

**SOUND TRANSIT  
STAFF REPORT**

**MOTION NO. M2004-116**

**Identification of the Preferred Northgate Station Location for the North Link Segment of  
the Central Link Light Rail Project**

<b>Meeting:</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>Type of Action:</b>	<b>Staff Contact:</b>	<b>Phone:</b>
Board	11/18/04	Discussion/Possible Action	Ahmad Fazel, Link Director <b>Ron Endlich, North Link Program Manager</b>	(206) 398-5389  (206) 398-5141

**ACTION**

Identifies a site east of 1st Avenue NE and west of the existing King County Metro Northgate Transit Center, spanning NE 103rd Street, as the preferred location and configuration for the Northgate light rail station of the North Link Segment of the Central Link Light Rail Project to be advanced to preliminary engineering and authorizes an alternative location at 1st Avenue NE, between NE 100th and NE 103rd Streets, be advanced to conceptual engineering.

**KEY FEATURES**

- This motion identifies the following preferred Northgate station location and configuration to be advanced to preliminary engineering:
  - The elevated light rail station will be located east of 1st Avenue NE and west of the existing King County Metro Northgate Transit Center, spanning NE 103rd Street with a station entrance north of NE 103rd Street and an entrance south of NE 103rd Street.
  - The station will include a mezzanine level to support enhanced pedestrian circulation at the ground level and facilitate a potential future pedestrian connection to the King County Metro Transit Oriented Development project planned adjacent to the station site.
  - The station will be constructed at an elevation that accommodates a future extension of the light rail line to the north, elevated above existing driveways and roadways at the Northgate Mall property.
- This motion authorizes further study of an elevated station located above 1st Avenue NE, between NE 100th and NE 103rd Streets, to determine the feasibility and relative merits of this option in coordination with other agency staff. Sound Transit staff will report study findings to the Sound Transit Board by January 2005, at which time the Board may choose to give further consideration to this station option.
- Sound Transit will continue to work with City of Seattle, King County Metro, and Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) staff as the Northgate station design progresses during preliminary engineering.

## **BUDGET DISCUSSION**

The North Link Segment of the Central Link Light Rail Project (North Link) civil engineering and architectural services consultant contracts include budgets for completing preliminary engineering for a single Northgate station configuration. Advancing further study of an additional Northgate station option through conceptual engineering would require additional expenditures that would be funded through existing contract contingencies. Staff will closely monitor affected design budgets and provide a budget status to the Sound Transit Board in the event that additional design work is recommended at that time.

## **REVENUE, SUBAREA, AND FINANCIAL PLAN IMPACTS**

Not applicable to this action.

## **M/W/DBE – SMALL BUSINESS PARTICIPATION**

Not applicable to this action.

## **HISTORY OF PROJECT**

### **Prior Board or Committee Actions and Relevant Board Policies**

<b>Motion or Resolution Number</b>	<b>Summary of Action</b>	<b>Date of Action</b>
R2004-08	Identified the preferred route, profiles, and station locations for the North Link Light Rail Project.	5/20/04
M2003-33	Directed staff to complete additional work on North Link route alternatives in order to provide the Board with more comprehensive information for its North Link route decision-making process.	3/13/03
M2002-13	Selected the route alternatives for inclusion and study in the North Link Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (Draft SEIS) and deleting less promising route alternatives from further study.	2/14/02
M2001-104	Directed the Executive Director to evaluate Central Link Light Rail routes and station alternatives between Convention Place and Northgate.	9/27/01

The North Link Draft SEIS identified two general Northgate station location options. One option has the elevated station located east of 1st Avenue NE between NE 100th and NE 103rd Streets with both north and south entrances coming to street level on that block. The second option has the elevated station spanning NE103rd Street with the north entrance on Northgate Mall property with the south entrance located south of NE 103rd Street. Both options included elevated tail and pocket tracks extending north of NE 103rd Street, with the second option having more of the tail track structure on Northgate Mall property (tail and pocket tracks are needed for train turn back operations and storage). A mezzanine was not included in the original station design for either station option.

Since June, Sound Transit staff and consultants have advanced Northgate station planning and design work. Staff met with King County Metro staff to coordinate the future Transit Oriented Development (TOD) project and bus transfer issues at the Northgate light rail station. King County Metro intends to complete a TOD project on the western portion of the block between NE 100th and NE 103rd Streets and will eventually move the existing Northgate Transit Center bus operations to 1st Avenue NE near the light rail station once it is completed to improve bus rail transfers and free up space for redevelopment on the block. Sound Transit staff has also discussed roadway and pedestrian access issues with City of Seattle staff and discussed I-5 freeway and ramp design issues with WSDOT staff. Sound Transit staff has also met with representatives of Simon Properties, owners of the Northgate Mall.

City of Seattle and King County Metro staff initially supported the station option that spans NE 103rd Street to provide a better pedestrian link to the Northgate Mall. Northgate Mall representatives have recently expressed strong reservations to Sound Transit staff about the presence of the station (and tail tracks) on their property because of concerns of reduced visibility of mall tenant storefronts from the freeway, loss of parking spaces due to light rail facilities, and potential spill-over parking impacts that could affect customer parking availability. The station option located between NE 100th and NE 103rd Streets would reduce the potential impacts to the Northgate Mall but would add 100 to 200 feet of walking distance to riders wanting to go to or from the Northgate Mall and the light rail station. This option increases the potential impacts to an expensive strip mall property located just south of NE 100th Street.

The expected construction cost of both station location options is similar. Real Estate staff have determined that the expected land acquisition and parking replacement costs would be lower for the option spanning NE 103rd Street than the option located between NE 100th and NE 103rd Streets. Sound Transit staff recommends that the station spanning NE 103rd Street move forward into preliminary engineering at this time, to not delay the completion of North Link preliminary engineering next spring.

Adding a mezzanine to the Northgate station would not alter the basic height and footprint of the station, but would allow for a direct pedestrian connection between the light rail station and the future King County TOD project and is supported by all the affected agencies. The added cost of the mezzanine will be accommodated within the existing Northgate station budget by other scope reductions.

The elevated guideway north of the Northgate station will be designed to accommodate the future extension of the light rail line to the north, and will provide adequate clearance over driveways and roadways along the Northgate Mall property.

In October, staff began consideration of a new station option intended to reduce potential property impacts north and south of the station. Initial design and agency review was completed on a design option that places the elevated station and tail/pocket tracks above 1st Avenue NE between NE 100th and NE 103rd Streets. The initial design involves the placement of columns on both sides of the existing 1st Avenue NE roadway supporting the station and pocket tracks above. Station entrances would come down to sidewalk level east of 1st Avenue NE on the block between NE 100th and NE 103rd Streets. While some review agency staff expressed interest in the advantages this option presents, other agency staff expressed the need to further review design and roadway issues in more detail before they could possibly support this option.

This option appears to reduce property impacts and parking replacement requirements south of NE 100th Street, on the King County Metro block between NE 100th and NE 103rd Streets, and

the Northgate Mall property north of NE 103rd Street. Further design work and agency review is needed to consider station entrance location and pedestrian access issues, confirm roadway capacity and geometry requirements, and complete additional environmental review on this option. Because this option appears to have the potential to reduce project cost compared to the other station options, staff recommends further study of this option to advance the design to the conceptual engineering level and report the results to the Board by January. If this new option has sufficient merit, the Board could reconsider its preferred station decision at that time.

Action on this motion would identify the preferred Northgate station location and configuration and direct further study on an additional station option for later Board consideration. The Sound Transit Board will have the opportunity to make the final decision on the North Link route and stations to be built after the publication of the Final SEIS.

Sound Transit staff will continue to work with City of Seattle, King County Metro, and WSDOT staff as the Northgate station design progresses during preliminary engineering.

### **CONSEQUENCES OF DELAY**

The identification of the preferred Northgate station is needed to advance North Link design and environmental review. Delaying the identification of the preferred Northgate station location and configuration could delay the completion of preliminary engineering and the Final SEIS.

### **PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT**

Sound Transit staff has held a number of station design workshops, project open houses, and other meetings involving neighborhood and business groups, property owners, and other interested parties throughout the Northgate station area as part of the environmental and conceptual engineering work completed to date. Sound Transit staff held a Northgate station public open house on October 19, 2004 and presented information about the station options. The Northgate station alternatives were also presented to the City of Seattle's Northgate Stakeholders Group on October 26, 2004. Sound Transit staff also attended the Northgate Community Forum on November 9, 2004 and discussed Northgate station options.

### **LEGAL REVIEW**

JW 11/8/04

## **SOUND TRANSIT**

### **MOTION NO. M2004-116**

A motion of the Board of the Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority identifying a site east of 1st Avenue NE and west of the existing King County Metro Northgate Transit Center, spanning NE 103rd Street, as the preferred location and configuration for the Northgate light rail station of the North Link Segment of the Central Link Light Rail Project to be advanced to preliminary engineering and authorizing an alternative location at 1st Avenue NE, between NE 100th and NE 103rd Streets, to be advanced to conceptual engineering.

#### **Background:**

The North Link Draft SEIS identified two general Northgate station location options. One option has the elevated station located east of 1st Avenue NE between NE 100th and NE 103rd Streets with both north and south entrances coming to street level on that block. The second option has the elevated station spanning NE 103rd Street with the north entrance on Northgate Mall property with the south entrance located south of NE 103rd Street. Both options included elevated tail and pocket tracks extending north of NE 103rd Street, with the second option having more of the tail track structure on Northgate Mall property (tail and pocket tracks are needed for train turn back operations and storage). A mezzanine was not included in the original station design for either station option.

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forward into preliminary engineering at this time, to not delay the completion of North Link preliminary engineering next spring.

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Action on this motion would identify the preferred Northgate station location and configuration and direct further study on an additional station option for later Board consideration. The Sound Transit Board will have the opportunity to make the final decision on the North Link route and stations to be built after the publication of the Final SEIS in spring 2005.

Sound Transit staff will continue to work with City of Seattle, King County Metro, and WSDOT staff as the Northgate station design progresses during preliminary engineering.

**Motion:**

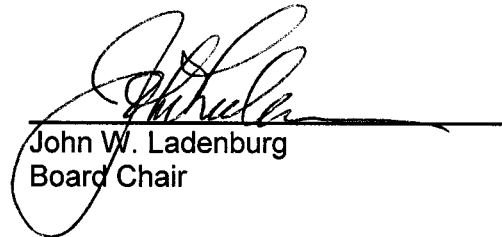
It is hereby moved by the Board of the Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority that the preferred location and configuration for the Northgate light rail station of the North Link Light Rail Project (North Link) to be advanced to preliminary engineering is identified as follows:

- The elevated light rail station will be located east of 1st Avenue NE and west of the existing King County Metro Northgate Transit Center, spanning NE 103rd Street with a station entrance north of NE 103rd Street and an entrance south of NE 103rd Street.

- The station will include a mezzanine level to support enhanced pedestrian circulation at the ground level and facilitate a potential future pedestrian connection to the King County Metro Transit Oriented Development project planned adjacent to the station site.
- The station will be constructed at an elevation that accommodates a future extension of the light rail line to the north, elevated above existing driveways and roadways at the Northgate Mall property.

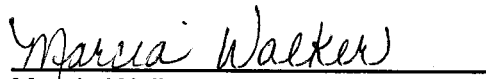
It is further moved that conceptual engineering of an elevated station located above 1st Avenue NE between NE 100th and NE 103rd Streets is authorized to determine the feasibility and relative merits of this option, in coordination with other agency staff. Sound Transit staff will report study findings to the Sound Transit Board by January 2005, at which time the Board may chose to give further consideration to this station option.

APPROVED by the Board of the Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority at a regular meeting thereof held on November 18, 2004.



John W. Ladenburg  
Board Chair

ATTEST:



Marcia Walker  
Board Administrator