

REVISED

April 6, 2015

CITY COUNCIL STUDY SESSION ITEM

SUBJECT:

East Link Project Update

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POLICY CONSIDERATION:

The general policy guidance below informs the City's work on this final design phase of the East Link Project.

Comprehensive Plan Policies:

The Comprehensive Plan contains a body of adopted policy, which emerged from the Light Rail Best Practices work, to frame the City's role in light rail project development, including advancing the City's land use and transportation objectives and minimizing neighborhood and environmental impacts.

MOU with Sound Transit:

The City and Sound Transit entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in November 2011 that defines City contributions to a downtown light rail tunnel. The MOU also provides the basis for a Collaborative Design Process (CDP) that was further defined and agreed to in January 2012. The CDP provides the mechanism for the City and Sound Transit to jointly advance the design of the East Link Project through the 60% design phase.

Light Rail Overlay District:

In addition to collaborating with Sound Transit within the framework of the MOU, the City is the permitting agency for East Link within Bellevue. The Council-adopted Land Use Code (LUC) Part 20.25M defining development standards and design guidelines shapes staff's feedback on design issues. The LUC provisions also establish the permitting process for East Link utilizing the Light Rail Permitting Citizens' Advisory Committee (CAC).

DIRECTION NEEDED FROM COUNCIL:

- Action
- Discussion
- Information

City staff will provide details about the structure of a potential amended MOU that addresses four main areas regarding East Link and a potential Operations and Maintenance Satellite Facility (OMSF); project mitigation; and financial terms between the City and Sound Transit.

BACKGROUND/ANALYSIS:

In November 2011, Council signed an umbrella Memorandum of Understanding with Sound Transit detailing City financial contributions toward the costs of a Downtown light rail tunnel, and design modifications to minimize impacts of the rail line on neighborhoods. The City and Sound Transit entered in to a "collaborative design process" intended to reduce costs, comply with codes and regulations, and finish the project on time and within budget.

The East Link light rail project is proceeding through to final design, the process that advances design work from approximately 30% to 100% completion. The November 2011 MOU contemplated that the City and Sound Transit would confirm the MOU Baseline and make any adjustments to the City financial contingency in writing at the time of Sound Transit Project Baselineing.

Operations and Maintenance Satellite Facility

In July 2014, the Sound Transit Board identified a preferred site for a new light rail yard for storage and maintenance of a portion of the system's light rail fleet, called the Operations and Maintenance Satellite Facility (OMSF). The preferred site was one of three studied through the environmental review process, and is centered on the former International Paper site adjacent to the Eastside Rail Corridor in the City's Bel-Red area. According to Sound Transit, the facility is needed to support the expansion of the light rail system to the north, south and east through the Sound Transit 2 package of system expansions. Two of the three sites studied are in Bellevue's Bel-Red area. The City believes that comprehensive resolution of issues for both East Link and OMSF are intrinsically linked, and must be addressed together.

During the July 24, 2014 Sound Transit Board meeting that identified the International Paper site as the Preferred Alternative for the OMSF, the Board also directed staff to maximize transit oriented development on the site and in the vicinity, and to conduct a stakeholder engagement process during the Preliminary Engineering (PE) and Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) phases of the project. The stakeholder group met four times in September and October 2014, and provided a letter to the Sound Transit Board at their November 20, 2014 meeting outlining their recommendations.

Amended MOU

Under the terms of the November 2011 MOU, at the time of Sound Transit's baseline budget for East Link, the parties were to confirm the City's Contingent Contribution in the project. Sound Transit is reaching the project baseline milestone, and for several months the two agencies have been working toward identifying resolutions to issues related to the MOU, project coordination and the potential OMSF location in Bel-Red through amendments to the existing MOU.

Key elements that would be addressed through an amended MOU include:

Operations and Maintenance Facility (OMSF)	<p>If, after environmental review, Sound Transit selects the site in the Bel-Red Corridor, an amended MOU would address:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design modifications that allow for future transit oriented development (TOD) • Design integration of the OMSF with surrounding architecture and future development • Non-motorized connections along the future Eastside Rail Corridor (ERC) and connections from the ERC to 120th Avenue NE
Project Coordination	<p>Identification of the most efficient delivery strategy for City projects that will be constructed by Sound Transit and certain aspects of the East Link project that will be constructed by the City.</p>
Project and Construction Mitigation	<p>Establish clear requirements to minimize disruptions to City businesses and residents, through techniques such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working collaboratively with both agencies, representatives of business and neighborhoods • Timing and location of noise mitigation • Goals for maintenance of traffic during construction
Project Permitting Fees	<p>The agencies recognize the important role that timely permit application and issuance plays in maintaining the overall project delivery</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Setting scope and responsibility of construction inspection • Setting parameters for what is and is not covered in permitting fees
Financial Reconciliation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification of the City’s final contribution to the overall East Link Project • Identification of elements for reimbursement between the parties

On Monday, staff anticipate providing details about the potential terms of an amended MOU, as well as next steps in the preparation of a final draft amendment.

Noise Mitigation

The noise impacts from East Link, both operationally and during construction, have been of keen interest to the Bellevue City Council and communities adjacent to the rail line. As part of the Design and Mitigation Permit process, Sound Transit must assess the operational noise impacts of each segment of East Link, and install mitigation when/where necessary to meet regulatory codes and standards.

Staff will provide information on the findings of the City’s technical noise review on Sound Transit’s compliance with the City’s noise code. This information will inform how noise will be addressed through project mitigation, and how other details of noise are addressed throughout draft terms of an amended MOU.

ATTACHMENTS:
NA