



City of
Bellevue

Office of the Mayor • Phone (425) 452-7810 • Fax (425) 452-7919
Post Office Box 90012 • Bellevue, Washington • 98009 9012

July 10, 2006

The Honorable John Ladenburg
Chair, Sound Transit Board of Directors
401 South Jackson
Seattle, WA 98104

Dear Chair Ladenburg,

I am writing on behalf of the Bellevue Council to join Kirkland, Redmond and Issaquah in recommending the Sound Transit Board select light rail as the preferred technology for the I-90 corridor project in the regional package being developed for voter consideration in November 2007. We have been asked to express a preference between the two technologies that are under consideration by the Sound Transit Board. They are light rail or rail convertible bus rapid transit.

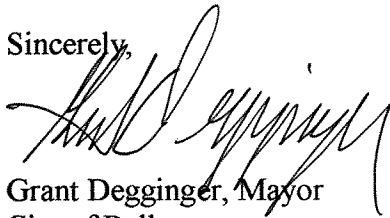
On Monday, June 26th, the Council held a public hearing so that we could listen to the residents of our community. Bellevue is the only city on the Eastside that has held such a hearing on this important subject. Overall, many people expressed their support for serving the City with HCT. This is consistent with the Council's previously adopted interest statement supporting HCT as a critical component of the City's long term land use and transportation strategies for increasing the transit mode split in downtown Bellevue to 40% by 2020. This transformation will be necessary to preserve our neighborhoods, provide mobility in and out of downtown and support economic growth. Based on the information provided by Sound Transit, it appears that light rail transit will carry more passengers at greater speed and convenience than rail convertible bus rapid transit. While light rail is projected to have a somewhat higher initial cost, it avoids both the subsequent cost of retrofitting the corridor and, importantly, the significant service interruptions that would occur when the conversion takes place.

Many of our citizens (including many who support HCT coming to Bellevue) expressed concerns about the configuration in which HCT will be delivered (aerial or tunnel) or the potential adverse effects of certain alignments. The proper configuration and the alignment are crucial to the future livability and success of our community. Bellevue is the second largest city in King County and has the second highest assessed value of any city in the state. We now have over 35,000 jobs and a growing residential population in our downtown—a downtown that is surrounded on three sides with outstanding single family neighborhoods. By 2020, the downtown is projected to have over 63,000 jobs and 14,000 residents. It is imperative that high capacity transit is deployed in a manner that will ensure we receive the most positive impacts from the transit system while assuring the least negative impacts to our neighborhoods and community.

The Council places a high priority on ensuring the transit system is compatible with the quality of life currently enjoyed in our neighborhoods and it does not negatively impact our existing roadway capacity. This will require close cooperation between the City and Sound Transit and meaningful public involvement of our citizens and businesses. As a first step, the East Corridor High Capacity Transit Study being undertaken by Sound Transit will serve to initially engage the community and will set the stage for future planning efforts to involve the community in answering questions about potential route, alignment, configuration and station options. We urge you to provide as much detailed information about deployment methodology and alignments as possible in advance of the November, 2007 vote.

We would like to extend our appreciation for your actions to advance HCT planning for the Eastside. The City looks forward to working closely with Sound Transit over the coming months to make this a successful effort for Bellevue and the region as part of a Sound Transit Phase 2 and Regional Transportation Investment District joint package.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Grant Degginger", written over a light blue horizontal line.

Grant Degginger, Mayor
City of Bellevue

Cc: Bellevue City Council
Steve Sarkozy, City Manager
Goran Sparrman, Transportation Director
Matt Terry, Planning and Community Development Director