



## East Link Extension



June 28, 2013

## South Bellevue Final Design Open House Public Involvement Summary

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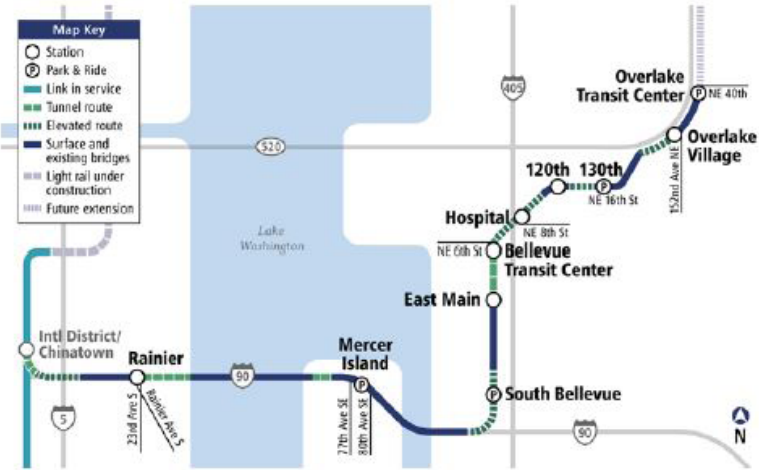
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# Background

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 and South 200th Link Extensions which are scheduled to open in 2016. East Link is part of the new light rail extensions being built north, south and east from Seattle.



When East Link opens, with a targeted date of 2023, 10 stations, serving Seattle, Mercer Island, Bellevue, Bel-Red 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, STart, 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



## South Bellevue segment

East Link Extension enters the South Bellevue segment on an elevated alignment from I-90. Light rail serves the South Bellevue Station, located at the current South Bellevue Park & Ride. Upon leaving the elevated station, it transitions to a trench along the east side of Bellevue Way SE in front of the historic Winters House and then returns to the surface on the east side of 112th Ave SE. East Link then traverses to the west side of 112th Ave SE under a new 112th Ave SE overpass near SE 15th St. and then north to an at-grade East Main Station located south of the intersection of 112th Ave SE and Main St.

## 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 30, 2013 to present final design concepts for the South 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 South Bellevue segment. The open house was held at Bellevue Hilton 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 5,500 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 announcement pushed out to 8,413 Twitter followers



## Open House Overview

Approximately 110 people attended the open house to learn about design plans for East Link in South Bellevue and provide comments. Attendees were greeted by project staff, asked to sign-in and were provided with a Community Guide to Final Design, South 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 South Bellevue segment including the South Bellevue and East Main 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](http://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 50 comments collected between May 30 and June 7, 2013. Transcribed comments are italicized below to highlight the tone of public feedback.

## South Bellevue Segment Design

- Support and concern about building an access road from Bellefield Residential Park to the Surrey Downs neighborhood:
  - *Access to Surrey Downs via Bellefield is essential. Otherwise there is not enough access to the neighborhood in case of downed trees, etc.*
  - *Bellefield Park – owners have responded to survey and majority do not want access road from Bellefield Park to Surrey Downs. And we would like left turns in + out of Bellefield Park at our South Entrance.*
  - *No Bellefield Surrey Downs variation access. Access is too limited & impacts too great.*
- Concerns about noise during construction and operations:
  - *Like to know construction schedule, wish not any after hour noisy construction work. What methods might be in place to mitigate construction noise?*
  - *...we would like the noise impact to the surrounding neighborhood to be mitigated.*
  - *Refine noise study now and tell us how close it is to Bellevue noise code limits.*
  - *Adding additional train, bus and car noise in the long term, and construction noise in the short term, will significantly impact us and our neighbors. The rail route runs very close to a residential neighborhood and effective mitigation is needed.*
  - *When this route was selected, the community was promised exceptional mitigation. As it would be prudent to begin planning that mitigation now as part of your design work, I have to assume some planning is underway. Shouldn't those plans be shared with the community that will be impacted so we can provide feedback?*
- *Since Sound Transit will be designing noise mitigation for the construction phase, it would be wise to design that mitigation as a permanent feature of the project so you won't have to do the work, and cover the expense, all over again to mitigate the increased noise from cars, buses and trains moving to and from the South Bellevue Station. Train noise and construction, while serious, are not the only direct impacts of East Link along Bellevue Way. Mitigation needs to be seen in that light.*
- *Concerned about noise, lack of sound barrier, rerouting of traffic through Enatai.*
- *Because noise walls will not mitigate noise to receivers along the Bellevue Way hillside, no noise variances should be sought / approved and / or Residential Sound Insulation Packages should be installed in all homes that will be impacted during construction.*
- *Construction activities should be limited to M-F, 8am-5pm, and no more than one lane of Bellevue Way / 112th Avenue should be closed or obstructed at any time. No noise variances should be sought or approved for the construction in South Bellevue, as the alignment borders on significant park properties and abuts residential neighborhoods.*
- *I enjoy outside activities @ The Bellevue Club in the summer. By putting a sound wall on the W. Side of 112th you will amplify the car noise. Then you add to that the train noise and the total sound will far exceed what we have at present. How are you going to mitigate the noise in that area?*

## South Bellevue Station Design

- Interest in incorporating elements of the area's natural environment into station design:
  - *Wooded residential. Trees, slough.*
  - *The station should highlight the Mercer Slough with artwork related to the natural surroundings, birds and wildlife that live in the park, and the showcase the importance of this wetland to Lake Washington.*
  - *Mercer slough is a vibrant native area with many species of birds, plants and other animals. Station design should reflect these natural elements.*
  - *First Nation People; Native Americans of the area; Salmon, trees; Birds; Water. Quality is everyone's responsibility.*
  - *The Mercer Slough, suggested birds are: Great Blue Heron, yellow warbler, common yellowthroat, marsh wren, American goldfinch, Mallard. We can work with the team on this.*
  - *The design could then have scenes from slough; birds; the slough itself, plants and trees.*
  - *I would like it to reflect the natural surroundings (birds, water, trees, etc.) that are a unique aspect of this part of Bellevue.*
  - *I really hope you design them to reflect the Mercer Slough with art and information related to the natural surroundings, birds and wildlife that live in the park, and the importance of this wetland to Lake Washington.*
  - *I think it would be very cool to incorporate some sort of viewing area on the top level for looking out over Mercer Slough and/or South to Mt Rainier. We should make it easy to appreciate what we have there with the eagles, herons, and other wildlife.*
  - *Nature, Birds, Plants of Mercer Slough Birds migrate from South American to nest in this park. Please include Eastside Audubon's input in design of art.*
  - *South Bellevue has an arboreal setting, so the station design should incorporate trees both natural and in the concrete / metal and art selected for the station. Water-themes would be appropriate, too. The station should also reflect that it is near a low-density, stable and well-kept single-family neighborhood, not an industrial or urban-core setting.*
- *The spaciousness of the mercer slough and the abundance of trees along Bellevue Way and the Bellevue Way hill can be preserved as much as possible with the minimalist design of the station. With art work, decoration, and lighting that blend seamlessly with the beautiful surrounding.*
- Concerns over visual impacts in surrounding neighborhoods and security at the station:
  - *It'd be great to learn more about security plan for the station. For homes west to the station at the hill side, please work with us on privacy aspect and impact of brightness of the station at night. The City and Sound Transit can help minimize the impact by building a good cluster trees around the station. And plant some privacy trees at the hill side providing year round privacy screen from the station. We will be very interested to work with the team especially the arborist for the project.*
  - *More trees and larger ones than the drawings show. We are losing a lot of mature trees and ST should replace them with equivalents. The structure at the Bellevue P&R looks like a graffiti palette waiting to happen, and I don't consider adding metals screens to poured cement to be much in the way of "softening" the look.*
  - *What is the security measure for the parking garage especially with the privacy screen, the metal mesh?*
  - *Please make sure it is well lit for evening and morning hours.*
  - *Questions about the height and visibility of the garage.*
  - *Concerns regarding the height of the guideway at the flyover, which blocks residents' view of the hill.*
  - *A question about the need for screening on the garage, and if there is really a benefit in trying to "hide" the fact that this is a large parking structure.*

- Emphasis on convenient pedestrian access and safety:
  - *... maybe there could be a foot bridge between the station and parking structure so that people didn't have to go up and down so much. I'd also vote for ramps over elevators - less maintenance.*
  - *Safe walking access is very important. I walk as much as I can, easy access that feels safe is crucial.*
  - *Pedestrian bridge cross Bellevue way if possible.*
  - *Bridge over Bellevue Way from 112th in Enatai?*
  - *New signalized cross walk will help, but 112th is pretty busy, a pedestrian bridge might make for more safety and less traffic obstruction.*
- Interest in bicycle access and amenities:
  - *Please have enough secure bike locking areas.*
  - *Please make sure the trees and plantings along the trail near the bus entrance to the North do not obscure cyclists approaching from the south. Additionally, it would be a good idea to put texture strips on the trail warning of approaching cross traffic.*
  - *I'm glad to see lots of bike storage. Will people be allowed to take bike on the train? If so, getting their bikes to the station platform may crowd the elevators.*

- Interest in streamlined passenger drop-off access and bus access options promote the flow of traffic:
  - *The circular design of the platform slows down buses too much. It would be better if the bus platform ramps were designed in a similar way to the current South Bellevue P&R bus bays which allow the buses to move through the area without unnecessary delays. (This only applies to buses moving through the area like the 241, 555, 556, etc...) There does not appear to be any priority given to buses that need to exit the station heading south on Bellevue Way. This will be problematic, especially during the afternoon rush hour when cars will be leaving the station.*
  - *Please streamline drop off access. Currently traffic on Bellevue Way slows significantly as people turn into the lot. An exit lane would help.*
  - *Don't impede traffic - have drop-offs out of the regular flow.*
  - *Don't let cars back up and block access, make it close but not too close.*

- Questions and comments related to the parking garage:
  - *It will be needed as the bus system sucks and traffic is only going to increase.*
  - *Lots and lots of parking please.....if you build it, they will come.*
  - *Please consider charging for parking and reducing the size of the garage.*
  - *Will parking design be improved in terms of aesthetics and access?*
  - *I don't see any reference to clearance height in the parking structure. As Bellevue is full of SUV's with boxes on top, clearance will significantly effect use.*
  - *God knows we need it. But it is ugly.*

## East Main Station Design

- Interest in balancing urban, natural, and technologically advanced design features:
  - *Urban, nature, similar to SEATAC.*
  - *The station should be technologically advanced where it displays real time when the next train is arrived to arrive/depart.*
- Interest in pedestrian access, way finding, and station visibility:
  - *If making pedestrian access to station through Surrey Downs neighborhood add sidewalks (or at least an side of street sidewalk) – pedestrian walkway leading to street is dumb.*
  - *Make sidewalks w/native landscape buffer.*
  - *In general, make sure that any signage or paths to the station are really easy to find, since the station isn't as obvious as the other station.*
  - *New signalized cross walk will help, but 112th is pretty busy, a pedestrian bridge might make for more safety and less traffic obstruction.*
  - *Make residential and street access available.*



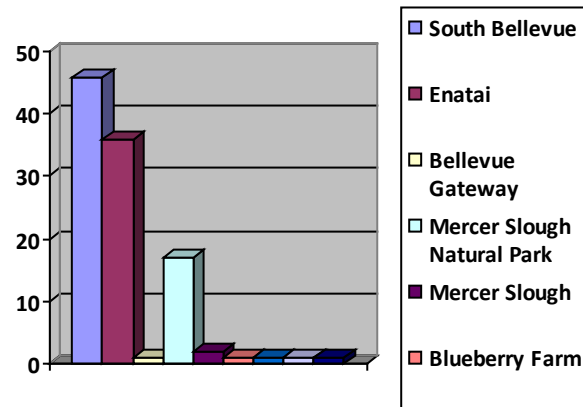
# Permanent Station Naming Comment Summary

- General comments

- *Bellefield is in center between the two? – Could it be considered?*
- *Names should primarily assist riders understand where they are to enable easy on + off decisions.*
- *Enatai mostly for people who are not residents. Enatai is best...but would be hard for visitors.*
- *The Mercer Slough is such an important park in Bellevue and wetland on Lake Washington that it should be permanently recognized in the station name.*
- *Emphasize the importance of connectivity to nature by recognizing it in the naming of stations.*
- *Enatai means “across the water” and this station will be.*
- *I believe locals will understand Enatai, however, out of town guest will need a clear map reference. Bellevue removes any and all confusion.*
- *A name that applies to a specific location is probably the most helpful. I’ve been on light rail systems that use a name for a particular region vs a street or location known to local people but not to the tourists; this can be very confusing for those who don’t know what Enatai or Surrey Downs is.*
- *The south Bellevue station is NOT in the Enatai neighborhood. The City defines the Enatai neighborhood as being bounded by Bellevue Way on the east. The station is actually in the Mercer Slough. Regardless, because the site has been called the South Bellevue Park ‘n’ Ride for 15 years+, for continuity and to avoid confusion for users, the name should not change.*
- *East Main is in Crossroads. The station is at the West end of Main Street. Everything in Bellevue is West on the County grid so Main Street Station would be better.*

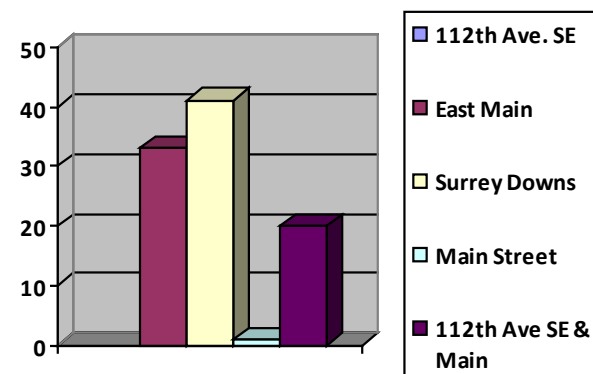
## What is your preference for the South Bellevue Station Name?

Out of 106 total respondents, a narrow majority (46 people) indicated South Bellevue as their preferred station name. The second most popular station name was Enatai (36). Other suggested names included Mercer Slough Natural Park and Mercer Slough.



## What is your preference for the East Main St. Station Name?

The majority of respondents who weighed in (41 of 95 total) listed Surrey Downs as their preferred station name. Other suggested names included 112th Ave SE & Main and East Main.

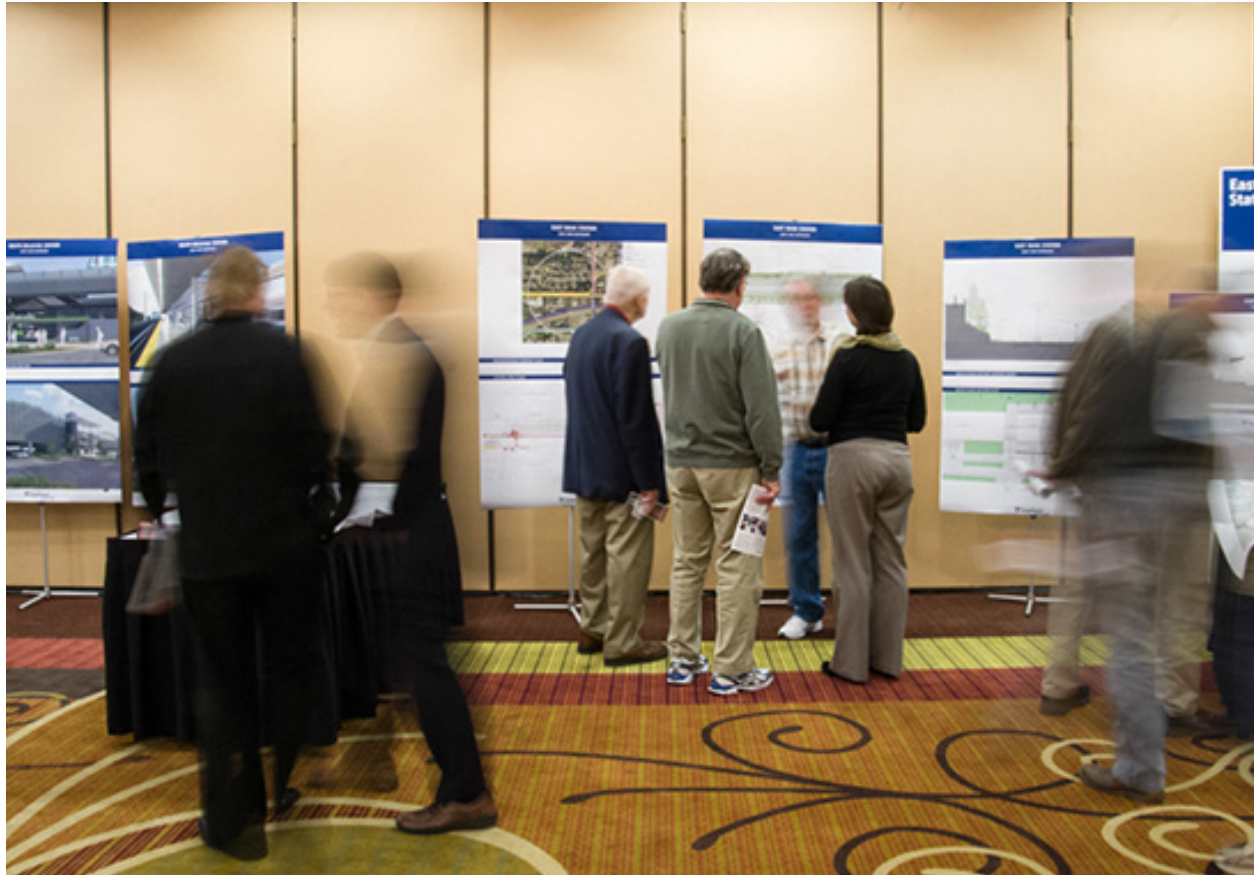


At approximately the 60% design milestone, the Sound Transit Board will make the final selection of the station names; taking in to consideration public, stakeholder and jurisdictional feedback.

## Next Steps

Sound Transit will incorporate public comments to the extent possible while working to advance design of the South 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](http://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](mailto:eastlink@soundtransit.org) or 206-398-LINK.





# East Link South Bellevue Segment Renderings

## South Bellevue Station

Located south of the intersection at 112th Ave. SE and Main Street, this at-grade station provides increased transit access to surrounding residences, neighborhoods and businesses as well as kiss-and-ride drop-off and pick-up.



## East Main Station

Located on Bellevue Way SE at the current South Bellevue Park-and-Ride site, this station includes bus and paratransit transfer facilities and approximately 1,500 parking stalls.





