



East Link Extension



June 14, 2013

Downtown Bellevue Final Design Open House Public Involvement Summary

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Background

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

The project builds on the Central Link light rail system running between Sea-Tac Airport and downtown Seattle and the University Link Extension that is scheduled to open in 2016. East Link is part of the new light rail extensions being built north, south and east from Seattle.



When East Link opens, with a targeted date of 2023, 10 stations, serving Seattle, Mercer Island, Bellevue, 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.

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

East Link Timeline



Cost savings update

In April 2013, Sound Transit and the City of Bellevue approved \$30-\$53 million in cost-savings measures, finalizing the East Link Extension alignment. This decision reflects 16 months of collaboration between Sound Transit and the City of Bellevue, and extensive community input on the Cost Savings Ideas. Sound Transit and the City of Bellevue will continue to collaborate on the design of East Link. Per a City of Bellevue resolution, up to \$5 million of the cost savings from the NE 6th St. Station Option should be used to enhance weather protection at the station and pedestrian access around the station.

Approved cost savings decisions

- **Bellevue Way:** Light rail will remain in a trench along Bellevue Way SE, in front of the historic Winters House
- **112th Ave. SE:** Light rail will run under a new 112th Ave. SE overpass built near SE 15th St. and cross SE 4th St. at-grade providing access to emergency vehicles
- **Downtown station:** A downtown tunnel station is replaced with an above-grade station on NE 6th St.

Overview

Sound Transit hosted an open house on May 16, 2013 to present initial final design concepts for the Downtown Bellevue segment of East Link Extension. The meeting served to introduce Sound Transit’s team of engineers, architects and community outreach staff to the Bellevue community; educate the community on the final design process, including what to expect and how to stay informed; provide an overview of the project schedule, benefits, and final design elements; and present and gather comments on design plans for the Downtown Bellevue segment. The open house was held at Bellevue City Hall from 5 to 7 p.m.

Notification

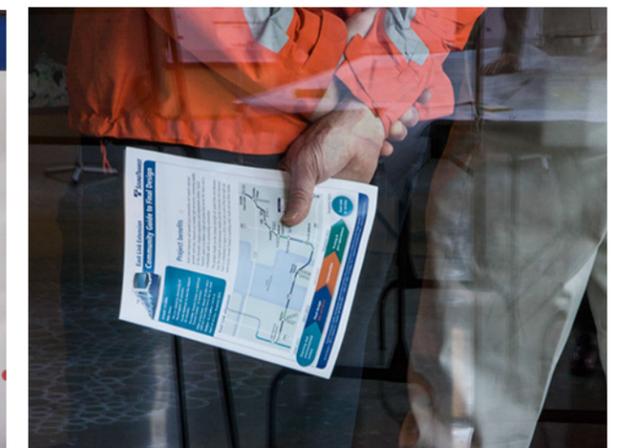
The open house was widely publicized through the following channels:

- Display advertisements in the *Bellevue Reporter*, *Seattle Transit Blog*, *La Raza*, *Seattle Chinese Post*, *Daily Journal of Commerce* and *BellevuePatch.com*
- Postcards mailed to over 25,000 eastside residents and businesses
- A press release to local papers and blogs
- Email notification to approximately 5,400 subscribers of the East Link Extension listserv, 850 subscribers of the Bellevue Gov Alert, neighborhood newsletter, and other agency or community group listservs
- Announcements on the Sound Transit and City of Bellevue project web pages
- Social media announcements pushed out to 8,413 Sound Transit Twitter followers

Open house overview

Approximately 70 people attended the open house to learn about design plans for East Link in the Downtown Bellevue segment and provide comments. Attendees were greeted by project staff, asked to sign-in and were provided with a Community Guide to Final Design, Downtown Bellevue segment fact sheet, and comment forms. Display boards and roll plots featured information about East Link, the final design process and design plans for the Downtown Bellevue segment including the Bellevue Transit Center and Hospital stations and track.

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



Comment Summary

Sound Transit accepted public comments in-person at the open house, and by mail, email and electronically on the East Link website. The following section is a summary of approximately 200 verbal and written comments collected between May 16 and 24, 2013. Transcribed comments are italicized below to highlight the tone of public feedback.

Downtown Bellevue segment design

- Interest in bicycle connections to light rail stations:
 - *No provisions for bicycle access to get to the stations. No provisions for bicycles to get to the rest of downtown and Bellevue neighborhoods.*
 - *Bellevue Downtown has a lot of families with lots of kids. These kids need to get to these stations and many of them will want to do so by bicycle. A wide sidewalk or bicycle lane on high traffic streets if not good enough.*
 - *Bike access is missing in the design drawings. It's next to impossible to access the stations.*
 - *20' for pedestrians and bikes in both directions over I-405 is not enough + not safe.*
 - *Use some of the cost savings to build one separated, family accessible, bicycle facility through downtown. (not just a wide sidewalk or 4' strip of paint).*
 - *Build a bike path -- fully separated from sidewalks -- connecting from Bellevue Way to the BNSF corridor over 405. This bike path should have an entrance/exit at the rail station, hopefully adjacent to some bike racks.*
 - *Interest in having a variety of passenger seating options that accommodates aging communities. An example is having a low barstool level of seating so that individuals can comfortably get up from the seating position.*
- Requests for enhancing the pedestrian experience in Downtown Bellevue:
 - *Downtown Bellevue is currently so car-centric that it is unpleasant to walk or bike there (or drive, for that matter). I would welcome any improvements as part of station design and construction.*

- Interest in construction impacts, schedule, and access:
 - *Please try not to close sidewalks during construction. That happens way too much around here.*
 - *Street businesses always suffer due to long sidewalk closures. Provide a sidewalk access plan even if it means removing a traffic lane.*
 - *The South Bellevue to Seattle portion of the route has minimal (if any) land acquisition and no tunnel work. Please consider a separate timeframe for that portion of the route and open it years earlier than the rest.*
 - *Construction should be done quickly to get the disruption over with. Access to buildings like the Bravern is already a problem...the construction schedule is years too long.*

Bellevue Transit Center Station Design

- Interest in prominent design features, green space, and creating a focal point:
 - *Does not appear to have a design that really makes it the major, big-statement station for Bellevue.*
 - *Modern and vibrant, like downtown Bellevue.*
 - *This is a community gathering space. Needs a focal point. In drawing entry to City Hall looks sterile, not welcoming.*
 - *The West Plaza design is very appealing. Good job. Hope it is realized.*
 - *Bellevue has many modern design elements including heavy use of glass and a formal streetscape.*
 - *Newness. Technology. Clean.*
 - *Regarding plaza = need the green space. It is a breathing space for the neighborhood.*
 - *Tree and flower plantings*



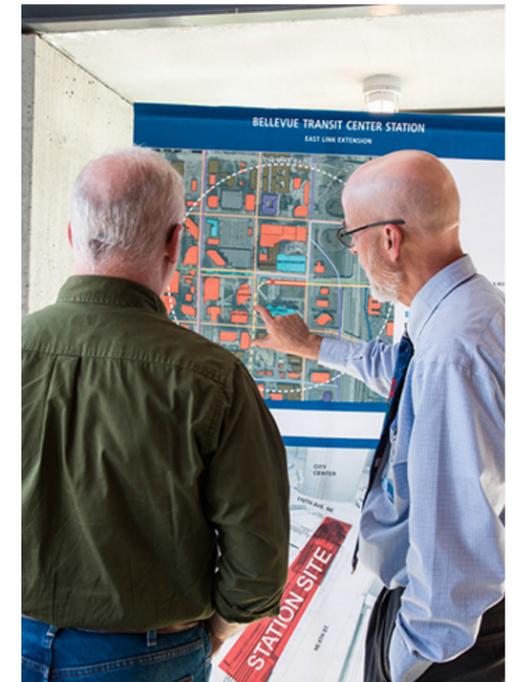
- Concern about station location:
 - *It's truly unfortunate that the actual platforms are so far east.*
 - *The station needs to be as far west as possible.*
 - *The fundamental issue is that it is too far away from anywhere pedestrians are actually going. All of the mitigation plans in the world can't change that fact. Pedestrian access will not be effective unless the station is moved closer to downtown Bellevue.*
- Concern for traffic near the station:
 - *The u-turn at Bellevue Transit Center station will be a problem. It allows for access at one side. Traffic will create a problem.*
 - *Slow-down traffic in the area immediately surrounding the station AND on the main pedestrian routes leading to/from the station, particularly toward Bellevue Way NE.*
- Interest in bus connections and re-routes during construction:
 - *How does the plan significantly affect the present bus system?*
 - *Planning possible bus reroutes for those that use 110th (during construction)*
- Comments indicated concern for walk distances to the station and support for enhancing pedestrian access:
 - *Transit center buses block site lines so may not be able to tell where the light rail station is.*
 - *Minimize walk distance for transfers between Link and ST regional express routes at BTC.*
 - *Move the bus stops from 108th and BTC to 110th and 112th (and potentially NE 6th). Most routes can also have stops closer in to downtown, but it is absurd to expect people to walk from 108th all of the way to the light rail station.*
 - *Don't keep pedestrians waiting to cross 110th. Lights should be prioritized for frequent pedestrian crossings without requiring people to press the signal button.*
 - *It looks like platform is at same level as Transit Center – should be great for access + intuitive way-finding.*
 - *Access to Bellevue Transit Center needs to be fast and convenient.*
 - *Covered access to Bellevue Transit Center and the City Hall.*

- *The proposed walking path between buses at BTC and the station is ridiculous - two street crossings???. There needs to be an entrance in the BTC island.*
- *There should be a direct pedestrian connection from Bellevue Transit Center that eliminates the need for pedestrians to cross streets at-grade. The station catchment area is severely impacted by the misguided decision to move the station out of the tunnel further east. There should be a direct connection to the north side of NE 6th to increase pedestrian ease of access.*
- *Clear signage directing to points of interest in each direction away from station and wider pedestrian paths, with landscaping. Excellent lighting throughout the evening.*
- **Request for a diagonal pedestrian scramble at 110th Ave and NE 6th St. to improve station access and prevent jaywalking:**
 - *Traffic lights should be set-up so that pedestrians can cross in any direction, even diagonal from the Bellevue Transit Center to the station.*
 - *The crosswalks from the current BTC center platform to the SW corner of NE 6th & 110th and from that corner to the SE corner of NE 6th & 110th need to be turned into an all-way walk. Many people jaywalk in this area against "Don't Walk" signs crossing the busway - This behavior will only increase once the light rail station is in place. Making this an "All walk" crossing will speed up transferring between buses and trains at this location.*
 - *The two cross-walk transfer to BTC across heavy and dangerous turning/maneuvering traffic is a poor design. Ped-bus conflicts will be frequent. Suggest an all-way walk cycle to freeze vehicle movements.*
 - *There need to be inviting routes through the mega-blocks and safe mid-block crossings to shorten the walk, especially since the station is on the edge of downtown.*
- **Requests for grade-separated pedestrian connections:**
 - *Pedestrian tunnel from platform under 110th and exit in the "island" of BTC.*
 - *Use some of the pedestrian money to build a pedestrian tunnel between this station and BTC so that transfers aren't missed due to crossing signal.*
 - *Do not preclude a sky bridge from station area to Meydenbauer Center.*
 - *I would like an underground pedestrian side tunnel between the station and BTC.*
 - *Consider underground access from bus center to downtown station.*
 - *Either close 110th Ave NE to through traffic or build a wide pedestrian tunnel under the intersection. Fix pedestrian to the Bravern and improve pedestrian access to NE 8th Street. In general, signals should always have an automatic pedestrian cycle.*
 - *Build a pedestrian underpass diagonally from the NW corner of 6th and 110th directly to the mezzanine level of the rail station... Make the underpass diagonal so people can cut down on two signalized crossings rather than one. Also add one or two entrances on NE 6th (you could do one at the mezzanine level and one at the platform level down the hill).*
 - *If you can't move the station closer, please consider a tunnel under 110th Ave NE to allow passengers to reach buses without being delayed by the traffic signal at 110th.*
- **Requests for full weather protection:**
 - *Interest in having canopy coverage for waiting passengers at stations where paratransit pick-up/drop-off is located.*
 - *Enclose if possible.*
 - *The station and its entrances should incorporate full weather protection over the entire station platform (no gaps) to compensate for the station no longer being underground.*
 - *Full enclosure and weather protection per the Council's direction.*

- *Tunnel or canopy above 110th.*
 - *Need as much protection as possible. It's windy on the street.*
 - *Wind, water, + warmth.*
 - *The station should be enclosing with full weather protection, which is consistent with the City Council's resolution on the cost saving options*
 - *Protection from the weather elements should be a primary objective when designing this station, now that it seems it will not be a tunnel station. As a daily user of another open Link station (Columbia City), I do not believe enough was done with Central Link stations to mitigate exposure to the elements.*
 - *Overhangs/roofs should be significantly wider or completely enclose the area over the platforms and rail lines, as compared to overhangs/roofs found on Central Link.*
 - *Completely enclose the station.*
 - *Please provide some weather protection at the southeast corner of NE 6th St and 110th Ave NE. Pedestrians will be waiting at this corner to move from the station to the transit center. This corner will be the only place a pedestrian will need to wait without weather protection, if no design change is made.*
 - **Interest in bike amenities at the station:**
 - *Possibly bigger elevators for platform access.*
 - *Sidewalks must be wide enough for bikes because roads are too hazardous.*
 - *Provide no lockers; use racks with lighting and cover instead.*
 - *Very few cyclists currently come into Bellevue via 112th & NE 6th. That is unlikely to change given Bellevue's current bike access plans. I'd defer the bike lockers on the 112th & NE 6th side of the station until demand exists.*
 - *There does not appear to be bike access from the West. Is the intent for cyclists to use the sidewalks, or brave the road?*
 - **The Bellevue Downtown Association expressed support for the City resolution to enhance weather protection and pedestrian connections at the NE 6th St. station.**
 - *East Link's busiest access point, achieved through a \$320 million pledge toward the tunnel, must be enclosed and weather protected to maximize both future ridership and value to the city and regional system... Early design, unfortunately, shows an outdoor station and a platform canopy with large gaps, leaving passengers exposed to rain, cold and wind during the winter months... Our Board also recommends that the design of the station anticipates direct pedestrian access, including a potential sky bridge between Meydenbauer Center, the station and future development on the Metro site.*
- ### Hospital Station Design
- **Suggestion for simplified station design concepts:**
 - *This is a low-rise industrial/commercial zone and the station character will not add or subtract from the character. Don't spend money unnecessarily on character.*
 - *The station is too large and complex. It will be expensive to build and maintain. It looks like a BART station, but without BART. A light rail station should be smaller and simpler. The money saved would be better used to extend to Redmond.*
 - **Interest in providing efficient and convenient access to hospitals:**
 - *Need more comfortable access for people of all ages and abilities to get to and from the hospitals.*
 - *Getting to the hospital for the elderly and disabled: who will be providing bus service?*
 - *It's too far from the hospitals for sick people to access.*
 - *Too difficult. Crossing I-405 on foot is a not a good experience. The entire area is not pedestrian friendly and has few pedestrians. A direct link to the hospital complex is needed...*
 - **Concern for noise:**
 - *Noise wall: There will be a 4 foot noise wall. We need more information on noise that can be heard in condos above the surface level.*

- *Train noise at station: test needs to be done to see if Lake Bellevue will carry noise to residents of Lake Bellevue Village.*
 - *Tests done recently: As far as ambient noise this will not be like 112th Ave. The ambient noise from the fountains is white noise and should not be a factor. Noise tests were recently done.*
- **Concern for traffic impacts:**
 - *Since the Sound Transit Board decided not to have the station above NE 8th St, this will impact the U turn at 120th Ave because automobiles dropping off passengers on the north side of NE 8th. It will back up traffic to 116th Ave.*
 - *Request to a westbound lane on NE 8th.*
- **Concern for flooding near Lake Bellevue:**
 - *Lake Bellevue is a flood zone. Sound Transit claims the flood will not reach their noise wall. Hurricane Sandy showed that the floods on the Jersey Shore, Staten Island and lower Manhattan exceeded what was expected.*
- **Comments expressed a desire to promote safety and accessibility in the station design:**
 - *This location is a 1/4 mile up-slope from the major users destination. A combination of off-arterial wide lighted paths and steps would mitigate the location.*
 - *What safety measures are you considering for the stations? Are you including a pop up rail system that is in place until the trail comes to a complete stop?*
 - *Include at-grade cross sidewalk access to the platform.*
 - *Warning at station: lights flashing needed, since this is the station near the hospital and doctors for the hearing impaired. Bells cannot/may not be heard by the deaf or hard of hearing. Other light rail cities use flashing lights at their stations.*
- **Provide full weather protection:**
 - *I have been told that this is a low-ridership station and that Sound Transit does not have full protection at these stations. Since this station will be used by the elderly and disabled, will full protection from the elements be provided?*
- **Interest in bicycle and pedestrian access:**
 - *Please work with Bellevue to allow for mid-block crossings near the station. Being forced to cross only at 116th or 120th will be unacceptable.*
 - *Like Tukwila station, the design seems to emphasize bus and car access. Bring the platforms closer to the street and to the pedestrians.*
 - *The design, as currently presented, lumps bike and pedestrian access to the station together. This is pretty standard for Bellevue but at least Bellevue is designing their newer sidewalks to be wider to cut down on conflicts. The sidewalk leading to the North Entrance of this station is particularly narrow and will inevitably lead to conflicts between pedestrians and cyclists.*
- **Concern for pedestrian crossing of NE 8th St.:**
 - *There should be a pedestrian overpass incorporated into the design of the station, leading directly from the station platform and headed SOUTH over NE 8th Street.*
 - *The station needs to have entrances on the south side of NE 8th St as well as the north side - both to open up development on the south, and to connect to bus service on NE 8th St. NE 8th St is impassable to pedestrians.*
 - *Make a bike/ped overpass over NE 8th street as an extension of the station platform that connects to ramps going down to ground level. This should be a continuation of the BNSF ROW bike path. It would allow pedestrians on the South side of NE 8th direct access to the station, without having to walk blocks out of the way, and likewise bikes travelling on the BNSF ROW don't have to travel that distance.*
 - *There is no way to safely traverse the massively wide NE 8th, so any bus connections would be unlikely.*

- *How will pedestrians cross NE 8th to access businesses + eastbound buses?*
 - *NE 8th is unusable for pedestrian crossings. This is incredibly unsafe.*
- *There need to be entrances to the station on the south side of NE 8th St so that Eastbound buses can be accessed.*
- **Mixed interest related to vehicle drop-off:**
 - *Extend 10th ST underneath the light rail and connect it to the lake Bellevue businesses. This would improve connections between the northern portions of Downtown Bellevue and the light rail station. Otherwise, there is no way for people to get to the light rail station without going up 8th, making a U turn, and coming to the station.*
 - *Vehicle drop-off is a hazard to people who are trying to walk to a station. It should be discouraged by keeping this zone a safe distance from bus riders and walkers.*
 - *NE 8th is wider than required at this point and a westbound kiss and drop zone could be easily incorporated. No eastbound drop off would not be required because there is no safe way to traverse NE 8th.*
- **Improve pedestrian access at 116th Ave NE:**
 - *The pedestrian path doesn't appear to include road improvements for crossing 116th. 116th needs considerable improvement.*
 - *Please create an easy-to-use, grade-separated crossing of 116th in a convenient place for station users. As the plans appear today, users will have to cross 116th--a wide, fast, pedestrian-hostile street--to reach the hospital from the station named after it.*
 - *116th Ave NE needs separated cycle tracks north up to Northup and then go to connect to 520 Bike Trail.*
 - *Off-street path ways to the hospital and a cycle track on 116th would be useful. The hill to the east is too steep for cycling and most cyclists would ride to the 120th station.*
- **Interest in bus connections:**
 - *Make sure access to transfer is very efficient with stations that are straight and direct to the bus stops.*
 - *There is no crosswalk to access the Eastbound bus stop! Why not enable easy pedestrian access on the bridge you are already building over NE 8th?*
 - *RapidRide B should stop right in front of the station if possible.*
 - *Move station 12 feet north to accommodate future widening of N.E. 8th (bus pullout, westbound lane).*
 - *Bus access area should be as far away from NE 8th Street as possible, to avoid back-ups onto NE 8th Street.*
 - *It appears that the only bus convenient to Hospital Station will be RapidRide B. That is a blown opportunity -- I hope you can find a way to make some of the buses serving areas north of the hospital connect to Link at Hospital Station with reasonable convenience, rather than forcing users to ride all the way to BTC and then backtrack on foot to reach Link at BTC station.*



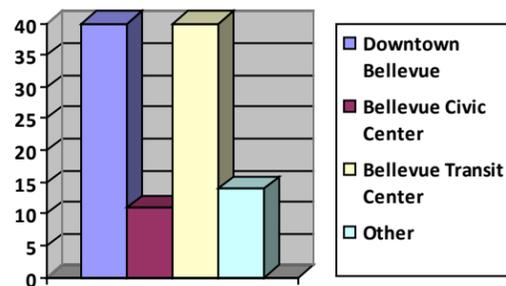
Permanent Station Naming Comment Summary

General comments:

- Make the names unique enough and well known enough so they aren't confused (for example, many people don't know Lake Bellevue, but do know the hospital area for Overlake and Group Health).
- Station names need to be useful to the riders in case they need to transfer to a bus for example. (Bellevue Transit Center Station is useful). Overlake Hospital is a long standing landmark, recognizable to most people, and they know where it is.
- Midlakes is the name of the area. The 120th st station will be as close to Lake Bellevue as the Hospital station, so I think it would be confusing to call it Lake Bellevue.
- Please don't use the word "station" on every name. We know it's a station. Especially on the rolling signs, it's just a waste of space. "Bellevue Transit Center" and "Midlakes" tells us everything we need to know.

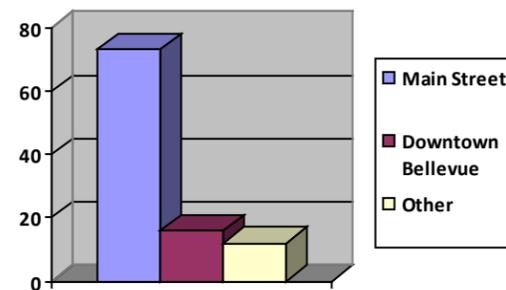
What is your preference for the Bellevue Transit Center Station Name?

An equal number of respondents indicated Downtown Bellevue and Bellevue Transit Center as their preferred station names. Combined, these 80 responses comprised 76 percent of total feedback. Other suggested names included Bellevue Civic Center.



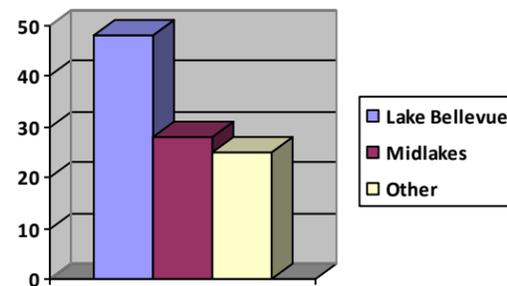
What is your preference for the name of the tunnel portal located near Main St. and 112th Ave NE?

The vast majority of respondents (73 of 101 total) listed Main Street as their preferred tunnel portal name. Other suggested names included Downtown Bellevue.



What is your preference for the Hospital Station name?

Approximately 48 percent of respondents indicated that Lake Bellevue is their preferred station name. 28 percent of respondents listed Midlakes as their top choice. Other suggested names included NE 8th Station.



Next Steps

Sound Transit will incorporate public comments to the extent possible while working to advance design of the Downtown Bellevue segment to 60 percent completion. The next opportunity to provide formal public comment will occur at the 60 percent design milestone which is anticipated in the second half of 2013. Please continue to

visit the project website for the latest news: www.soundtransit.org/eastlink. For more information or to request a briefing for your organization, please contact Sound Transit Community Outreach staff at eastlink@soundtransit.org or **206-398-5470**.

