

Appendix C: Email Comments

All comments in this section represent comments received by email between February 18 and March 12, 2010.

Email Comments

From: Gregory G. Daquila

Sent: Wednesday, March 10, 2010 1:13 PM

To: Kuciemba, Katie

Subject: Mercer Island Presentation

Hello Katie,

Here are my answers to the Comment Form handed out last night.

1. I live one and a half miles South of the station
2. I work in Downtown Bellevue. City Center Building, adjacent to the Bellevue Transit Center
3. I will use Light Rail (LR) primarily for special events
4. Frequency of use: Low (Expectation of 6 – 10 trips annually to Seattle, 12 – 20 counting a return trip)
5. Accessing station
Walk: No, Require wheelchair because of Multiple Sclerosis
Drive: No,
Bike: No,
Bus: Yes, (Metro Access van)
Passenger drop off: Yes
6. Station Entrance: I think the 80th Street station is the better choice for limited mobility access
7. Pedestrian & bike facilities: No comments
8. Passenger features:
Weather protection desirable above and at track level. Because of my wheelchair, I am exposed in time and surface area to rain while loading and unloading from an Access Bus. A good example is the Mercer Island Community Center . From the curb to the front-doors is over 75 feet of unprotected travel. When it is raining, a person in a wheelchair exposes more surface area to the rain than ambulatory individuals. People who walk only expose their head and shoulders to the rain.

Position buttons to open station doors to elevators so we don't have to backup or turn around to get through if buttons are aside the main doors. Again I use the Mercer Island Community Center as an example. The ADA button to enter from the parking lot is located on the extreme right side of the building, flush with the front doors. If I was using my manual wheelchair, enough time is required to backup, turn around, go backwards enough to clear the now open front door to negotiate the entrance before automatically closing. I know I am using the Community Center as a critique on the Sound Transit Station, but realize these issues are prevalent throughout the area. Last week I was at the Lincoln Square Cinemas. After the movie I took the sky bridge over NE 8th to the Hyatt. Buttons to opens doors were not convenient for a wheelchair because of button location. My experience is buttons are best position in front of doors just outside of the open doors arc.

Minor issue about restrooms: Again this is from my real world experience in a wheelchair. When the door for a bathroom stall does not close automatically, a person in a wheelchair cannot enter a stall, turn around, hold on to door and drive backwards to close the door completely. Then releasing the door to lock it, only to have it swing back fully open. My power wheelchair has the control stick on the right hand side so I cannot physically reach the handle with my left hand and drive backwards closing the door. The best solution is for maintenance to adjust the doors to always close with gravity. Then one can latch the door without having to hold door fully closed.

9. Other design issues:
In 2006 we (much of King County) lost power for almost 2 weeks (10 days I recall). I suggest you have a generator at one station to allow at a minimum an single elevator to work. One individual

at the meeting suggested you exclude any elevators and escalators in favor of stairs and ramps. I understand the desire to “Be Green” and think of the earth. One of your engineers said to negotiate a 22 foot drop, a ramp of over 300 feet is required. I am sure this comment rates a zero on a scale of probability. I would be happy to loan one of my manual wheelchairs to allow the person suggesting no elevators the experience to manually transverse 300 feet (in the rain no less!)

Obviously parking at the station will not be available. At a minimum you need to provide a 3 minute Load and Unload curbside area. The Bellevue Transit Center has two 3 Minutes spots on the eastside of 108th at the crosswalk (NE 6th). In addition to public loading zones, you need to provide space for regular Metro bus traffic on Mercer Island and Metro Access vans that require 7 to 12 minutes to load/unload a wheelchair. More time is required because Access drivers must physically use tie-downs on wheelchairs and walkers when transferring.

You introduced me to Greg (blue shirt and tie) last night who said the design of the station would allow traffic waiting to pick-up passengers the ability to circle the station from 77th Ave around to 80th Ave. Conceptually this may be true but something deep down says you are asking “Peter to take care of Paul” and unintended consequences will arise. I am not a Transportation Engineer but I do know you don’t get something for nothing. Downtown Mercer Island already experience major delays negotiating the intersection on 77th and 27th (Walgreens). One block away from the station but close enough to gum up the optimum plans of circling the LR station.

Other issues from using a wheelchair:

Elevators should be smart enough to operate without pushing a button on the inside to go down or up. After all the ride is only to one location. At work we have motion sensors that turn on lights when you enter a dark room. You should employ sensors to control elevator operation automatically. At work our elevators display small screens of information. From a sitting position, one cannot read the display because of the angle. If you plan on using flat screen displays (elevator or station) make sure they are at a usable/readable height.

While great ideas at first, the park and ride facilities (Mercer Island and South Bellevue) will never be large enough to satisfy the demands placed on them. Limiting parking by rider location is not realistic or right. People (especially east of Mercer Island) who commute to Seattle like using the Mercer Island Park & Ride lots because they can catch any bus heading east out of Seattle and always get off on Mercer Island to get their car. Their use of parking spaces limits people (primarily elderly, retired) who would like to use LR but cannot because parking near is not possible.

Paul said Sound Transit plans to triple the capacity of the South Bellevue Park & Ride. Is this a realistic plan? The location is really a “wetlands” extension of Lake Washington. My concern is can the topography (really a swamp) support the additional weight of a parking structure and vehicles? Clearly LR will provide service to the Bellevue Transit Center, how would one get to Bellevue Square from 108th? I would use LR more frequently if Downtown Bellevue (the Square, Lincoln Square, Hyatt) where specific destinations.

Might I suggest charging a graduated fee to park at the Park & Ride lots? This is without much thought so please let me opine. Since you can’t reserve parking for specific residents, how about linking the riders Orca Card to their parking. If you are able to Toll traffic without stopping (Tacoma Narrows), then let people be charged for length of time (or even distance from residence) on their Orca card or Identification Tag used for Tolling. For example: A rider from Issaquah would pay a higher rate than a citizen from Mercer Island thereby discouraging non-local commuters from using our Park & Ride lots. They could still use them but incur a cost to do so. Likewise if we go east and attempt to use the Eastgate Park & Ride. I have not fully thought-out this suggestion but alas it is an idea to ponder.

Final question: Someone asked about frequency of LR and the answer was about every 8 minutes. I

didn't think about this but the two tracks must actually be a single closed loop with the trains going round and round. Not like the Monorail with only one train per track. Is this the case and trains will loop around to continue at an endpoint? I think I have gone on long enough. I don't expect specific answers to all my comments. You have better things to do I am sure. Hopefully some of my ideas are useful to your planning process.

Thank you for the opportunity to voice my thoughts.

Regards,

Greg Daquila

From: Steve & Joanne Lee

Sent: Friday, March 12, 2010 9:52 PM

To: eastlink- mailbox shared,

Subject: Mercer Island Preliminary Engineering Workshop Comments

Hello,

Here are my comments.

Mercer Island Preliminary Engineering Workshop
Tuesday, March 9, 2010
5 - 7:30 p.m. (presentation at 6 p.m.)
Community Center at Mercer View
8236 SE 24th St., Mercer Island

1. East Link Project

The East Link Project makes a lot of sense. Just be sure there is frequent bus service to integrated Factoria, Eastgate, Issaquah, and points East with "seamless" transfers. Seamless transfers would be logical transfers at Mercer Island and South Bellevue Park & Ride. Don't let Bellevue City Council vote out having a station at the South Bellevue Park & Ride. Educate the City of Bellevue (Surrey Downs Area) on what sound mitigation measures can be applied. Open segment to downtown Bellevue ASAP and do not wait until Overlake is ready.

2. Mercer Island Station

I like two entrances to the station (it provide good pedestrian flow). Keep the escalators. Will there be cost savings to not raise the platform and simply add sound barrier walls to reduce freeway traffic noise? Covered waiting is a must. Need additional parking at South Bellevue Park & Ride as Mercer Island Park & Ride is always full. Designate some parking spots as limited to 4 hours so mid-day riders will have a parking spot.

3. Station Access

3a. I live 3 miles from the station

3b. I do not work on Mercer Island

3c. I do not intend to use light rail for daily commuting. I will use light rail for special events to Bellevue or Seattle with destination parking is expected to be difficult.

3d. Anticipate using station on weekends

3e. I plan on accessing the station by driving to the park & ride

3f. I anticipate using the 80th Avenue SE entrance because it better aligns with the park & ride. Keep the 77th Avenue SE entrance for safety and crowd control.

4. Station Features

Integrate the light rail station to bus stops and park and ride. Make all components feel like an "interconnected outdoor mall". Build covered walkways and bus waiting areas so riders don't get so wet when transferring (...getting wet is a big negative to riding public transportation). Provide train and bus arrival/departure electronic reader boards. Provide free Wi-Fi. Provide plenty of lighting. Provide good visible uniform police presence. Keep the escalator in the plan

Thanks,

Steve Lee

From: Suzanne Sperry
Sent: Monday, March 01, 2010 4:00 PM
To: Kuciemba, Katie
Subject: I-90 Mercer Island light rail

I will not be able to attend your meeting next Tuesday so I need to share a couple of thoughts with you.

I am very pleased to see light rail come across the Island. I live on Mercer Island and take Sound Transit to both Seattle and Bellevue almost every time I need to visit there.

BUT there is one major problem. I am retired and usually go to doctors, dentists and such between 9:00a.m. and 4:00 p.m. It is a real pain to try to use our totally inadequate NEW parking garage. It is nearly always filled to bursting between 9 and 3. This means that, after circling the parking garage a few times, I must turn around and drive back into downtown MI and try to find a spot there. Then I have to walk back to the Park & Ride, catch a later bus than I'd intended and usually am late for my appointment.

If you plan to have Light Rail, too, that just means MORE commuters and absolutely NO place to park. I do hope some thought is given to either doubling the size of our current parking structure before the Rail gets here, or putting in another parking garage nearby.

Sincerely,

Suzanne Sperry