

East Link light rail:

Bel-Red/Overlake Open House Summary



April 2010

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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. Sound Transit is also conducting environmental review on the future extension between Overlake Transit Center and downtown Redmond. East Link will connect the Eastside's biggest population and employment centers, serving 45,000-50,000 riders daily.

In May 2009, the Sound Transit Board identified a preferred alternative with eastside stations serving Mercer Island, Bellevue, and Redmond. From downtown Bellevue, light rail will serve the Bel-Red corridor, Overlake Village, Overlake Transit Center and Microsoft's campus in a combination of elevated and at-grade alignments located north of Bel-Red Road.



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 Bel-Red and Overlake Open House Overview

On Thursday, April 1, 2010, Sound Transit hosted a public open house to provide a status update to the Bel-Red and Overlake communities on the East Link design progress and to solicit feedback on light rail routing, property impacts and station design. 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 Highland Community Center in Bellevue from 5 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. Approximately 61 community members were in attendance.

The open house 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 have encouraged community feedback. Community outreach events and activities for East Link have 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 (EIS) 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 Bel-Red and Overlake design progress
- Provide information about the East Link project status and next steps
- Solicit feedback on key issues including light rail routing, property impacts and station design

Format

Participants were asked to sign-in as they arrived. Each participant received a comment form that provided information about Segment D, space for general comments about the East Link project, Bel-Red and Overlake stations, as well as specific questions related to concerns about light rail routing, property impacts and/or station design.

After signing in, Sound Transit staff encouraged participants to view display boards around the room to learn about the Link light rail system and upcoming opportunities to get involved. Three stations were dedicated to reviewing detailed information about the Bel-Red and Overlake station plans, including station drawings and strip plots. The Cities of Bellevue and Redmond hosted tables to share information about coordinated efforts and related projects. Members of the East Link project team staffed the open house to answer questions and record comments.

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

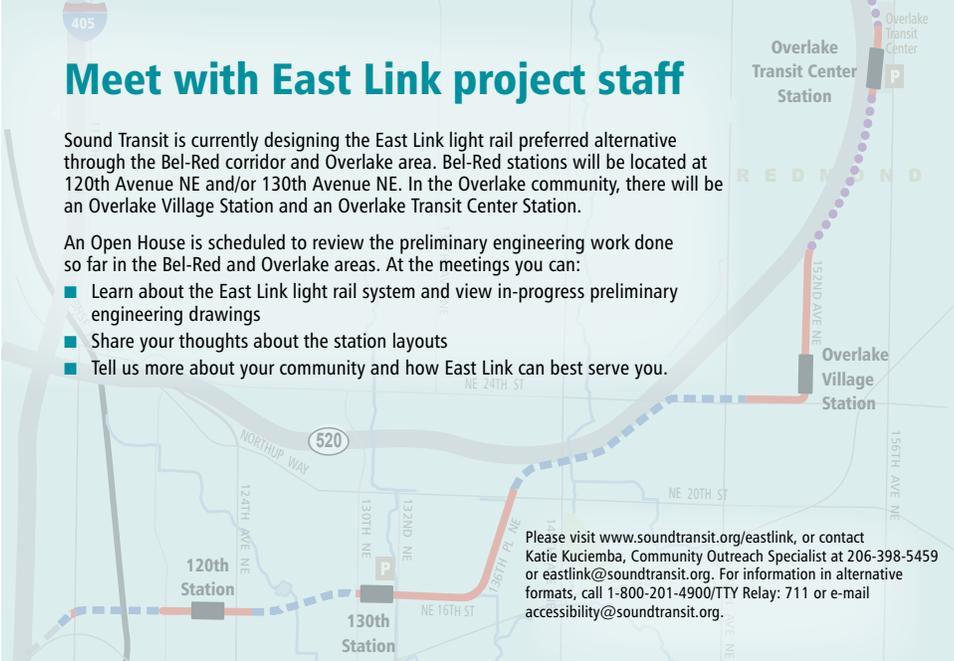


Public Notification

Sound Transit directly notified individuals who live or work within ¼ to ½ mile of the East Link alignment in Bel-Red and Overlake through a postcard mailing. In addition, the Bellevue and Redmond communities were notified 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. Sound Transit ran display ads announcing the open house in the *Bellevue Reporter*, *Redmond Reporter*, *Russian World*, *La Raza Del Noroeste*, and *Seattle Chinese Times*. Translation services were also advertised and available as needed.

In addition to notifying the general public, Sound Transit requested participation from business owners in the corridor, stakeholder, 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 D.



Meet with East Link project staff

Sound Transit is currently designing the East Link light rail preferred alternative through the Bel-Red corridor and Overlake area. Bel-Red stations will be located at 120th Avenue NE and/or 130th Avenue NE. In the Overlake community, there will be an Overlake Village Station and an Overlake Transit Center Station.

An Open House is scheduled to review the preliminary engineering work done so far in the Bel-Red and Overlake areas. At the meetings you can:

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

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

You're invited:
**East Link Light Rail
Preliminary Engineering
Open House**

BEL-RED/OVERLAKE CORRIDOR
Thursday, April 1
5 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.
Highland Community Center
14224 NE Bel-Red Road, Bellevue

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

 Receive E-mail Updates

Can't attend the meeting? Sign up for e-mail updates at www.soundtransit.org/subscribe.

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Public Comments

Sound Transit received a total of 19 public comments at the Bel-Red/Overlake meeting. The public comments summarized below were submitted at the open house, via e-mail or mail following the meeting. Verbatim transcriptions of all comments are provided in Appendix B.

General Comments

The first page of the comment form addressed general feedback on the East Link project. The following are comments highlights arranged by topic.

East Link Alignment

Participants shared many suggestions about light rail routing through Segment D of the East Link corridor. Specific suggestions varied, as demonstrated by the comment highlights below.

- *“I am concerned that Sound Transit will build their light rail at-grade, and that would be a tremendous mistake. It needs to be underground. I am hoping that this light rail is placed underground using the London Tube as a role model.”*
- *“1. The line should be routed from downtown Bellevue north to SR 520 then parallel SR 520 (just south of SR 520 roadway) to the Overlake Transit Station. 2. The line should not be routed through the Bel-Red corridor.”*
- *“Would strongly desire line to start elevated climb, before turning north on 136th Place, reducing property acquisitions/impacts to PNB facility, a cornerstone to Bellevue’s vision for arts district. An at-grade crossing at NE 20th would be very detrimental to cross traffic since its one of the only three East-West arterials and over 25,000 cpd. Keep it elevated whenever possible, it reduces the property acquisition costs and delay of condemning adjacent properties.”*
- *“Your aerial alternative (#?) at 148th and Overlake Village should be designed to allow future 520 EB off-ramp expansion alternative. City of Bellevue oblique/aerial drawings of long range developments need some street names to help viewers’ orientation. Alignment at 136th Ave and NE 20th should be changed to grade-separated crossings! (re: safety, delay, capacity for both light rail, motor traffic, and pedestrian/bike concerns).”*
- *“The new alternative alignment along SR 520 in Overlake Village looks excellent. It should cost less to build and improve operations. Sound Transit should share some of the cost benefits with Redmond by funding a pedestrian/bicycle bridge over SR 520.”*
- *“I am so thrilled to see that Sound Transit is preventing the same mistake they made on MLK (at-grade center light rail). Almost the entire East Link needs to be a clear distance from the road.”*



- *“Re: typical alignment cross sections “Trench-Center Running” type. If you are going to dig a ditch, put a lid on it! A bus or a semi could slip on ice and go over the jersey barriers and possibly land right on top of a passing train.”*
- *“Consider a spur to the Crossroads shopping (Enter which could extend south from the Overlake Village station or better yet, have shuttle service to Crossroads shopping center from the Overlake Village station to save \$.)”*
- *“I would hope that Sound Transit takes the time to get the best ideas and keep speeds high and impacts the least to existing properties unlike San Jose that is having to re-do their rail line because they tried to do it cheaply in the short term but much costlier long term. Portland learned that the best and most cost effective use of public \$ was to use existing ROW and eliminate/reduce impacts to properties adjacent to the line.”*



Light Rail Benefits

Participants had mixed views about the benefit of light rail and a few suggested alternate transit solutions.

- *“East Link will be great! It can’t come quickly enough.”*
- *“1. It is not necessary 2. It is not cost effective 3. It should be replaced by bus rapid transit.”*
- *“I rely heavily on Metro, but on a round trip coast straight to California takes me more miles than 500 metro trips. I want money spent on long distance high speed rail”*

Project Information

Another comment focused on the need for additional and improved project displays.

- *“Need improvements to large plan profile sheet that shows clearly and quickly what segments are at-grade including the future expanded street network of Bel-Red sub area plan. Need better/additional exhibit maps showing bike route network in relation to LRT alignment”*





Station Design

Among participants who submitted comment forms, there were several suggestions to add new stations at various points along the light rail alignment. The locations include: I-5/I-90 interchange, SR 520 and 130th/132nd Ave NE, and Overlake.

- *“If at all possible, add an “I-5 station” that could pick up and drop off I-5 traffic passengers (bus and car access only). Car access would need a park & ride of course. However, I’m told that would not be feasible at the I-90/I-5 conjunction area. But even bus only access might be feasible, if there are enough Metro routes that go on I-5 without going through downtown Seattle, past I-90.”*
- *“There should only be one station in the Bel-Red area; it should be located at approximately the intersection of SR 520 and 130/132nd NE.”*
- *“One Overlake stop should be near new bridge.”*

Participants felt development near the station should include attractive retail and service options. Stations should provide features to improve accommodations and services for passengers.

- *Encourage stores we can walk to such as drug stores, card, and restaurants adjacent to stations. Choose types of development that transit users patronize.*
- *Put grocery and other stores in or beside the station. Stations need benches, rain protection, restrooms, and bus connections.*

Property Impacts

Property owners who submitted comment forms were concerned about property values, as well as any potential property acquisitions and access impacts.

- *“Yes Seg D, a slight north curve to rails G 5’ to 10’ Leave my facility possibly untouched; this will also save part of Evans property by utilizing some of sand and gravel lot. Thanks.”*
- *“I don’t have development plans, but the East Link routing through the Bel-Red corridor will decrease my property values.”*
- *“Have 150,000 SF of managed space all throughout the corridor that will be directly or indirectly affected. My main concern is the future accessibility to those properties and the takings, partial or whole of these same.”*

Next Steps

The community feedback provided during the Bel-Red/Overlake open house is important to Sound Transit and regional decision-makers. Sound Transit will weigh this feedback, along with cost, ridership, service quality, environmental impacts, land use impacts, and service efficiency as they advance the preliminary engineering design and environmental studies. 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 will be published in late 2010/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 email
accessibility@soundtransit.org





East Link light rail:

Bel-Red/Overlake
Open House Appendices