

# East Link light rail:

## Mercer Island Workshop Summary



April 2010

 **SOUNDTRANSIT**  
RIDE THE WAVE

# East Link Light Rail Project Overview

East Link is Sound Transit's voter-approved project to build light rail between Seattle and the Overlake Transit Center in Redmond via I-90. East Link will connect the Eastside's biggest population and employment centers, serving 45,000-50,000 riders daily. Sound Transit is also conducting environmental review on the future extension between Overlake and downtown Redmond.

In May 2009, the Sound Transit Board of Directors identified a preferred East Link alternative with east side stations serving Mercer Island, Bellevue, Bel-Red and Overlake. Light rail will run on the existing I-90 center roadway across Lake Washington with stations at Rainier Avenue in Seattle and Mercer Island. New HOV lanes will be constructed on the I-90 outer roadways adding 24-hour HOV access both east and westbound while preserving the existing number of general purpose lanes.

## East Link Timeline

2009–2010 Preliminary Engineering



2011–2013 Final Design



# East Link Preferred Alternative

Identified by Sound Transit Board of Directors, May 2009



2013/2014 Construction

2020/2021 Service Begins



# East Link Mercer Island Workshop Overview

On Tuesday, March 9, 2010, Sound Transit hosted a preliminary engineering workshop to provide a status update to the Mercer Island community on the East Link design progress and to solicit feedback on station access and features. The input received will help guide the project team as they complete the preliminary engineering process to further design the East Link alignment and stations. The meeting was held at the Community Center at Mercer View from 5 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. Approximately 90 community members were in attendance.

This community workshop was part of a comprehensive public involvement program Sound Transit has developed to support the East Link project. Throughout the course of the East Link project, Sound Transit has offered opportunities for the public to learn about the project and encouraged community feedback. Community outreach events and activities for East Link included:

- Project update mailings, e-mail updates, and project Web site
- A series of public scoping meetings in November 2006
- Five route and station workshops in spring 2007
- Draft Environmental Impact Statement hearings in early 2009
- A series of neighborhood workshops in fall 2009 and spring 2010
- Ongoing community briefings
- Informational project booths at community events and festivals

## **Purpose**

- Present updated information on the Mercer Island design progress and station layout
- Provide information about the East Link project status and next steps
- Solicit feedback on key issues including station access and features

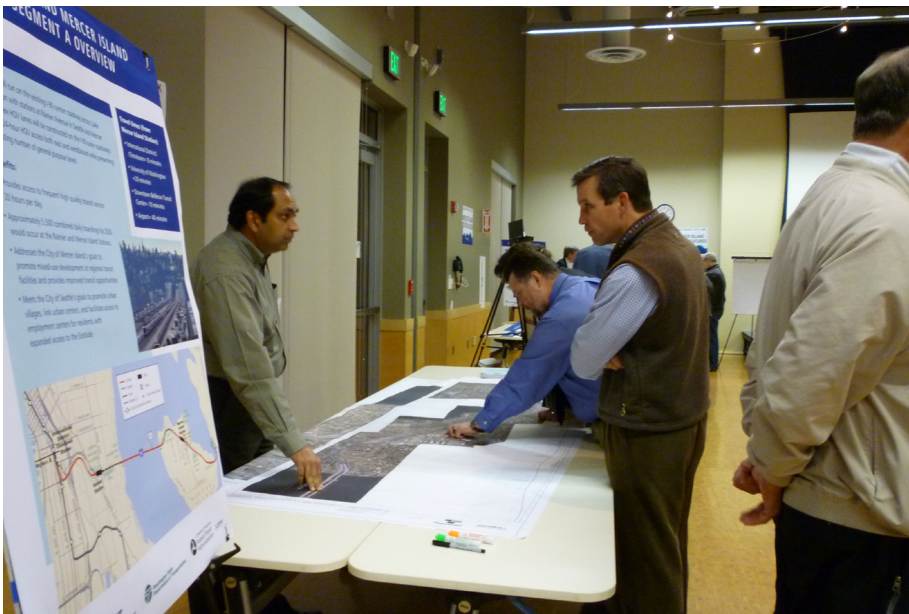
## Format

Participants were asked to sign-in as they arrived and Sound Transit staff informed them of the meeting purpose and agenda. Each participant received a comment form that provided information about the segment area, space for general comments about the East Link project and Mercer Island Station and alignment, as well as specific questions related to station access and features.

After signing in, Sound Transit staff encouraged participants to view display boards around the room in order to learn about the link light rail system and upcoming opportunities to get involved. Two meeting stations were dedicated to reviewing detailed information about the Mercer Island Station plans, including station drawings and strip plots. Members of the East Link project team staffed each station to answer questions and record comments.

At 6 p.m. Sound Transit staff invited participants to listen to an overview presentation. The presentation highlighted the workshop purpose and goals and provided a report on the current project status. Sound Transit Segment lead Paul Cornish provided an overview of Segment A and highlighted the key station features on Mercer Island. The presentation concluded with a question and answer session. The workshop continued after the conclusion of the presentation.

Participants were invited to submit their comments on the comment form, by mail or e-mail, or by communicating directly with Sound Transit staff. The comments provided are highlighted in this summary. A full record of transcribed comments from flip charts, e-mails and comment forms are documented in Appendix B and C.



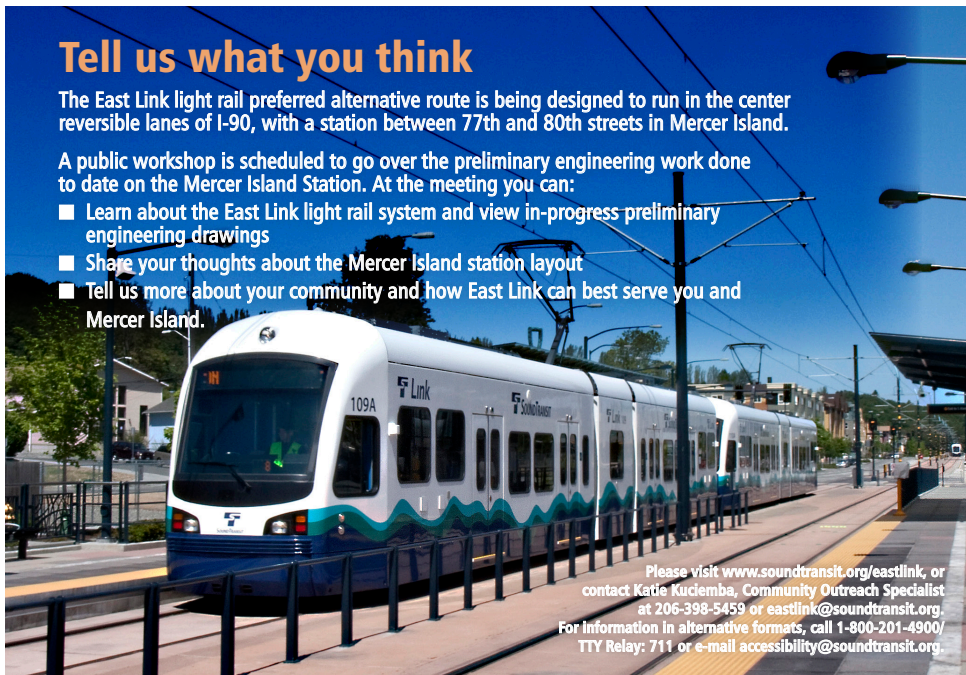


## Public Notification

Sound Transit notified citizens who live or work on Mercer Island of the East Link workshop through a variety of methods including the Sound Transit Web site, an electronic newsletter sent to listserv subscribers, news releases, a postcard mailing, and display advertisements in local newspapers. Translation services were also advertised and available as needed.

Sound Transit mailed a postcard announcement to all residents, businesses and post office boxes on Mercer Island. Sound Transit ran display ads announcing the workshop in the Mercer Island Reporter.

In addition to notifying the general public, Sound Transit requested participation from business owners in the corridor, stakeholders, and neighborhood groups, as well as citizens who attended previous meetings, submitted comments, or asked to be added to the project mailing list. A copy of the postcard announcement and other notifications are included in Appendix E.



**Tell us what you think**

The East Link light rail preferred alternative route is being designed to run in the center reversible lanes of I-90, with a station between 77th and 80th streets in Mercer Island.

A public workshop is scheduled to go over the preliminary engineering work done to date on the Mercer Island Station. At the meeting you can:

- Learn about the East Link light rail system and view in-progress preliminary engineering drawings
- Share your thoughts about the Mercer Island station layout
- Tell us more about your community and how East Link can best serve you and Mercer Island.

Please visit [www.soundtransit.org/eastlink](http://www.soundtransit.org/eastlink), or contact Katie Kuciemba, Community Outreach Specialist at 206-398-5459 or [eastlink@soundtransit.org](mailto:eastlink@soundtransit.org). For information in alternative formats, call 1-800-201-4900/TTY Relay: 711 or e-mail [accessibility@soundtransit.org](mailto:accessibility@soundtransit.org).

**You're invited:**


**East Link Light Rail 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

To request accommodations for persons with disabilities, call 1-800-201-4900 / TTY Relay: 711 or e-mail [accessibility@soundtransit.org](mailto:accessibility@soundtransit.org).

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# LINK LIGHT RAIL East Link Project



## Tell us what you think

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### Please join us Tuesday, March 9, 2010

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Community Center at Mercer View • 8236 SE 24th St., Mercer Island

*Interpreters, as well as accommodations for persons with disabilities, can be arranged upon request with sufficient notice by calling 1-800-823-9230 or TTY Relay: 711.*

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# Public Comments

Sound Transit received a total of 30 public comments between March 9 and 22, 2010. The public comments summarized below were submitted at the workshop, or via e-mail or mail following the meeting. Verbatim transcriptions of all comments are provided in Appendix B and C. All appendices are available to download online at <http://www.soundtransit.org/eastlink>.

## Key Themes

- General support for East Link and requests to complete the project sooner than scheduled.
- Request for additional parking, passenger drop off-areas, park-and-ride expansion and/or time restricted parking spaces for mid-day users.
- Improve bus access on Mercer Island to encourage multi-modal use of the transit system.
- Include adequate bike storage and pedestrian features at the Mercer Island station.
- Ensure light rail stations are ADA accessible.

## General Comments

The first page of the comment form addressed general feedback on the East Link project and Mercer Island station. The following key themes emerged from this section.





## General support

In general, participants indicated support for East Link and requested the system be constructed as quickly as possible.

- *“I am so pleased that light rail is coming to Mercer Island. As a twenty-three year resident of Mercer Island, I look forward to being able to take light rail to the airport, to Seattle, to the University of Washington, to Bellevue, etc.”*
- *“Hurry, hurry, hurry – the design and especially construction times seem excessively long.”*
- *“Open segment from Seattle to South Bellevue park-and-ride first. And build it sooner than 2021! Much sooner.”*
- *“Great! Should have been built in the 1960s. Never too late to do the right thing.”*

## Parking

Participants requested additional parking spaces at the Mercer Island park-and-ride. Many of these comments indicated heightened concern for parking after completion of East Link. Several comments proposed potential solutions including mid-day time restrictions and parking dedicated for Mercer Island residents.

- *“The Mercer Island park-and-ride is full every day. Mid-day use is impossible. Active retirees... are prevented from using the bus. Set aside a few stalls that have a time restriction! That way, anyone wanting to park there, at say 10 or 11 a.m., at least has a chance to park-and-ride.”*
- *“Feel the park-and-ride is too small and will not be adjusted.”*
- *“Mid-day park-and-ride spots so mid day users have a space to park.”*
- *“Adding parking in Bellevue will not do anything to relieve the inability of MI residents to use the lot and the transit!!! There needs to be time restricted or resident restricted parking available!!!”*
- *“The current park-and-ride lot on Mercer Island is being used by carpoolers. Change the mess so only people who ride transit are allowed to use the lot.”*



### **Multi-Modal Connections**

Several comments referred to bus service on Mercer Island and encouraged Sound Transit to work with Metro to improve bus service to the station.

- *“Using other buses to get to the park-and-ride is often logistically not possible from many parts of the island.”*
- *“Provide efficient transportation between mid island residents and the station. Low frequency buses are not an attractive system. Sound Transit should take the lead to propose such solutions as partnership with private entities.”*
- *“Need good coordination with Metro for buses to light rail.”*

### **Safety**

There was a comment that addressed safety concerns related to narrowing the I-90 bridge lanes due to the I-90 Two-Way Transit and HOV project.

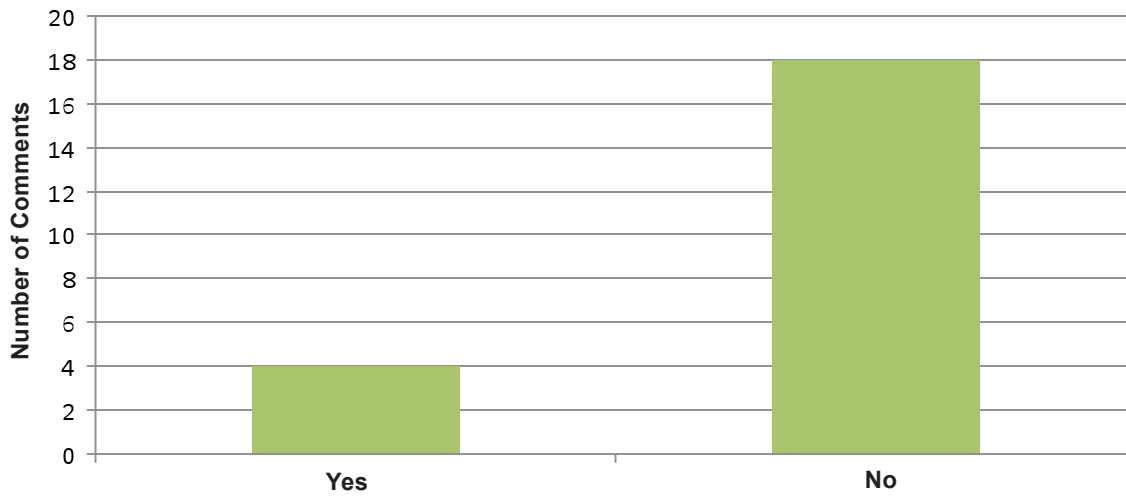
- *“Concerned about safety on I-90 Bridge with narrower lanes and very limited shoulder. How is that safe for emergency response personnel?”*



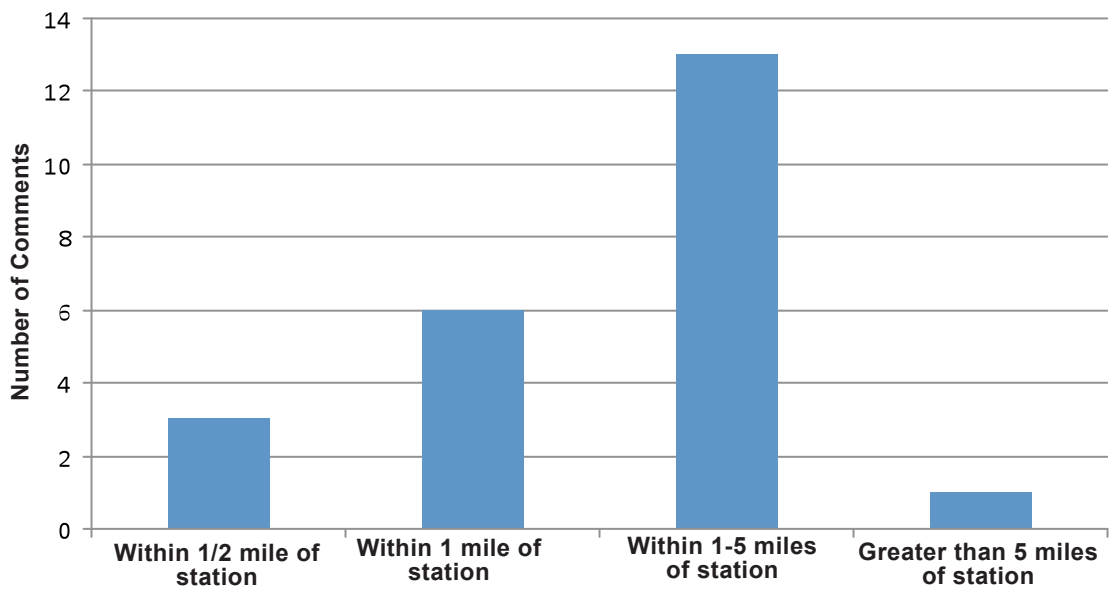
### **Station Access**

The second portion of the comment form focused on questions related to station access. The overwhelming majority of workshop participants live on Mercer Island, most within one to five miles of the station. Many residents do not work on Mercer Island and intend to use light rail for a combination of daily commuting and special events. The majority of individuals indicated they plan to walk or drive to access the station and slightly more people said they intend to use the 77th Ave SE entrance most frequently. The following graphs illustrate the answers provided in the comment form.

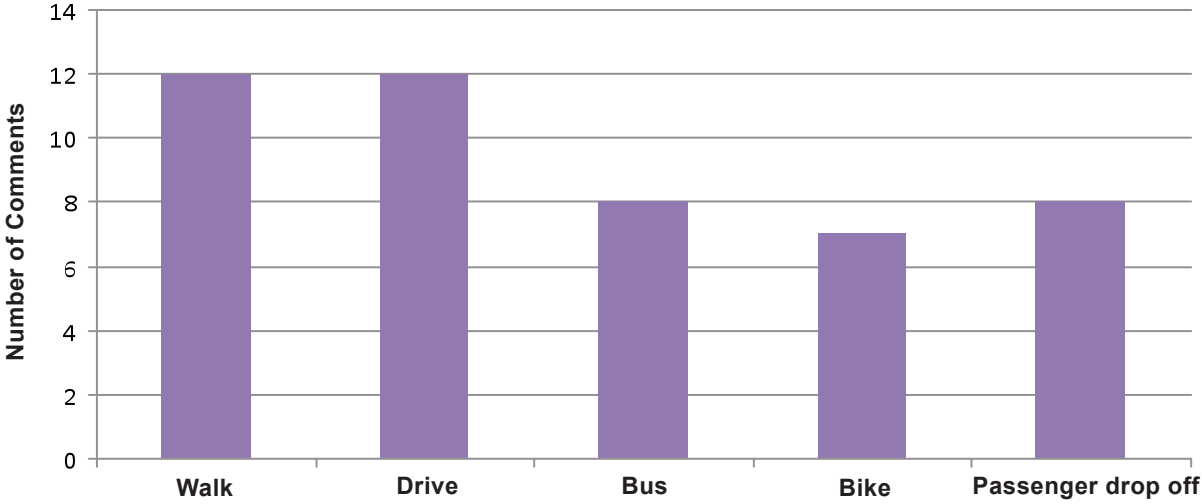
## Do you work on Mercer Island?



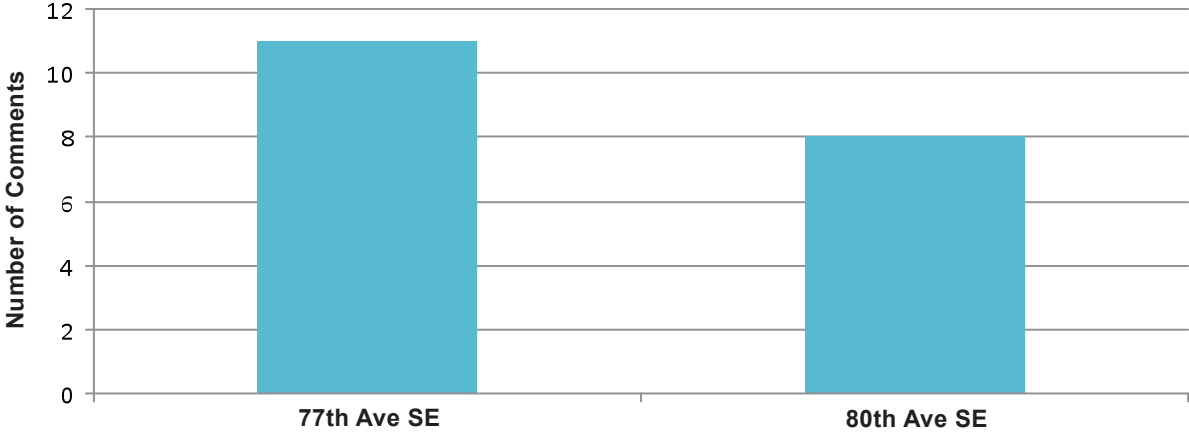
## Do you live on Mercer Island?



### How do you plan on accessing the station?



### Which station entrance do you anticipate using most frequently?





## Station Features

Among the participants that provided comment the majority indicated support for bicycle and pedestrian features. Abundant bike storage and access to light rail were frequently noted as top priorities. In addition, participants requested a wide array of station features including weather protection, covered walkways, seating areas, arrival time displays, a passenger drop-off area, restrooms, and artwork to enhance the Mercer Island station.

### ***Bicycle Facilities***

- *“Bike storage and bike access to trains at both station entrances.”*
- *“Bike storage is very important – especially if the park-and-ride gets full.”*
- *“Most important to me will be the ability to take my bicycle with me on light rail so I will have it with me when I get off. Otherwise, light rail will not benefit me.”*

### ***Passenger amenities***

- *“Seating, covered standing and seating areas, artwork (sculptures) etc., drinking fountains, bike storage, passenger drop-off in front of each station, kiosks.”*
- *“Covered walking areas with adequate seating; good walking access.”*
- *“Please consider real-time next train arrival displays not just on the station platform, but up at the bus stop/park-and-ride level as well.”*
- *“Passenger drop-off, pick-up. Short term waiting for autos.”*
- *“Community bulletin board, coffee shop, free WIFI.”*
- *“Sound Transit and/or the city should add cover (awnings to shield from rain) between 809th and N. Mercer Way intersection and the station entrance.”*
- *“Benches, weather protection, good lighting.”*

## ADA accessibility

Accessibility for disabled and elderly passengers was frequently addressed by participants at the workshop.

- *“Accessibility for seniors – very long walk from park-and-ride to platform.”*
- *“Position buttons to open station doors to elevators so those in wheel chairs don’t have to backup or turn around to get through if buttons are aside the main doors.”*
- *“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.”*

## Aesthetic Design Elements

A few of the comments requested including aesthetic design elements such as artwork and landscaping to enhance the visual appearance of the station and establish it as a prominent community feature.

- *“Strongly encourage a dynamic architectural statement be made as to the design and character of the two station entries. Hire top notch architects for the station design and give them artistic license.”*
- *“Aesthetic features – native plantings, art.”*
- *“Make it beautiful (not just functional), include landscaping, I-90 access across Mercer Island is unique with Douglas firs and parks growing on top of the freeway.”*

## Additional Comments

Following the presentation, there was a brief question and answer period. The following questions and comments were raised by workshop attendees.

- Concern for loss of express lanes, duplicate light rail and bus routes, and increase in non-resident use of the Mercer Island park-and-ride
- Request to build light rail on SR 520 or construct three stops on Mercer Island to increase ridership
- Interest in changes to bus routes
- Support for accelerated construction of the South Bellevue park-and-ride expansion
- Concern for safety due to plans to narrow the shoulders on the I-90 bridge
- Questions related to accessibility and desire to make stations ADA accessible.
- Request to build a park-and-ride lot along I-405
- Concern for disruption during construction
- Coordinate with Metro to ensure multi-modal connections are possible
- Interest in frequency of light rail on Mercer Island
- Install cameras and provide security at station to address safety issues
- Suggestion to add time-restricted parking stalls at the Mercer Island park-and-ride
- Interest related to noise impacts and mitigation procedures
- Preserve green space on I-90 around the light rail station
- Request for clarification on the I-90 express lane provision

# Next Steps

The community feedback provided during the Mercer Island workshop is important to Sound Transit and regional decision-makers. Sound Transit will weigh this feedback in the design of the East Link alignment and station locations, along with cost, ridership, service quality, environmental impacts, land use impacts, and service efficiency. The East Link project team also plans to continue outreach efforts by scheduling community briefings, hosting community open houses and providing ongoing project updates through the mail, e-mail and Web site.

Sound Transit is also preparing a Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) that is planned to be published in late early 2011, which will evaluate the preferred alternative and other alternatives from the Draft EIS. After the Final EIS is completed, the Sound Transit Board will make a final decision on the project alignment and station locations.

In order to address frequently asked questions raised during the workshops, Sound Transit will update the East Link Web site to answer these and other questions we hear from the public. We are always interested in hearing your thoughts about the East Link project!



# Contact

Please submit comments or questions to:

Katie Kuciemba  
Community Outreach Corridor Lead  
(206) 398-5459  
eastlink@soundtransit.org  
401 South Jackson Street  
Seattle, WA 98104

For information in alternative formats, call:  
TTY: Relay: 711 or e-mail  
accessibility@soundtransit.org

To speak with Sound Transit about the proposed Link light rail mass transit project in East King County call 1-800-823-9230 during regular business hours.

Para hablar con Sound Transit acerca del propuesto proyecto de transporte público de Link Light Rail en el este de King County, llame al 1-800-823-9230 durante horas normales de oficina.

要向 Sound Transit 瞭解或討論擬在 East King County 進行的 Link light rail 公共交通項目，請在正常的工作時間致電 1-800-823-9230。

Upang makipag-usap sa Sound Transit ukol sa iminungkahing Link light rail na proyektong sasakyang pangmasa sa Silangang King County tawagan ang 1-800-823-9230 habang sa karaniwang mga oras ng pangangalakal.

Если вы хотите высказать сотрудникам Sound Transit свои замечания по поводу предлагаемого проекта линии общественного транспорта Link light rail в восточной части King County, звоните по телефону 1-800-823-9230 в обычные рабочие часы.

Muốn nói chuyện với Sound Transit về đề án chuyên chở công cộng đường lửa xa nhẹ Link tại Phía Đông Quận King, hãy gọi số 1-800-823-9230 trong giờ làm việc thường lệ.

در مورد مسیر پیشنهاد شده برای پروژه ترانزیت سبک راه آهنی در کینگ شرقی با شماره 1-800-823-9230 در ساعات کاری تماس بگیرید برای گفتگو با سوند ترانزیت





# East Link light rail:

Mercer Island Workshop Appendices