

## **MOTION NO. M2010-44**

A motion of the Board of the Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority modifying the preferred light rail routes and stations previously identified in Motion No. M2009-41 for the East Link Light Rail Project Final Environmental Impact Statement.

### **BACKGROUND:**

Sound Transit, the Federal Transit Administration, and the Washington State Department of Transportation published a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the East Link Project on December 12, 2008 pursuant to the National and State Environmental Policy Acts (NEPA and SEPA). The East Link EIS evaluates the impacts of constructing and operating light rail service from Seattle to the Overlake Transit Center, and studies alignments from the Overlake Transit Center to downtown Redmond. For the purpose of the EIS, the East Link Project is broken into five segments (A, B, C, D, and E). A 75-day comment period was held and public and agency input was received at five informational open house events. Public hearings were held at each open house event. The Sound Transit Board received copies of each of the 765 comments submitted during the comment period.

At its May 14, 2009 meeting, the Sound Transit Board identified the preferred alternative for the East Link Final EIS (Motion No. M2009-41). Motion No. M2009-41 also directed staff to evaluate proposed design modifications to some alternatives, to conduct a peer review of at-grade light rail operations in downtown Bellevue, and to respond to questions regarding tunnel alternatives in downtown Bellevue.

Through the fall of 2009, staff briefed the Board on design developments, the results of a tunnel peer review, the first meeting of an at-grade peer review panel, the results of a value analysis review, and continued public outreach. The Board sought further information on the downtown Bellevue alternatives, which emerged from these reviews – a shorter tunnel alternative (Alternative C9T) and two new at-grade alternatives (Alternatives C9A and C11A). In December, the Board agreed to a City of Bellevue request to evaluate an elevated alternative on the edge of downtown Bellevue (Alternative C14E).

Sound Transit staff and consultants worked jointly with City of Bellevue staff to produce the Downtown Bellevue Light Rail Alternatives Concept Design Report. Following publication of the report, the Sound Transit Board and City of Bellevue Council held a joint workshop on February 11, 2010. Staff received direction at the workshop to respond to additional questions and frame possible trade-offs for further consideration by the Board. A public meeting was held February 18, 2010 to obtain comments from the public and other agencies.

On March 25, 2010, staff provided the Board with a comprehensive update on the East Link Project, including the results of design modifications and studies requested in Motion No. M2009-41 in Segment B: South Bellevue and Segment D: Bel-Red/Overlake. Staff also responded to questions from the February 11, 2010 joint workshop and presented possible Segment B-C combinations for consideration by the Board.

On April 8, 2010, the Sound Transit Capital Projects Committee further reviewed the possible modifications and discussed the progress made with the City of Bellevue on additional funding sources and project cost savings that could make a downtown Bellevue tunnel alternative (Alternative C9T-110<sup>th</sup>) affordable. The Committee voiced support for the preferred alternative identified in May 2009 to be modified to include Alternative C9-T, but only if a term sheet between Sound Transit and the City of Bellevue establishing key funding requirements and other terms was in place.

NEPA requires that Sound Transit identify its preferred alternative in the Final EIS. The identification of a preferred alternative for the Final EIS is a statement of the Board's current intent regarding the East Link Project based on the Board's review of the East Link Draft EIS, public comments from interested citizens, agencies, tribes and organizations, and other information developed to date; it is not a final decision on the East Link Project. The Board will make a final decision on the project to be built, including the route and station locations to be built, after publication of the Final EIS.

**Motion:**

It is hereby moved by the Board of the Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority to modify the preferred light rail alternative for the East Link Project Final EIS. The new preferred alternative is described below:

**Segment A**

There is one route alternative between downtown Seattle and Bellevue. The route begins in the existing Downtown Seattle Transit Tunnel and connects to the Central Link light rail system at the Chinatown/International District Station. It enters I-90 via the existing D2 Roadway, a high occupancy vehicle (HOV) ramp between downtown Seattle and Rainier Avenue. The route is in the center reversible lanes of I-90 across Lake Washington and Mercer Island.

The preferred alternative for the D2 Roadway is:

- Joint bus-light rail operations

The preferred alternative for the Mercer Island station west entrance is at:

- 77<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE

A design option to study is:

- Evaluating proposed partnerships by the City of Mercer Island for new park-and-ride capacity in or near the Mercer Island Town Center

**Segment B: I-90 to Downtown Bellevue:**

The preferred alternative for Segment B is Alternative B2M: 112<sup>th</sup> SE, which is a combination of Alternative B3S and the B2: 112<sup>th</sup> SE alternatives and will include:

- An elevated exit of the center roadway and preservation of the HOV direct access for south Bellevue Way to west I-90 and east I-90 to north Bellevue Way.
- An elevated profile on the east of Bellevue Way to the South Bellevue station
- An elevated station on the existing Park-and-Ride property with structured parking
- An alignment along the east-side of Bellevue Way to 112<sup>th</sup>
- Continuing north from Bellevue Way along 112<sup>th</sup> into downtown Bellevue

Design options on 112<sup>th</sup> will be studied further jointly with the City of Bellevue and brought to the Board for consideration.

**Segment C: Downtown Bellevue to Overlake Hospital**

The Sound Transit chief executive officer is authorized to sign a term sheet with the City of Bellevue related to additional funding sources and scope reductions that would reduce the affordability gap for Alternative C9-T: 110<sup>th</sup> Tunnel.

The preferred alternative in Segment C is:

- Alternative C9-T: 110<sup>th</sup> Tunnel, and
- Alternative C11-A: 108<sup>th</sup> At-grade
- Design options for the location of the Hospital Station in the BNSF corridor at or near NE 8<sup>th</sup> will be studied further and brought back to the Board for consideration.

#### **Segment D: Downtown Bellevue to Overlake Transit Center**

Sound Transit encourages transit oriented development and design in the Bel-Red and Overlake neighborhood areas where transit supportive development is minimal or nonexistent. The regional cost to serve these areas is substantial, and light rail will play an important role in supporting the redevelopment planned by the cities of Bellevue and Redmond. Staff will explore opportunities for shared right-of-way construction and reconstruction, cities' dedication of right-of-way, and public-private partnerships, as funding sources for the regional investment.

The preferred alternative in Segment D is Alternative D2-A: NE 16<sup>th</sup> At-Grade modified, and will incorporate:

- Designing the alignment and station between 120<sup>th</sup> and 124<sup>th</sup> as a retained cut subject to a term sheet establishing project delivery and financing methods in which Sound Transit's cost would be the same or less than the cost of an at-grade alignment and station.
- In the Overlake Village area, locating the alignment along SR 520 with a station at 152<sup>nd</sup> designed so as to accommodate a City of Redmond pedestrian bridge over SR 520.

#### **Segment E: Overlake Transit Center to Downtown Redmond**

The preferred alternative in Segment E is:

- Alternative E2: Marymoor

A design option to incorporate with E2 is:

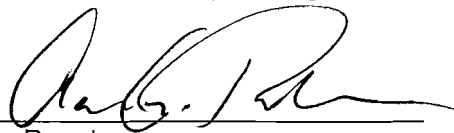
- Terminating the alternative at a downtown Redmond station located in the BNSF corridor near 161<sup>st</sup> Avenue to reduce the walking distance to the Redmond Transit Center and park and ride.

#### **Maintenance Facility**

The Board does not have a preferred maintenance facility location at this time.

It is further moved that staff is authorized to complete the East Link Project Final EIS, using the preferred alternative identified above and the other alternatives in the Draft EIS. In addition, all four of the downtown Bellevue alternatives evaluated in the Downtown Bellevue Light Rail Alternatives Concept Design Report (Alternative C9-T: 110<sup>th</sup> Tunnel, Alternative C9-A: 110<sup>th</sup> NE At-Grade, Alternative C11-A: 108<sup>th</sup> At-grade, and Alternative C14-E: 114<sup>th</sup> NE Elevated) are carried forward into the Final EIS.

APPROVED by the Board of the Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority at a regular meeting thereof held on April 22, 2010.

  
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Aaron Reardon  
Board Chair

ATTEST:

  
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Marcia Walker  
Board Administrator