Announcements on the Sound Transit East Link Extension web page
- Social media announcements on the Sound Transit Facebook and Twitter accounts
- Transit squads: Postcards distributed to riders at the Mercer Island Park-and-Ride during morning and evening peak commute times

Overview

On July 10, 2014, Sound Transit hosted an open house to inform the public of design progress on the Mercer Island segment of East Link Extension, including the Mercer Island station. The meeting served to educate the community on design details, provide an overview of the project schedule, benefits, and final design elements; and present and gather comments on 60 percent design plans for the Mercer Island segment. The City of Mercer Island Advisory Group (MIAG) attended the open house to answer questions about their involvement in the final design process (see more information below). The open house was held at Mercer Island Community and Event Center from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m.

City of Mercer Island Advisory Group

The City of Mercer Island Advisory Group (MIAG) is comprised of three City Council members, three Design Commission members, and three Arts Council members and responsible for providing feedback on the design of the Mercer Island station. All comments submitted to Sound Transit at the open house will be shared with the MIAG.

Join us July 10

Mercer Island segment East Link Extension Open House

Final Design Milestones: 30% 60% We are here 90% Construction

Sound Transit has reached an important milestone! Design plans for the **Mercer Island Station** are 60 percent complete. The open house is your opportunity to review current designs, meet the East Link project team and provide feedback.

Learn about:

- Station design updates
- Public art
- Landscaping
- Pre-construction information

PLEASE JOIN SOUND TRANSIT:
Thursday, July 10, 2014 • 5 - 7 p.m.
Presentation begins at 5:30 p.m.
Mercer Island Community & Event Center
8236 SE 24th St.
Mercer Island, WA 98040

Learn more and submit comments online at soundtransit.org/eastlink or contact Sound Transit at 206-398-LINK, eastlink@soundtransit.org.

To request information in alternative formats or accommodations for persons with disabilities, call 1-800-201-4900 TTY Relay: 711 or email accessibility@soundtransit.org.

SOUND TRANSIT
RIDE THE WAVE

Open house overview

Approximately 70 people attended the July 10 open house to learn about updated design plans for the Mercer Island station and provide comments. Attendees were greeted by project staff, asked to sign-in and provided with a Community Guide to Final Design, segment fact sheet and comment forms. Display boards and roll plots featured information about East Link, the final design process and updated design concepts for the Mercer Island station.

Sound Transit staff provided an overview presentation at 5:30 p.m. Project staff were present to answer questions and share information about design details with community members. Attendees were encouraged to share their thoughts on the design plans. 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. Below is a summary of feedback collected at the open house and information tables, as well as 16 written comments received between July 10 and July 25, 2014.



Located in the center roadway of I-90, riders will enter at 77th Ave. SE and 80th Ave. SE, in close proximity to the Mercer Island Park-and-Ride lot.

Mercer Island Station Design

- General comments on station design, features and amenities:
 - *I like how the roofline of the platform canopy is supposed to meet the headhouse roofline.*
 - *...The glass walls on the north/south sides of the headhouses may lend themselves to a more open feeling that just isn't coming through well in the renderings.*
 - *The "FCC Room" present in both headhouses should be moved from the station entrance level down to the platform level.*
 - *I don't like how high the station entrances are.*
 - *I am concerned about how the new station will reflect traffic noise out at the I-90 "Pit" and out onto the Island.*
- Interest in reflecting community character in station design and integrating elements of the natural environment:
 - *I'd much rather see something more forest-oriented than big-city 'glass and steel'. What's shown says nothing to me about Mercer Island's community character.*
 - *Include a green roof to make the station blend in to the surrounding area.*
 - *Include a lot of plants and trees as well as art.*
 - *It is nice to have lots of greenery.*
 - *Use natural materials – brick and wood.*
- Interest in the ventilation stacks and station accent color:
 - *Be bold with the color.*
 - *Looks good – just remove the red ventilation stacks.*
 - *I like the accent color, consider incorporating it into the support structure for the headhouses instead.*
 - *Can you do sage green? Look is very sterile.*

- *The roof top vent fans are a distractor to the overall elegant sweeping lines! Could they be incorporated into the sides as an art piece, pinwheels?*
- *Perhaps it would be possible to add some red accents on a grey primary color to the vent shafts instead.*
- **Interest in ensuring bike access to the station is maintained and adequate bike storage is provided:**
 - *The design and location of the bus zone at the park and ride creates conflicts between pedestrians waiting for buses and cyclists passing through on the trail.*
 - *Need more room for bikes and bike lockers.*
- **Split interest on increased vehicle parking capacity:**
 - *The whole purpose of building the light rail is to stop people from using their cars and improve the environment. Consider facilitating an UBER for Mercer Island neighbors or a shuttle.*
 - *We don't need additional parking. We can't handle anymore.*
 - *...Restrict the P & R parking lot to MI residents only.*
 - *We need more parking on Mercer Island.*
- **Concerns about maintaining vehicle access to I-90**
 - *I don't want to lose the express lanes.*

Construction Impacts

- **Interest in mitigating construction impacts and maintaining the East Link construction schedule:**
 - *Minimize full road/bridge closures.*
 - *The longer access to the I-90 Center Roadway is maintained the better, so long as it does not impact the East Link construction schedule.*
 - *East Link is the most important transportation project for Eastside mobility for the next generation and [the project schedule] should not be compromised...*
- **Comments on noise levels during construction:**
 - *Build sound walls for construction [to keep construction noise at a minimum].*

I-90 Transit Integration

Sound Transit and King County Metro are designing facilities at South Bellevue and Mercer Island to maximize access to congestion-free rail service. During the July 10 open house, staff were available to answer questions on the concept of I-90 Transit Integration. On August 12, Sound Transit and King County Metro held a joint open house in Issaquah to expand more on the Transit Integration concepts and plans. Please refer to the August 12, 2014 Transit Integration Open House Summary for a full review of the comments we received. Comments below were received at the July 10 East Link open house:

Interest in learning more about transit integration and options:

- *Was a counter-clockwise scenario (without a roundabout) considered? I understand the generalized pros/cons but think it should be more fully analyzed.*
- *With the recent decision to utilize the BNSF site in Bellevue for the Rail Yard it would seem this location could be converted into a multi-story structure that could also serve as the above grade roundabout for all eastside busses.*
- *I urge Sound Transit to mitigate impacts to our community by working with our city council members and the city of Bellevue's elected officials to keep our growing eastside traffic off I-90.*
- **General comments on the transit integration scenarios:**
 - *I support the roundabout at 77th Ave SE and Sunset Highway.*
 - *Losing the reversible lanes is a big loss for I-90. Bringing all the eastside busses to the Island is just insane from my perspective. Truly creative solutions are best made now.*
 - *Transit integration should not occur on the Island.*
- **Comments and concerns regarding potential impacts to private property associated with the transit integration:**
 - *I can see directly down 77th Ave SE from my back porch. Under all of the scenarios, I will be able to see buses, and I will be impacted by noise.*
 - *I hear every bus that passes through today. The bus intercept proposal will result in substantially more buses.*

- *With hundreds of buses a day circulating through our community it will add to the water and air pollution levels at the north end of the Island where our heaviest population lives.*
- *I oppose residential property takings and think Sound Transit should avoid going down that path.*
- **Transit integration may impact traffic on Mercer Island:**
 - *Traffic impacts along SE 27th Street could significantly impact reliability.*
 - *Bus turnaround will have gridlock potential on our city streets.*
- **Mixed feelings about transit integration bus layover options:**
 - *The 77th Ave SE and Sunset Highway option allows for better locations for bus layover areas away from residential property and the Town Center while still keeping bus operations away from the Town Center area.*
 - *The bus layover on 77th Ave SE could block visibility to the station entrance.*
 - *Having buses layover on Sunset Highway could create a "wall of buses" in front of the park.*
- **Interest in maintaining clear bicycle and pedestrian connections in transit integration options:**
 - *Every effort should be made to preserve as direct as possible pedestrian/bike/trail connections.*
 - *In the North Mercer Way roundabout scenario, please demonstrate how pedestrians will get across North Mercer Way ... it should be maintained at this intersection to provide a direct connection to the pathway on 77th Ave SE and the station entrance.*

Tell us about yourself! How do you plan to use East Link?

Do you live or work near the Mercer Island Station?

Yes - 4



No - 4



How often do you anticipate using the station?

Never - 2



Less than once a month - 1



A few times a month - 2



Weekly - 3



Daily - 2



Do you intend to use light rail for daily commuting, special events, or both?

Daily commuting - 2



Special events - 3



Both - 5



How do you plan on accessing the station?

Walk - 3



Drive - 6



Bus - 2



Bike - 1



Passenger drop off - 3



No plans - 2



Permanent station naming comment summary

A separate comment form was provided to gather input on permanent station names for the Mercer Island station. Sound Transit requested that station names reflect the neighborhood environment, avoid commercial references, comply with ADA guidelines, and follow Board Policy requirements for station naming. Following the meeting, an online survey was posted to the project website. A total of 15 responses were received. The following is a summary of public feedback on permanent station names.



- What is your preference for the Mercer Island station name?
 - Mercer Island - 10
 - Other -
 - Islander Station - 2
 - Lake Washington Station - 1
 - Mercer Island Downtown - 1
- Interest in keeping 'Mercer Island' as the station name:
 - Keep as Mercer Island to avoid confusion.
 - Make the name as easy and clear for all riders as possible – tourists and residents.
 - Keep it simple. It's not like there is room to have a 2nd and 3rd station on Mercer Island



Information Tables

Outreach staff hosted information tables at local venues on Mercer Island the week after the open house to answer questions and engage with the public about the updated station design plans. Informational materials, including copies of the display boards, handouts and comment forms from the July 10 open house were available. Outreach staff spoke directly with 13 interested community members. Additional passersby looked at the East Link Overview and Mercer Island station rendering display boards and were aware of the project. Similar to the open house, the common theme among drop-in visitors was parking. The Washington State Department of Transportation and related I-90 westbound lane closures that would happen the following week (July 18-25) also came up in questions from people who asked if the work was related to the light rail project and if that construction work would affect buses.

- **Locations:**
 - *Mercer Island Summer Celebration, 7/12/2014 11 a.m. – 7 p.m. and 7/13/2014 10 a.m. – 6 p.m.*
 - *Mercer Island Community & Event Center, 7/15/2014, 11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.*
 - *Tully's Mercer Island, 7/17/2014, 12:30 – 2:30 p.m.*

Next Steps

Sound Transit is working to advance design of the Mercer Island segment to 90 percent completion. The next opportunity to provide formal public comment will occur at the 90 percent design milestone, anticipated in the first half of 2015.

Stay Involved

Visit the project website for the latest news: soundtransit.org/eastlink

Request a briefing for your organization: Contact Sound Transit Community Outreach staff at eastlink@soundtransit.org or **206-398-LINK**.

Subscribe to the project listserv: soundtransit.org/subscribe-to-alerts





EAST ENTRY AT 80TH AVE SE



VIEW FROM MERCER ISLAND PARK & RIDE



I-90 FLOATING BRIDGE CROSSING

