



Central Puget Sound
Regional Transit Authority

Environmental Impact Statement Scoping Summary Report

East Link Project

October 2006

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Purpose

Sound Transit is beginning an environmental review process for the East Link Project, which is a proposed extension of the Central Link Light Rail Transit project from Seattle to Bellevue and Redmond via I-90 and Mercer Island. This process is in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the Washington State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA).

Consistent with producing an environmental impact statement (EIS), Sound Transit conducted a scoping process to receive input on the East Link Preliminary Purpose and Need Statement, preliminary alignment alternatives, and environmental resources to be analyzed.

The purpose of this report is to summarize comments received during the public scoping period. This information will be considered by Sound Transit in identifying the range of reasonable alternatives and potential environmental issues to be evaluated in the EIS.

Background

The East Link Project is an element of the proposed Sound Transit 2 (ST2) package of mass transit projects currently being considered by Sound Transit. The project is consistent with the agency's recently adopted Long-Range Plan update.

After the adoption of the Long-Range Plan, Sound Transit began developing the next phase of transit investments for implementation, which is called ST2. On July 13, 2006, the Sound Transit Board of Directors identified three capital investment options for expanding the regional transit system under ST2. In each option, light rail transit is identified as the preferred transportation mode for HCT in the East Link (Seattle to Bellevue and Redmond via I-90 and Mercer Island) corridor.

The three capital investment options were issued for public and agency review and comment during the same public scoping comment period as the East Link scoping period. The scoping period took place from September 1, 2006, to October 2, 2006. After a review of public and agency comments, the Sound Transit Board of Directors will select a final ST2 package, which will then be submitted to the voters within the Sound Transit District in November 2007, alongside a companion package of regional road investments. Together, this package of roadway and transit improvements is referred to as the Regional Transportation Improvement District, or RTID.

As the public agency proposing the East Link project, Sound Transit is required to comply with SEPA and is the lead agency under SEPA. Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT), which has jurisdiction over Interstate 90 (I-90), State Route 520 (SR 520), and Interstate 405 (I-405) and would approve any activities on its facilities, will serve as a SEPA co-lead agency along with Sound Transit.

The East Link project will also pursue federal funding from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). As a result, the FTA is required to undertake an environmental review in compliance with NEPA. The FTA, as the federal lead agency under NEPA, with Sound Transit and WSDOT as the state lead agencies under SEPA, have determined that the East Link project may have adverse environmental impacts. To satisfy both NEPA and SEPA requirements, the agencies are preparing a combined NEPA/SEPA EIS for the East Link project.

The Scoping Process

Scoping is the first step in the EIS process. During scoping, the range of proposed actions, alternatives, and impacts to be discussed in an EIS are evaluated. This scoping process was initiated by Sound Transit, and is being conducted in consultation with city and county agencies; affected tribes; regional, state, and federal agencies; interest groups; businesses; affected communities; individuals; and the public. The following activities were undertaken in support of and during the scoping process:

- Identified proposed alternatives for evaluation, environmental issues to be addressed, and opportunities for public involvement.
- Released the Environmental Scoping Information Report on September 1, 2006, describing the proposed alternatives, issues, draft Purpose and Need Statement, and the public involvement schedule. This report was available at the public open houses, the agency scoping meeting, and on the Sound Transit Web site.
- Sent postcards to over 154,000 residents and businesses to announce the beginning of the scoping process, the public open houses, and the availability of the Environmental Scoping Information Report.
- Held four well-attended public scoping meetings (see dates below) to present project information and receive comments to help refine proposed alternatives, environmental issues, and the environmental process.
- Held one agency scoping meeting on September 12, 2006, to receive comments from interested and affected agencies.
- Met or corresponded with affected local, regional, state, and federal agencies, tribes, and other organizations about issues within their jurisdiction or concern.
- Reviewed approximately 300 written and oral comments made at the scoping meetings or received during the scoping period, and, as appropriate, refined the proposed alternatives, issues, and public involvement program.
- Prepared this Scoping Summary Report to summarize the results of the scoping process, including comments received, and made the report readily available to the public.

The public scoping open house dates were:

Wednesday, September 13, 2006
 4:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.
 Meydenbauer Center
 11100 NE 6th Street
 Bellevue, WA

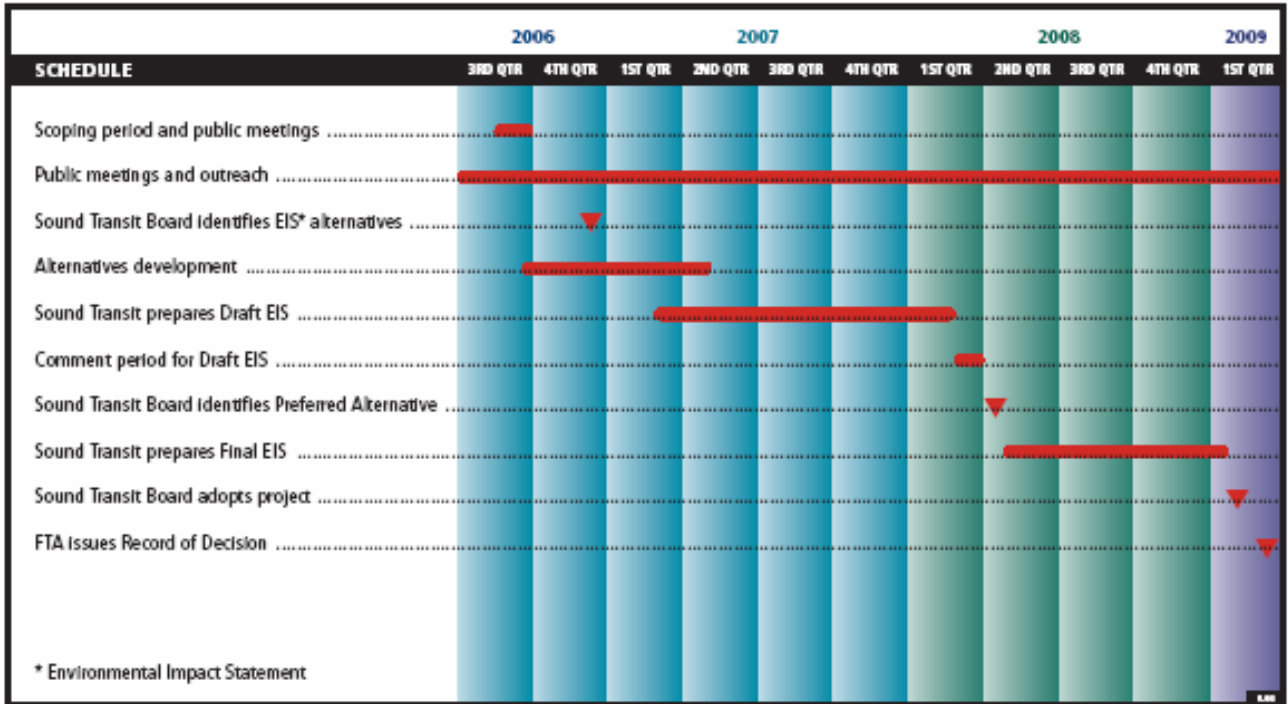
Thursday, September 14, 2006
 4:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.
 Old Redmond Schoolhouse Community Center
 16600 NE 80th Street
 Redmond, WA

Wednesday, September 20, 2006
 4:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.
 Union Station, Great Hall
 401 S. Jackson Street
 Seattle, WA

Thursday, September 21, 2006
 4:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.
 Community Center at Mercer View
 8236 SE 24th Street
 Mercer Island, WA

The proposed East Link study schedule is shown below. Opportunities for public involvement and input will continue throughout the environmental review process.

East Link Study Schedule



Summary of Comments Received

This summary is an overview of approximately 300 comments received between September 1, 2006, and October 2, 2006. Nearly half of those who commented expressed preferences for particular East Link route alternatives. Other comments addressed concerns specific to a segment or larger concerns for the project as a whole. The comments are organized into sections. This section is organized by (1) Comments Specific to the Preliminary Purpose and Need Statement; (2) Comments Not Specific to a Segment; (3) Comments Specific to a Segment; and (4) Comments from Public Agencies, Jurisdictions, and Institutions. The format of these sections is similar to the expected contents of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement, with comments organized by the following topics (where comments in the identified categories were not offered, the category is not listed):

- Transportation
- Economics
- Displacements and relocations
- Neighborhoods and land use
- Visual and aesthetic resources
- Air quality
- Noise, vibration, and electromagnetic fields
- Geology and soils
- Historic and archaeological resources
- Parklands
- Construction
- Other concerns

1. Comments Specific to the Preliminary Purpose and Need Statement

Sound Transit received 12 comments specific to the Preliminary Purpose and Need Statement. The Cities of Seattle, Bellevue, and Redmond support light rail as appropriate to the purpose and need of the project. The City of Seattle indicated that alternate high-capacity transit (HCT) modes have been studied extensively, do not perform as well as light rail, and should not be studied further. The City of Bellevue commented that light rail transit offers a meaningful solution to worsening cross-Lake Washington and intra-Eastside mobility problems.

A few commenters, including WSDOT, Fish and Wild Service, and Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), indicated that the Purpose and Need Statement was too narrowly focused and requested that Sound Transit refer to HCT or other alternatives, such as bus rapid transit (BRT), rather than specifying only light rail in the Purpose and Need Statement. Bellevue, Mercer Island, FHWA, King County Department of Transportation (KCDOT), Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT), and WSDOT as well as some organized groups expressed a desire that all alternatives undergo evaluation of how each will affect the current and future regional transportation system, including facilities, operations, and performance.

Furthermore, it was requested that the Purpose and Need Statement be expanded to include how East Link will address transit operational deficiencies, such as reliability and travel speed, for all transit modes using shared facilities.

Additionally, specific project objectives were offered from organized transportation coalitions, WSDOT, and the City of Mercer Island:

- Provide a reliable and efficient alternative for moving people throughout the region.
- Improve speed and reliability and expand capacity for people traveling on the region's increasingly congested transportation corridors, while preserving the environment.
- Increase mobility and accessibility to and from the region's highest employment and housing concentrations by providing a transportation alternative.
- Select a comprehensive solution capable of meeting all or most of east King County's most critical regional transit needs.
- Move the greatest number of people across the I-90 bridge.

One group proposed that "the Purpose and Need Statement should be expanded to include the SR 520 and I-405 corridors, as well as all Eastside cities, including Renton, Kent, and Auburn. This would support their feeling that there is a greater need to serve north-south congestion in east King County than a system connecting Seattle with the east side of King County.

The City of Mercer Island proposed to include the following language in the Purpose and Need Statement:

- The conversion of the center I-90 roadway amendment agrees "to the earliest possible conversion of the center roadway to two-way High Capacity Transit operation based on outcome of studies and funding approvals" and only after "additional facilities and services" have been provided to Mercer Island residents "to the extent of loss of mobility to and from Mercer Island."
- The I-90 amendment requires the construction and operation of all phases of the I-90 Two-Way Transit and High-Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) Operations Project and the addition of two new HOV lanes in the outer roadways prior to and not concurrent with conversion of the center roadway to HCT.

2. Comments Not Specific to a Segment

General Support

Many respondents explicitly supported extending light rail from Seattle to the Eastside, with comments not specific to segments. A majority of comments supported the idea of light rail to the

Eastside with some suggested modifications (discussed by segment below). Several respondents indicated that the project should be built as fast as possible. A few comments generally supported all alignments in each segment.

Sound Transit 2 (ST2) and Project Funding Options

ST2 is a funding package that includes the East Link project as one of many transit improvements. Sound Transit sought input on the ST2 packages by hosting four open house meetings and collecting input via an online survey. With these efforts, ST recorded over 5,000 respondents' input. These comments are being separately compiled and reported to the Sound Transit Board of Directors. Nearly 80 percent of respondents addressing rail expansion consistently supported the maximized rail extension options, followed by lower but still strong support for medium rail extension option. Four-hundred sixty-nine respondents on the ST2 funding package mentioned adding transit and specifically rail to the east side of Lake Washington.

Two of the ST2 open houses were held together with the East Link public scoping meetings. Twenty-eight respondents on the East Link comment cards mentioned their preference for ST2 funding packages. Of these, 22 respondents supported the maximum system extension of ST2 and the East Link project and maximum tax under consideration to fund these projects. Six respondents favored the medium system expansion of ST2 and the East Link project. A few respondents were interested in an East Link project that would serve a broader, region-wide transit system serving Seattle, Bothell and Kenmore, Kirkland, Issaquah, Tukwila and Renton, and out to Pierce County.

Alternatives to Light Rail

Approximately 56 respondents on the East Link project supported light rail, while 26 indicated a preference for transit other than light rail. Of these, nine mentioned bus rapid transit (BRT) and eight suggested additional bus service (non-BRT). Six mentioned various other transit modes such as maglev, high speed trains, or other unspecified transit technologies, and three mentioned additional single occupant vehicle (SOV) travel lanes.

“Do Nothing” Alternative

While the majority of responses were in favor of the East Link project connecting to the Eastside via I-90, there was some concern on whether or not an HCT system, particularly rail, was needed on the Eastside. Less than 1 percent of respondents suggested that a “Do Nothing” alternative would demonstrate the natural, future increase in Sound Transit ridership. These respondents indicated a desire to review the “Do Nothing” option prior to the November 2007 vote.

Transportation

Transportation-related comments included the following:

- **Transportation Benefits** – A few requests were made, mostly from public agencies, that the environmental review should analyze overall transit ridership by area and the potential ridership demand, including bus and East Link patronage. Comments also expressed concern that light rail may provide less accessibility and availability for riders who currently use the bus system.
- **Intermodal Connections** – Several commenters suggested that the light rail route should provide efficient and adequate connections with other existing and future transit modes in Seattle and throughout east King County as well as connect well with park-and-ride facilities. Some requested that the project review potential connections from areas east of I-405, such as Factoria, Newport Hills, and Wilburton. Some were concerned that East Link might reduce the likelihood of improvements to north-south transit and connections with bus routes.

One eastside business organization commented that the East Link Draft EIS should evaluate and make clear how implementation of its potential alternatives will affect implementation of the I-405 Corridor Program Master Plan, as laid out in the 2002 Record of Decision, including its transit, roadway, and freight mobility.

- Pedestrian and Bicycle Activity – Sixteen respondents suggested that station areas should provide for safe and efficient pedestrian and biking connections, especially near the Rainier station in Seattle and a station in downtown Bellevue. The need for sidewalks in station areas and the method for evaluating pedestrian impacts was a concern for a couple of people.

Land Use and Economics

A few development-focused businesses and agency comments requested that long-range plans for growth and development be considered in the EIS evaluation. Others asked that the routes be evaluated in comparison to the land use and economic goals for the area, noting that some routes would serve established population and employment areas, while others would serve emerging growth areas. WSDOT requested that the land use evaluation in the EIS consider regional and local land use goals on I-90, I-405, SR 520, SR 167, and I-5.

Construction Impacts

Construction of the route and stations was seen as potentially disruptive to all business areas near potential routes. The Bellevue Downtown Association is concerned about construction impacts on businesses and adjacent properties; private development activities; commuter patterns; and capacity on arterials, I-90, I-405, and SR 520. A couple of the comments expressed concern that the construction effects could potentially negate any current or planned transportation improvements to the corridor.

Other Comments

The costs for the project and the time required to make a decision were cited as important issues by several respondents. While a few respondents were concerned with the cost of the project and voting before understanding the route that Sound Transit was planning to select, still others expressed support to pay additional taxes to get the project built as soon as possible. Several comments were received concerning the visual impact of overhead utility lines.

3 Comments Specific to a Segment

Segment A (Seattle to South Bellevue)

Route and Station Preferences

Some commenters questioned why I-90 is the preferred route over SR 520, concluding that building the system in compliance with any updates to the SR 520 floating bridge would better serve the region or be more efficient. Others suggested different cross-lake options such as a new bridge or tunnel under Lake Washington and some questioned the feasibility of building light rail on the floating bridge portion of I-90.

One comment reflected that the Rainier Avenue/I-90 station should be considered provisional if additional funding is needed for Eastside expansion. There were two comments requesting an additional or relocated [from Rainier Avenue] station at the Goodwill site near Dearborn.

Although the Mercer Island Park-and-Ride is currently being expanded, a few Mercer Island residents voiced strong concerns about the number of available spaces for island residents because many of the park-and-ride parking places are currently used by non-resident commuters. There is apprehension that even with the expansion, Mercer Island residents will be unable to use the facility.

Transportation

Many residents of Mercer Island were concerned about losing lanes on I-90 as well as direct I-90 access for residents and loss in mobility. The City of Mercer Island was concerned about the conversion of the center roadway and how its implementation fits in with the Amendment to the Memorandum of Agreement between the cities of Seattle, Mercer Island, and Bellevue; King County Metro; and the Washington State Highway Commission. Mercer Island commented that its agreement to the amendment is contingent upon satisfactory mitigation of any "loss of mobility from Mercer Island". Similarly, FHWA expressed concern for the degradation of the function of I-90. Finally, the City of Bellevue wants to preserve HOV capacity at the Bellevue Way interchange at I-90.

Bicycle and Pedestrian

A few respondents indicated a preference to widen the bicycle lane across I-90. A few respondents indicated the importance of bicycle connections to other areas of Seattle from the Rainier station.

Segment B (South Bellevue to Main Street)

Route and Station Preferences

Sound Transit received 107 comments relating to route preferences in Segment B. A considerable number of comments opposed the Bellevue Way SE and 112th Ave SE routes and emphasized studying either 118th Avenue SE or the BNSF Railway corridor. One respondent suggested that if either of these routes were selected, the abandoned I-405 Wilburton overpass should be considered for a maintenance facility. Over 50 respondents also indicated a preference to keep light rail along I-405 in this segment, primarily as a route that did not include 112th Avenue SE. A few commenters expressed a preference for the Bellevue Way SE route as it would better serve prime shopping centers as it approaches downtown Bellevue. However, about 15 stated that they want it in a tunnel if along Bellevue Way. Several commenters said that East Link should provide connectivity between Eastgate Park-and-Ride, Factoria, and Newport with downtown Bellevue via Richards Road or I-405.

Some comments noted that the South Bellevue Park-and-Ride should be expanded to adequately serve current and future commuters, as well as provide adequate and frequent bus connections, while others requested that the land surrounding the existing park-and-ride not be used for an expanded station or park-and-ride.

Transportation

Many residents' comments focused on transportation interfaces within Segment B and how the project might worsen traffic (cut-through traffic, degraded access onto arterials, and related noise disturbance) in adjacent neighborhoods. It was requested that routes east of I-90 and I-405 be considered for the environmental review.

Neighborhoods: Displacements and Relocations

Comments reflected a great concern for impacts on south and west Bellevue neighborhoods, including Enatai, Surrey Downs, and residential areas along Bellevue Way SE. Representatives from Segment B neighborhoods expressed concern that an alignment through 112th Avenue SE would greatly impact their neighborhood and may force many residents to move or may result in the loss of the neighborhood's integrity and infrastructure. Roughly a dozen respondents were concerned about the necessity of acquiring right-of-way for East Link and the subsequent potential loss of housing and cumulative impacts of East Link. A few respondents requested that Sound Transit conduct and disclose a detailed study of the displacement and relocation impacts of each alternative prior to the vote on the ST2 and RTID package in November 2007. The residents expressed concern for degradation of quality of life, such as loss of urban forest areas such as Mercer Slough that have developed over time.

Visual and Aesthetic Resources

Proclaimed residents and a few others expressed concern about the proposed elevated sections of the East Link alternatives causing visual and lighting impacts along 112th Avenue SE.

Noise and Vibration

Residents expressed concern that construction and operation of a light rail system would greatly increase the noise level in their area, especially in the Mercer Slough area, along Bellevue Way and 112th Avenue.

Ecosystems, Wetlands, and Parklands

Concern for potential impacts to Mercer Slough and associated wetlands and habitat was noted for routes using Bellevue Way SE. Comments indicated that particular environmental concern and review should be given to the following areas: Lake Washington, Mercer Slough, Sturtevant Creek, and Kelsey Creek.

Historic Resources

Six comments reflected concern for historical buildings, specifically the Winters House on Bellevue Way and the Sacred Heart Church (which borders Segment B & C)

Segment C (Downtown Bellevue)

Route and Station Preferences

Over 50 comments addressed tunnel routes in Downtown Bellevue. The City of Bellevue and Bellevue business organizations (36 comments) support tunnel route alternatives in order to preserve traffic capacity in downtown Bellevue. Likewise, they do not support routes that remove transportation capacity. Those who preferred at-grade alignments preferred the convenience, visibility, and cost-effectiveness of this alignment. Two respondents said they would like routes that travel through areas east of I-405. Most who mentioned downtown access felt a preference for a strong connection with the current Bellevue Transit Center.

Singular comments included accessing Bellevue only through NE 4th and NE 8th Streets; continuation of the 118th Street route to NE 4th, NE 2nd, or NE 6th; the addition of a route from NE 8th Street to 156th Avenue NE; a route into Bellevue elevated across I-405 onto Main Street; and an additional at-grade route at 108th Avenue SE because it would provide satisfactory access both west and east to Bellevue Way SE and 112th Avenue SE for retail and businesses. Also, a few responders suggested an additional station at Bellevue Square.

King County requested addressing the impacts on King County's Meydenbauer property and considering the addition of NE 8th Street to 156th Ave NE (Crossroads) as an alternative alignment.

The Bellevue Downtown Association (BDA) does not support any at-grade route alternatives which would remove roadway capacity in downtown Bellevue.

Economics

The Bellevue Downtown Association (BDA) expressed interest in how this project may affect and enhance growth, development patterns, transportation capacity, and overall accessibility to, from, and within downtown Bellevue.

Segment D (Downtown Bellevue to Overlake Station)

Route and Station Preferences

Approximately 20 comments related to route preferences in Segment D. Route preferences generally listed the Bel-Red Corridor or NE 16th Street as the best alignments to reach the Overlake Transit Center and the SR 520 alignment as the least preferred. Additional stations were suggested at Sears along 148th Avenue NE and at NE 16th Street and 124th Avenue.

Several respondents supported a station at the Group Health/Overlake Hospital Medical Center, including the Hospital, noting its growing needs. Also, workers at the Microsoft campus near Overlake Transit Center commented on the urgent need to connect Seattle Central Link Light Rail to Overlake and Redmond. An additional route was suggested to connect Bellevue Way to the park-and-ride near SR 520 and Northup Way (South Kirkland Park and Ride).

Land Use

Several commenters requested that Sound Transit integrate Segment D with the redevelopment plans of the Bel-Red Corridor to maximize land use and potential redevelopment in that area.

Segment E (Overlake Station to Redmond)

Route and Station Preferences

Eighteen commenters specified support for full extension into Redmond, whereas six commenters felt that there was little benefit in this segment. Three people expressed an interest in going to Woodinville. Three other respondents highly desire a Bear Creek Park-and-Ride stop, while one person felt the Leary Way and Bear Creek alignments might cause negative effects in downtown Redmond. The commenters who preferred Bear Creek Park-and-Ride said it would provide downtown Redmond with light rail, yet also provide a closer link for residents from Redmond Ridge and the Snoqualmie Valley. In contrast, Redmond city staff commented that neither the Bear Creek route nor the Leary Way routes complemented future land use plans as well as other routes.

Additional stations were suggested at NE 80th Street; NE 51st Street and SR 520; half-way between the Overlake Transit Center and Redmond at NE 60th; and 140th Avenue and the Overlake Transit Center. One comment suggested moving the station to north of the Overlake Safeway store on NE 24th and west of 152nd Avenue.

Transportation

With light rail service to Redmond, comments reflected, it is imperative that Sound Transit integrate East Link with bus service.

4. Comments from Public Agencies and Jurisdictions

Sound Transit received comments from federal, state, and local agencies. Most of these agencies requested coordination with Sound Transit, or highlighted specific concerns related to light rail construction and operation. These comments are summarized below by agency.

United States Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration

Comments from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) targeted the Preliminary Purpose and Need Statement, range of alternatives, NEPA studies, FHWA's role as a cooperating agency under NEPA, and WSDOT's role as a co-lead agency under SEPA and NEPA. The following bullets summarize FHWA's comments:

- FHWA's experience suggests that the Purpose and Need Statement is too narrowly focused and that it should refer to high capacity transit rather than light rail specifically.
- FHWA's jurisdiction is approval of an access change in use of the interstate right-of-way and changes to access ramps. Potential impacts and mitigation for access changes need to be evaluated.
- The EIS should consider a broader range of HCT alternatives. This can be addressed by including the reasoning from earlier planning studies if they have ruled out other transit technology alternatives.
- The effects on the region's overall transportation system in the project vicinity should be evaluated.

- Completion of the R-8A alternative is required for East Link to function properly and should be included in the No Build Alternative.
- FHWA is concerned about how the proposal of HCT in the I-90 corridor will impact I-90 operations and safety.
- FHWA recommends that FTA consider WSDOT as a NEPA co-lead agency.

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

The National Park Service (NPS) anticipates an analysis of park effects that is consistent with Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act, and recommends early consultation with the Interagency Committee for Outdoor Recreation to identify any Section 6(f) properties protected by the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act that may be affected.

United States Department of the Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service

The United States Fish and Wildlife Service suggests employing the term “high-capacity transit” instead of “light rail” in each reference to HCT, whether in regards to the Central Link light rail line or East Link.

U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Federal Emergency Management Agency

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) requests that FTA, as the federal lead agency under NEPA, perform a rigorous review to identify practicable alternatives to avoid the floodplain. If avoiding a floodplain is not possible, then FTA should consider alternatives to avoid adverse effects and incompatible development in the floodplain.

Washington State Department of Transportation

WSDOT confirmed their status as co-lead with Sound Transit under SEPA and expects to participate as a co-lead or cooperating agency under NEPA. WSDOT offered comments on the Preliminary Purpose and Need Statement, as well as desired ridership, transportation, and environmental analyses, as listed below:

- A narrow purpose and need could present a risk of legal challenge. The purpose and need and scoping process should assure that all reasonable HCT alternatives be accounted for in the environmental review either by fresh analysis or by reference and/or incorporation of materials from prior studies.
- Use current information in the environmental analysis to assure that issues and opportunities from emerging technologies are not precluded.
- Consider other regional transportation projects and programs on I-90, I-405, SR 520, SR 167, and I-5.
- Review interim and construction-period effects. Specifically, WSDOT is concerned with efficient management of traffic during construction.
- Reflect ridership in a single-seat trip between East Link and Airport Link through a direct rail connection between the two routes.
- Demonstrate regional ridership as compared with project-specific ridership, by segment. Ridership should reflect travel time and station spacing for trips throughout the entire light rail system.
- Consider adding another downtown Bellevue station. The trade-off between additional stations and increased travel time needs to be thoroughly examined. Absolute light rail travel time should be compared with automobile travel times.

- Evaluate and make clear how implementation of the project's potential alternatives will affect implementation of the I-405 Corridor Program Master Plan, as laid out in the 2002 Record of Decision, including its transit, roadway and freight mobility.

Washington State Department of Ecology

The Washington Department of Ecology (WDOE) provided the following comments on various environmental resources, including water quality and the protection of Lake Washington, Mercer Slough, Sturtevant Creek, Kelsey Creek, Bear Creek, and Sammamish River, and all adjacent wetlands:

- Mitigation – A description of possible mitigation options for unavoidable adverse impacts should be provided, including impacts on potential or known fish habitat and any wetlands.
- Contaminated Sites – Unidentified contaminated sites may be found during site investigations for the East Link route. Any new contamination sites should be reported to WDOE in accordance with the Model Toxics Control Act.
- Soil Disposal – The soils generated for disposal will need to be evaluated to determine whether they fall under the authority of state solid waste regulations.
- Stormwater – The East Link project will cross a number of Section 303(d)-listed waterbodies. The project should be designed to meet the new WDOE stormwater manual requirements.
- Water Quality – Concrete and grout should be managed to avoid impacts on water quality.
- Shoreline Management Act – The East Link project scoping-level evaluation of waterway crossing options (i.e., bridges vs. tunnels) should be evaluated within the context of the Shoreline Management Act. The East Link project has the potential to require consistency review/permits within four locally administered shoreline master programs in the cities of Seattle, Mercer Island, Bellevue, and Redmond.

Washington State Department of Natural Resources – South Puget Sound Region

The Washington State Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) notes that sections of the East Link project will cross state-owned aquatic land, including Lake Washington and the Sammamish River. Sound Transit is required to complete an easement agreement with WDNR in order to do so.

King County Department of Transportation

The King County Department of Transportation (KCDOT) expressed their concern about the potential to increase congestion on I-90; therefore, they wish to review transportation analyses that address I-90, and how East Link may be phased with other improvements to I-90. Other related comments are summarized as:

- Address how road system capacity and bus operations will be maintained during construction.
- Include intermodal connections for local and regional transit service, as well as for pedestrians and bicycles.
- Include forecasts of bus-transit ridership figures for Metro and Sound Transit bus service.

City of Bellevue

The City of Bellevue supports light rail transit as the preferred HCT mode for the I-90 corridor. Bellevue expressed support for the East Link project to serve residential and business centers,

while avoiding or minimizing adverse impacts where possible. The following summarizes the City's concerns about proposed routes in the segments within Bellevue:

- Segment B (South Bellevue to Downtown Bellevue) – Bellevue would like to preserve transportation capacity to, from, and along Bellevue Way, while also enhancing transit accessibility to nearby residents around the South Bellevue Park-and-Ride. The South Bellevue Park-and-Ride could act as a major transfer point to and from the Eastside bus network and provide greater capacity to the project.

Bellevue is interested in reviewing the route selection process for Segment B, with an interest in the 118th and BNSF Railway alternative routes.

In addition, routing and station location options should consider long-term system effects so that future expansions along I-90 would not be precluded.

- Segment C (Downtown Bellevue) – The environmental review for this segment should assume a station at the Bellevue Transit Center and the appropriate facilities to accommodate forecasted bus-transit volumes without compromising roadway capacity. Therefore, Bellevue feels that the tunnel options should be reviewed extensively so that light rail does not come at the expense of the mobility of other transportation modes. Elevated configurations should also be reviewed with respect to transportation impacts and urban design.
- Segment D (Downtown Bellevue to Overlake Transit Center) – Bellevue is vested in enhancing land use within the Bel-Red Corridor and providing HCT access to the medical district. The City does not support a route following SR 520 for the whole length of the Bel-Red corridor. Furthermore, Bellevue requests that the East Link project include a station along a new NE 16th Street corridor near NE 16th Street and 124th Avenue.
- Environmental Resources – Bellevue requests that relocations, land use, construction, and traffic impacts be carefully analyzed in the environmental document. The City also requests that Sound Transit consider local transit feeder options to best serve multiple activity centers in Bellevue, Factoria, Eastgate, Crossroads, and Overlake.

City of Mercer Island

Mercer Island offered several comments on the Purpose and Need Statement and the potential effects the project may have on the conversion of the center roadway of I-90 to HCT. A summary of the City's comments about the Purpose and Need Statement are provided on page 4 of this report. In addition, Mercer Island listed the following issues to be analyzed in the EIS:

- Frequency of train travel
- Operational effects of light rail on the floating bridge
- Duration of center roadway closure during construction
- Equitable access for Mercer Island and mitigation for residents, including enhanced local bus service for the rail station and the Mercer Island Park-and-Ride

City of Redmond

The City of Redmond supports the preliminary Purpose and Need Statement and agrees with the listing of environmental elements that should be evaluated in the EIS. As to preferred routes and a maintenance facility, Redmond requests the following:

- Locating the light rail alignment line along the south side of SR 520 from West Lake Sammamish Parkway NE to the SR 520/SR 202 interchange, turning left into the BNSF Railway right-of-way, and continuing northeast in the right-of-way to 161st Avenue NE and the downtown Redmond Park-and-Ride; or

- Entering downtown Redmond from SR 520, turn north to travel along West Lake Sammamish Parkway NE to the BNSF Railway right-of-way, then travel southeast in the BNSF right-of-way to the SR 520/SR 202 interchange; and
- Locating the East Link maintenance base in the industrial area south of East Lake Sammamish Parkway NE and east of Marymoor Park

Other considerations include:

- Redmond would like to move the proposed Overlake neighborhood station to a more central location with better access to Overlake residents and businesses.
- Redmond prefers that retained cuts be covered as much as possible in the below-grade to at-grade alignments.
- Redmond does not support light rail on either Leary Way or Bear Creek Parkway because of potential negative impacts on traffic and adjacent residential uses and the lack of connectivity with Redmond Town Center and downtown Redmond.

City of Seattle Department of Transportation

The Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) expressed support for the Purpose and Need focusing on light rail. SDOT requests that environmental review include the following:

- Develop conceptual future local bus service networks in response to a shift of passengers from buses to light rail and connectivity with future bus and streetcar lines.
- Analyze impacts on, and alternatives for travel to/from, Seattle by high-occupancy vehicles (HOVs) and regional buses.
- Assess the feasibility of joint bus and rail operations in the Downtown Seattle Transit Tunnel.
- Evaluate options to create a more pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly, accessible street environment at the Rainier Avenue South and I-90 interchange area.
- Address potential parking issues, such as “hide and ride” (people using on-street parking and walking to the station) impacts.
- Address impacts on freight movement in the Rainier Avenue station area.
- Review current and pending City of Seattle transportation projects that may influence or impact East Link project implementation.
- Address potential utility impacts, as identified by Seattle Public Utilities, including: water facilities, drainage and wastewater facilities, population forecasts, and tunnel fire/life safety.

Next Steps

Screening Analysis

The alternatives presented in the East Link Project Environmental Scoping Information Report and the alternatives that emerged from the public scoping process will undergo a screening analysis to determine which alternatives to study in the Draft EIS.

Draft Environmental Impact Statement

The Draft EIS, which is planned for release in the first or second quarter of 2008, will provide an in-depth analysis of the East Link alternatives. Sound Transit, WSDOT, and the FTA will circulate the Draft EIS to affected local jurisdictions, state and federal agencies, community organizations, environmental and other interest groups, and interested individuals. The document will also be

available at Sound Transit offices, public libraries, and community centers. A 45-day formal public comment period on the Draft EIS will extend from the date of issuance of the document. In addition, public hearings will be held during the comment period to receive verbal testimony.

Final EIS and Mitigation Commitments

The Final EIS will document and address comments received on the Draft EIS. It will also document any mitigation commitments associated with the East Link project.

Federal Approval

Soon after the Final EIS is issued, FTA will issue an environmental determination.

List of Respondents and Availability of Purpose and Need Statement

Approximately 300 comments were received and recorded by Sound Transit as of October 2, 2006. The names of organizations and individuals from whom Sound Transit received comments are listed below. Copies of all scoping comments submitted to Sound Transit are available for review at Sound Transit's offices at 401 S. Jackson Street, Seattle, Washington 98104-2826, or by contacting Lauren Swift at (206) 398-5445.

Agency Scoping Comment Providers

Name	Agency
Office of the Mayor	City of Bellevue
Bryan Cairns	City of Mercer Island
Rosemarie M. Ives	City of Redmond
Daniel M. Mathis	Federal Highway Administration
Mark G. Eberlein	U.S. Department of Homeland Security
Ken S. Berg	U.S. Department of the Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service
Rory D. Westberg	United States Department of the Interior
Rebekah R. Padgett	Washington Department of Ecology
Monica Durkin	Washington State Department of Natural Resources
Harold S. Taniguchi	Washington State Department of Transportation
Douglas B. MacDonald	Washington State Department of Transportation
Ronald C. Sheck	Washington State Department of Transportation
Charlie Howard	Puget Sound Regional Council
Jon Layzer	Seattle Department of Transportation
Harold Taniguchi	King County Department of Transportation
Kevin Desmond	King County Metro
Dennis E. Lewarch	The Suquamish Tribe

Organization Scoping Comment Providers

Name	Organization
Renay Bennett	Bellecrest Neighborhood Association
Patrick Bannon	Bellevue Downtown Association
Lisa Rowe and Leslie Lloyd	Bellevue Downtown Association
John Niles	Coalition for Effective Transportation Alternatives
LuAnn Carlson	Corporate Strategies and Development, LLC
Jim Horn, Dick Paylor, Bruce Nurse, Bell Eager, Jim MacIsaac, Will Knedlik	Eastside Transportation Association
Jill Ostrem, Roy Farrell, Peter Morgan	Group Health
Jeff French	Intercare Insurance Services
Bruce L. Nurse	Kemper Development Company
Emmett Maloof	Maloof Investments
Tom Parker	Overlake Hospital Medical Center
David Schooler	Sterling Realty Organization
Stacie LeBlanc Anderson	Surrey Downs Community Club
Dave Skelton	The Skelton Family Trust
Andrea & Nathan Harrison	US Business & Marketing Group
James E. McCutcheon	VanderWel, Jacobson, Bishop & McCutcheon

Citizen Scoping Comment Providers

Alan W. Smith
Alice Nordwall
Amy Faith
Andy and Heather Hermanson
Angela Settle
Angela Smith
Ann K.
Ann Kruse
Arlene Darby
Azaria Rousso
Barbara Sauerbrey
Barbara Zepeda
Bernice Dye
Beth Johnson
Bill Eames
Bill Hirt
Bo Lu
Bob & Ginger Fulton
Bob & Joanna Bengford
Bonnie Lindner
Brenda Nicholson
Brian Baker
Brian Dougherty
Brianna Sieberg
Bruce Becker
Bruce N. Lee
Bryan Weinstein
Carol Pattison
Carolyn Graham
Charles Bollergeon
Chris Hooker
Claire Almquist
Cliff Hanks
Colleen Broadus
Collette Norby-Slychord
Connie Ellsbury
Corbin & Debbie Tudor
Craig and Natasha Black
Craig Clampitt

Craig Dalby
Craig Marker
D. Houck on behalf R. Westberg
Dale Murphy
Dan Haffner
Daniel Witmer
Darrell M. Scattergood
Daryl and Diane Wendle
David and Brenda Kern
David Delinger III
David F. Plummer
David Lester
David M. Dodge
David Myerson
David Schwartz
David Smith
David Smith
David T. Hasbrook
David Wiggins
Deborah Lelinski
Dennis E. Lewarch
Dennis O'Keefe
Dennis R. Schnabel
Don Peterson
Donald F. Padelford
Donald G. Miller
Donald Haas
Donald Peterson
Douglas D. Hoople
Duane Goehner
Edward Hudek
Edwin Lambert
Eleanor & John Griffin
Ellen Sollod
Ellie & Arye Gittleman
Erin Fleck
Forrest Jammer
Frank Paddock
Fred Baxter

Gary Fulton
George Petrovich
Gerry Tolentino
Gordon Stoll
Grant Degginger
Gunter Kaldschmidt
Hank Myers
Hans Gunderson
Harriet Weiss
Harriett Morton
Helene Marcelia
Henry Brown
Hermes Shabbazian
I. Robert Andrews
Ingrid Clair
Ingrid Hanou Clampitt
Ira Appelman
Ira Worden
J. Juel
Jacob Struiksmma
James McIntosh
James Miller
James Morris
Janet Hall
Janis Gane-Johnson
Janusz Springer
Jeff Cockill
Jeff Roberts
Jennifer Thompson
Jerome C. Baer
Jessica Strater
Jessica Zbogor-Smith
Jin Li
JL Kangley
Joanne Sor
Joe Russell
John A and Anne L P Heil
John Egbert
John Griffin
John M. Kloeck
John Morgan
John Sciuchetti
Johnson M. Marshall

Jon Lilja
Joseph Mack
Joseph Mauri
Josh Benaloh
J Swearing
Judith Clark
Judith Giniger
Julie Painley
Kam Boulle
Karen Stash
Katharine Hough
Keith Swenson
Kelly Sublett
Kevin Michael Paulich
Kevin Weishaar
KM Saul
Kyle & Katy Enger
Kyle Houser
Laura Fox
Leonard Marino
Leonard Newstrum
Linda and Wayne Bosshar
Linda Hildreth
Linda Welshons
Lise Northey
Lona J. Hendricks
Lynn Hall
Lynn Lee Thompson
Lynne Pogue
M. Fleming
M. Heller
Maia Richardson
Marc Goyette
Margaret Harrington
Mark S. Allen
Mark S. Brown
Marty Hill
Mary Stoll
Maryann and Kevin Klustner
Matt Leber
Matthew Kerner
Max Maginness
Megan Durning

Merinda & Thomas Stone
Michelle M. Hauser
Mike Fleming
Mike McMahon
Mike Schuh
Mr. & Mrs. J. Ollis
Murali Krishnan
Nancy & Shawn Matheson
Ned Friend
Pam Toelle
Pamela B. Hiatt
Pat Janes
Pat Little
Patsy Bonincontri
Paul R. Harvey
Peter Montgomery
PGHarris58
Phil Miller
Richard Chinn
Richard D. Willard
Richard Tait
Rita Moore
Robert Hildreth
Robin M. Ray
Rodney Rutherford
Ron
Ron Relle
Russell Powell
Ruth Patterson
S. Alsin
Salina Lyons
Sam Elder
Sam Osheroff
Samir Chudgar
Sandy Campbell
Sandy Howard
Sanusz Springer
Sara Suter
Sarah Larsen
Scott Cameron
Scott J. Beam
Scott Nicholson
Sebastian Helm

Sharon Bosse
Stephanie Major
Steve Erickson
Steve Miller
Steve Nagygeller
Steve Strauch
Steven Greenberg
Susan Bidwell
Susan Flagg
Susan Moe
Susan Ogilvie
Susan R. Woerdehoff
Susie Gostyla
Tara S.
Terri Dige
Terry Pepple
Terry Peterson
Thomas Pearson
Thomas Smailus
Tim and Cheryl Erwin
Tim Gould
Tina Guerro
Todd R. Woosley
Tom McArthur
Tony Gaetjens
Tony Rahman
Tracy Wise
Travis Gunther
Troy Carr
Valdi Havrda
Victoria and Robert Williamson
Wayne Suyenage
William & Elizabeth Baluch
William Bonner
William Bradburd
William & Carol Easterbrook
Williams Troffey
Yolanda Marshall