

East Link Extension

Cost Savings Open House

Public Involvement Summary



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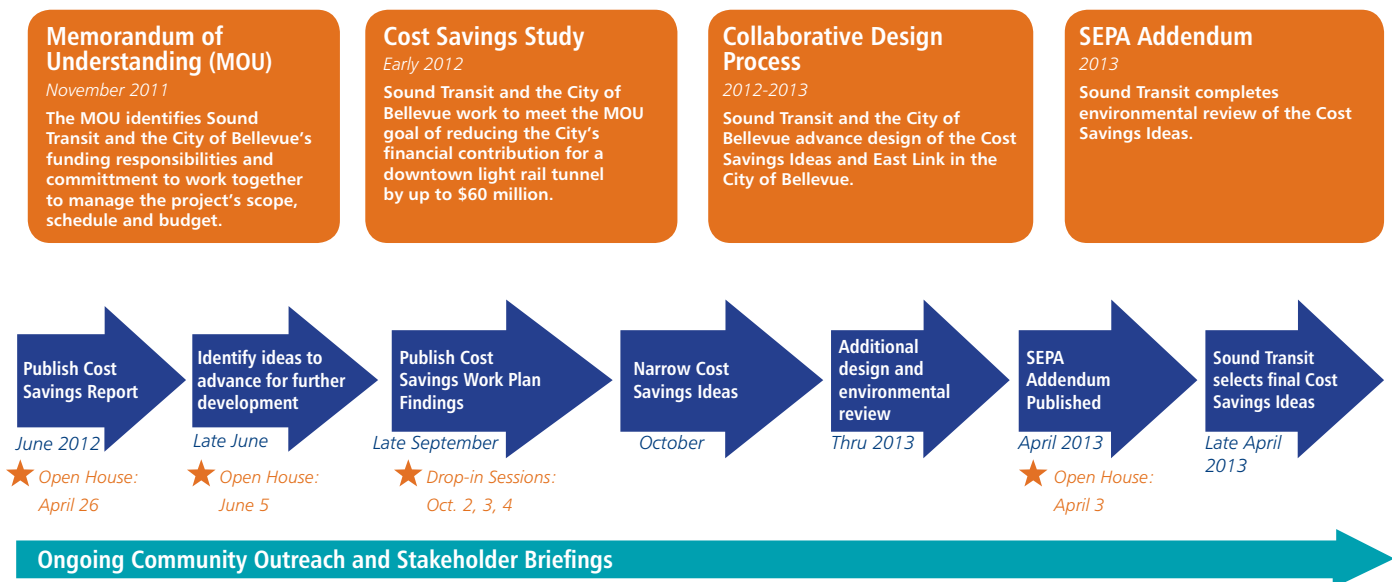
Background

Since spring 2012, Sound Transit and the City of Bellevue have worked together to evaluate Cost Savings Ideas for East Link Extension. Through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) executed on November 15, 2011, Sound Transit and the City of Bellevue established a collaborative framework to share the additional cost of a tunnel in downtown Bellevue.

Sound Transit and the City issued a Cost Savings Report on June 28, 2012, followed by further analysis published in the Cost Savings Work Plan Findings on September 27, 2012. Each Cost Savings milestone coincided with extensive public outreach, generating community input that helped shape the refinement of the Cost Savings Ideas. Since September, Sound Transit and the City have conducted further design and environmental review to advance the Cost Savings Ideas. On March 26, Sound Transit released a SEPA Addendum to the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) that evaluates the environmental impacts of the Cost Savings Ideas.

This document summarizes the final Cost Savings Open House and public comments that will be considered before Sound Transit, in collaboration with the Bellevue City Council, makes a final decision to revise the selected project by advancing any of the Cost Savings Ideas.

What is the Cost-Savings Decision Making Process?



Cost Savings Ideas

Shift Bellevue Way

Light rail runs at-grade on Bellevue Way in front of Winters House. Bellevue Way shifts west and a new City of Bellevue HOV lane is added. The driveway to the Winters House and Blueberry Farm is relocated farther south.

112th Road over Rail

Elevated 112th Ave. SE crosses over light rail, realigning SE 15th St. This refinement replaces the City of Bellevue requested modification in the 2011 MOU, for an elevated light rail flyover.

- **Emergency Access Only:** Light rail at-grade on 112th Ave. SE with SE 4th St. limited to emergency access only.
 - **Bellefield Access Variation:** A design variation of the SE 4th St. Emergency Access Only option builds a new access road from SE 15th St. in Bellefield Residential Park to 111th Pl. SE in the Surrey Downs Neighborhood.
- **SE 4th Open:** Light rail at-grade on 112th Ave. SE with SE 4th St. open to right in/right out traffic.
- **Rail under SE 4th:** Light rail in a retained cut alignment along 112th Ave. SE with SE 4th St. open to Surrey Downs neighborhood.

Downtown Bellevue Station

- Optimized Selected Alternative (tunnel station under 110th Ave): North station entrance shifted west of 110th Ave. NE, closer to Bellevue Transit Center. Tunnel depth reduced.
- Downtown Bellevue – Relocated Station to NE 6th: Surface station at NE 6th St. Tunnel depth reduced and alignment moved south of NE 6th St.

Overview

Sound Transit and the City of Bellevue co-hosted the final Cost Savings Open House on April 3, 2013 to share preliminary design information and environmental findings for the Cost Savings Ideas. Approximately 100 people attended the open house held at Bellevue City Hall from 4 to 7 p.m.

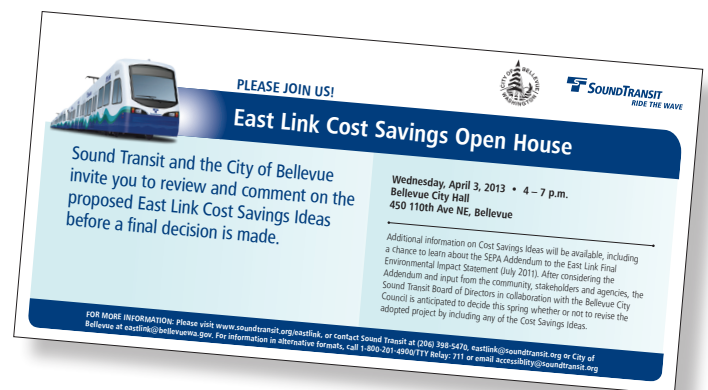
Attendees were asked to sign-in upon arrival and received a comment form. Display boards and strip plots featured the updated Cost Savings Ideas and environmental findings from the SEPA Addendum. An animation played on a continuous loop throughout the meeting to provide perspective on the look and feel of the potential Cost Savings Ideas. Technical and environmental staff were available to explain the design details and environmental information. Staff invited participants to provide comments on the revised concepts and collected a total of 39 comments at the open house.

Public comments were accepted in-person at the open house, and by mail and email. Sound Transit and the City of Bellevue received approximately 120 comments during the final round of Cost Saving outreach, between April 3 and 10. The Sound Transit Board in collaboration with the Bellevue City Council will weigh public feedback along with environmental and engineering findings to determine which ideas will be selected. All meeting materials and graphics are available on Sound Transit's East Link website, www.soundtransit.org/eastlink and linked from the City's website as well.

Notification

Sound Transit and the City of Bellevue jointly publicized the open house. There was broad notification of the open house and opportunities to comment through the following channels:

- Display advertisements in the Bellevue Reporter, Seattle Transit Blog, La Raza, Seattle Chinese Post, BellevuePatch.com and Daily Journal of Commerce
- Postcards mailed to over 20,000 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
- Social media announcements pushed out to 3,257 Sound Transit Facebook fans and 7,933 Twitter followers
- Announcements on the Sound Transit and City of Bellevue project web pages
- Letters mailed to potentially affected property owners identified in the SEPA Addendum



Comment Summary

The following is a summary of key themes that emerged during the final Cost Savings outreach process. The key themes are arranged by potential cost savings idea. A selection of transcribed comments representing key these are included in italics below.

Shift Bellevue Way West with City of Bellevue HOV Lane

Attendees identified concerns about noise, visual impacts and loss of trees as a result of shifting Bellevue Way west. Residents expressed support for the Selected Alternative along Bellevue Way. Comments cited concern for the City of Bellevue's proposed High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lane.

A representative from the Enatai Neighborhood Association shared concerns for noise and visual impacts. Several Enatai residents mentioned a neighborhood survey resulting in significant opposition to the Shift Bellevue Way Cost Savings Idea.

Concern for noise, visual impacts and loss of trees.

- *Sound doesn't travel in a straight line. It radiates outward and noise will travel up the hill.*
- *Please retain the trench design, shortening the elevated portion at the P&R. Add one south bound lane on Bellevue Way S.*
- *Do not do this! Not a fan of cutting into hillside and losing trench for Winters House section due to noise, aesthetics and not enough cost savings to warrant it.*
- *These noise predictions do not tell us what will happen to the homes behind the first row of homes next to the wall. Almost all of these homes sit higher than the proposed wall and will no longer be protected by the taller noise buffer of mature trees that will be removed in the widening of Bellevue Way.*
- *I do not support the removal of the trench plan by Winters house as it significant detracts from the historic nature of the area, the beauty of the view of the area and the impact to the natural appearance of the Bellevue Way area.*

Support for the Selected Alternative.

- Keep light rail in the trench 90% Of Enatai neighborhood voted on in a survey.
- Adamantly opposed. The trench option was understood to be the mitigation for the Enatai neighborhood and needs to be maintained.

- The intrusion into the hillside is massive and puts numerous homes in close proximity to an extensive and high retaining wall. The consequential degradation will expand into the neighborhood and the noise impacts will be greater without the trench...
- Please keep the trench in the area by the Winter's house. Don't widen or move Bellevue Way.

Concern for the City of Bellevue's proposed HOV lane. Comments questioned the need for the HOV lane and effectiveness at reducing congestion and concern about the loss of trees.

- *Do not build an HOV lane into Bellevue Way. The whole point of mass transit is to encourage its use - not encourage driving cars by providing HOV lanes.*
- *HOV lane is not needed in the long run.*
- *The HOV lane will bring minimal benefit for one hour or less per weekday. It is not worth losing a tree-filled hillside and moving the roadway closer to hundreds of Enatai homes.*
- *Expanding the road to include the HOV lane on Bellevue Way will do little (or less) to relieve congestion along Bellevue Way during peak hours. The backup that regularly occurs along Bellevue Way is caused by the slowing of traffic on I-90 and the impact of traffic lights around the Park-and-Ride.*
- *No! No! No! This will not help cut-thru. The bottle neck is I-90 and people will continue to sneak thru looking to save time*
- *I do not support this plan as the noise abatement will be insufficient for this new plan and although the COB is the HOV driver for it, I do not see it providing significant improvements.*
- *Move Bellevue Forward supports either the adopted alignment - the trench - or an at-grade alignment on Bellevue Way. However, in either scenario MBF does not support the addition of a third lane (HOV or GP) on Bellevue Way. MBF believes that this extra lane is too negatively impactful on the Enatai neighborhood.*



Some comments indicated support of the City of Bellevue proposed HOV lane on Bellevue Way and for the Cost Savings Idea.

- *This is a very good idea, a new HOV lane would be great and it serves many too!*
- *It would be good to have an extra lane.*
- *Would like to see some way to add HOV on Bellevue Way as do believe it will reduce massive congestion we see daily on Bellevue Way to/from Seattle for commute. But trench for Bellevue Way is still my best vote to address and maintain some semblance of "mature" look along Bellevue Way*
- *I favor this change. Great way to save money and add an HOV lane for drivers.*
- *HOV lane should be required.*
- *Seems the most reasonable for the situation. HOV lane would have to be eventually built anyway and at higher cost.*

112th Road over Rail – SE 4th St. Access sub options

Most comments expressed concern about safety, access, traffic, noise, vibration and visual impacts.

Emergency Access Only

Residents expressed concern for neighborhood access, noise, vibration and visual effects.

- *Need to preserve neighborhood access.*
- *Not acceptable need access and mitigation of noise, vibration and visual.*
- *Residents must have access via more than two roads.*
- *Surrey Downs access is already reduced (no access from 1st). We need/want access via SE 4th and not in competition with light rail.*

Some interest in the emergency access only option.

- *I'm ok with this option.*
- *Yes! We don't want more at-grade crossings of the rails. At-grade is best for money but don't let people use the crossing except for emergencies.*
- *Looks good.*
- *Looks good to me, but what about pedestrians and bikes?*
- *This is a good option to ensure safety within the Surrey Downs neighborhood.*

Bellefield Access Variation

Comments indicated concern for cut-thru traffic and restricted access to the neighborhoods.

- Do not open access to Surrey Downs through SE 15th St. crossing.
- This is totally unacceptable to open our neighborhood to cut-thru traffic for an adjoining neighborhood (Bellefield) for very restricted access.
- No – too far south to serve north end and will contribute to additional neighborhood cut-through traffic.
- Need left hand turn lanes! The u-turn will create a tremendous traffic snarl.
- Vehicular access to the neighborhood from SE 15th is not necessary and an incompatible element at best. The 300 homes of Surrey Downs have 5 vehicular access streets and can function as well with a well-planned 3.

SE 4th St. Open

Comments indicated a mix of interest and concern for limited right-in/right-out access to Surrey Downs. One comment cited signal noise as a key concern.

- Best choice.
- Keep it open – Surrey Downs needs safe and clear roads to their homes.
- Yes! Too much traffic into other neighborhood if you close it.
- A signal at this light would be a noise issue for the neighborhood.
- Complete access required by placing train in trench. 108th is too crowded when BHS is starting/ending daily and main street access is not practical Right in/right out.
- Cost savings options (at-grade, including limited or no entrance at SE 4th St. should not be considered).
- I definitely want to have access to Surrey Downs with no restrictions.
- No – for reasons outlined above as well as limiting access with right-in, right-out only.
- Move Bellevue Forward encourages Sound Transit and the City of Bellevue to move the at-grade alignment into final design while working towards designing reasonable access solutions for the Surrey Downs neighborhood from 112th Ave SE.

Rail under SE 4th St.

Comments identified interest in the retained-cut alignment and grade separated access to Surrey Downs via SE 4th St. Residents cited safety benefits as well as fewer noise and visual impacts.

Comments indicated that rail under SE 4th St. has safety benefits and reduces noise, vibration and visual impacts.

- Retained-cut is ideal, well worth \$11 million. At-grade crossings are a recipe for disaster. Keep 4th St. open for neighborhood access.
- The SE 4th trench is also imperative for safety reasons.
- Only acceptable option for the access with trench to provide noise/vibration/visual reduction of impacts.
- I support this option as the least visually disturbing choice, as well as the least impact to the Surrey Downs neighborhood which will suffer the majority of Sound Transits impacts.
- Consider trenching the train with vehicular access to Surrey Downs through the Park @ SE 6th where there is already a signal at 112th SE.

Benefits cited benefits of unrestricted neighborhood access and reduced traffic impacts.

- The only way to keep SE 4th operable.
- Only viable option to maintain reasonable impact to Surrey Downs.
- Retained cut/ trench under 4th SE St. It is the only way a west-side running alignment will succeed.
- As a Surrey Downs resident, I request that St and COB adopted and support the retained cut/trench design under SE 4th St. It is the only option acceptable to our community.
- This SE 4th approach not only helps reduce a major east Surrey Downs access issue but also helps reduce some of the noise impacts.
- This is by far my preference. Live in Surrey Downs and want unrestricted access to neighborhood not competing with light rail.
- The rail must go below SE 4th St. to have unrestricted access to Surrey Downs from 112th Ave.
- A neighborhood of 300 homes needs more unrestricted access than the entrances on 108th and Main can provide alone. The access and egress is needful for convenience and safety.

General preference for the MOU Recommendation.

- *Keep rail in trench.*
- *It remains my opinion that the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) alignment with a retained cut/trench under SE 4th Street is the only way a west-side running alignment will succeed with a minimum acceptable impact on our neighborhood. The trench on 112th Ave SE, under SE 4th Street is the only “exceptional mitigation” that was promised.*
- *The MOU alignment with a retained cut/trench Under SE 4th St would be the Only option for a west-side running alignment as the only “exceptional mitigation”*

The Bellevue Downtown Association expressed concern about the design features of this option.

- The renderings for the rail under road option at SE 4th Street essentially show a chain-link fence and bulky, concrete cross supports. If this option moves forward, Sound Transit and the City should work to advance the design and materials to address and improve the aesthetics for this corridor.

Downtown Bellevue Station – Optimized Selected Alternative (tunnel station under 110th Ave)

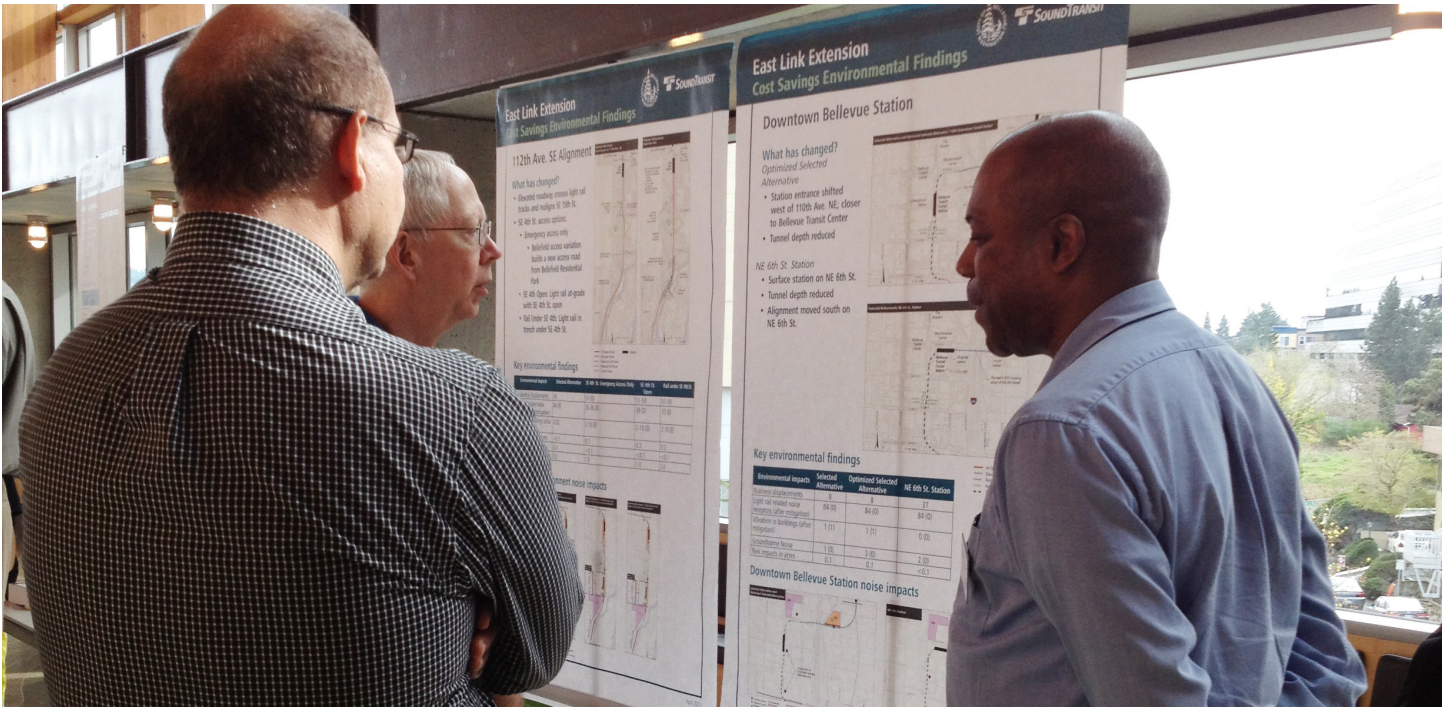
The Downtown Bellevue Station Cost Savings ideas generated mixed support and concern.

- *The cost savings for the tunnel should come out of the downtown portion of the system, and should not be at the expense of the neighborhood and park residents who have already suffered enough injury from the decision to run the line where they live.*

Several comments cited benefits of the Optimized Selected Alternative, including keeping the station entry closer to the transit center.

- *This is the best option – keep the station close to the downtown core!*
- *Yes keep underground.*
- *This option is good. Closing 110th St. is fine – it’s not an efficient thorough fare anyway as it’s closed north and south ends by Main and 112th St.*
- *Build a tunnel please.*
- *I support the “Optimized Selected Alternative”. It puts the station entrance closest to the transit center, as well as saving \$6-10 million dollars.*
- *This is the best options. It reaches the most businesses and allows for easier connections to other transit.*





- We also continue to support the adopted optimized tunnel station with entry points north and south of NE 4th St. This station would have full weather protection and improved access immediately adjacent the Transit Center (Bellevue Downtown Association).
- Move Bellevue Forward has been and remains a strong advocate for the tunnel station in downtown Bellevue because it provides fast, safe, and reliable trips for the highest number of riders...we are pleased to see that \$6-10 million in cost savings has been identified in the downtown tunnel option.

Concern for pedestrian access and proximity to existing transit center.

- Station is too far south. Station needs to be as close as possible walk from transit center.
- Consider grade separated pedestrian crossings across 110th (tunnel) & 6th (elevated).

Concern for traffic, construction impacts and cost savings potential related to the Optimized Selected Alternative.

- This will mess up already bad traffic.
- Not sufficient cost containment to merit investment in changes.
- The Abella Condominium community is vehement in its opposition to the 110th Ave tunnel option. The tunnel option would present increased security and maintenance challenges and corresponding ongoing mitigation costs....The tunnel option precipitates ADA concerns. The construction would wipe out the commercial parking.

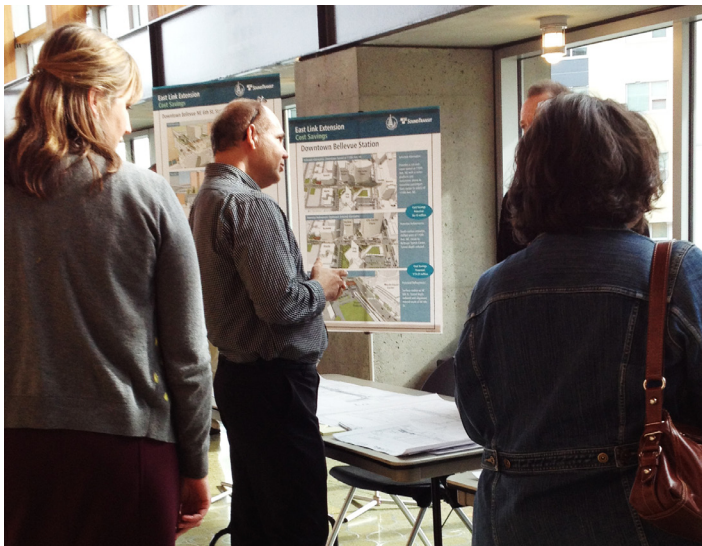
Downtown Bellevue – Relocate Station to NE 6th St.

Comments citing benefits of relocating the downtown station to NE 6th St. identified cost savings potential as a key consideration.

- *Best choice. But platform needs to be well covered and protected from elements. Even if you build a shell over platform.*
- *Yes!! Savings from this portion are vital.*
- *Seems to make sense*
- *The Plaza affect of a NE 6th Street Station is a useful signature element for the downtown. However, a NE 2nd Place access should be incorporated for future density use from the west downtown community and existing neighborhoods south of Main.*
- *I own a commercial unit at Abella Condominium ... I strongly endorse the NE 6th street tunnel option and implore you to stop consideration of the 110th Ave NE tunnel option... This option would close the commercial access garage to our building, resulting in a lack of parking access for our commercial tenants....a garage closure would be a death sentence for my business.*
- *Best option. Brings riders up out of the tunnel to a safer, surface station. Saves big.*

Comments expressed concern about access, multimodal connections and weather protection.

- *I support this option strongly and request a design and cost for 1. Sky bridge to/from the station to Bravern and convention center. 2. An underground pedestrian crossing passageway from terminal to existing transit terminal and high rise buildings to the west.*
- *It would be good to have the station near the buses.*
- *This is a bad idea—the station is already too far from the downtown core.*
- *This option has too much risk of deterring potential riders. It's the longest walk from the bus bays, and the sidewalk incline is a barrier to disabled riders.*
- *The illustrations for the NE 6th St. Station unfortunately reinforce its relative downside in rider access and experience, especially in inclement weather. For comparison purposes, the work didn't produce any new conceptual designs for the tunnel station (Bellevue Downtown Association).*
- *If 110th Station is eliminated why not run rail down 112th as a moving sidewalk to transit center turn savings to corner rail along 112th.*



Next Steps

Over the next month, Bellevue City Council and the Sound Transit Board of Directors will evaluate public input on the Cost Savings Ideas along with engineering and environmental findings. The Bellevue City Council is scheduled to take action on the Cost Savings Ideas on April 22. The Sound Transit Board of Directors plans to make a final decision on whether to modify the Selected Project by advancing any of the Cost Savings Ideas at the April 25 Board meeting.

