

CITY OF BELLEVUE
CITY COUNCIL

Summary Minutes of Study Session

December 9, 2013
6:00 p.m.

Council Conference Room
Bellevue, Washington

PRESENT: Mayor Lee, Deputy Mayor Robertson, and Councilmembers Balducci, Chelminiak, Davidson, Stokes and Wallace

ABSENT: None.

1. Executive Session

At 6:02 p.m., Deputy Mayor Robertson called the meeting to order and declared recess to Executive Session for approximately 20 minutes to discuss one item of potential litigation.

The meeting resumed at 6:40 p.m., with Mayor Lee presiding.

2. Study Session

(a) East Link Project Update

Acting City Manager Brad Miyake introduced staff's update on the East Link project, including the City Hall Plaza design and East Link art elements.

Transportation Director Dave Berg noted that Attachment C [Page 2-13 of meeting packet] is a map showing the East Link alignment segments and the recently defined contract packages. Attachment A [Page 2-5] provides an update on the East Link work program.

Ron Lewis, East Link Deputy Executive Director, Sound Transit, said the project budget through final design is \$756.8 million. Two civil final design contracts cover Seattle to South Bellevue and South Bellevue to the Overlake Transit Center, and there is one systems contract for the entire project.

Mr. Lewis highlighted key milestones in the East Link schedule. The project is in final design, and Sound Transit is in the early stages of right-of-way acquisition. He noted that I-90 corridor final design activities including station and guideway design, third party agreements, track bridge

and track attachments, ventilation issues, seismic analysis, community outreach, and construction contract packaging.

Mr. Lewis described testing on the track bridge, which is the structure connecting the stationary I-90 roadway to the floating bridge across Lake Washington.

Responding to Councilmember Wallace, Mr. Lewis said the testing demonstrated the ability to run the trains at optimal speeds over the track bridge as anticipated, taking into account changes in the lake level and wind/storm loads on the bridge.

Mayor Lee requested more information on the track bridge testing for the Council and staff.

Responding to Councilmember Davidson, Mr. Lewis said minor adjustments are being made to the track bridge following the testing in Pueblo, Colorado.

Responding to Deputy Mayor Robertson, Mr. Lewis said Sound Transit tested two cars although East Link light rail will use four-car trains. Sound Transit feels confident that the testing was able to simulate all potential conditions. They will continue to test the track bridge throughout final design.

Responding to Councilmember Balducci, Mr. Lewis said Sound Transit will provide the video of the rider's experience during the testing.

Mr. Lewis highlighted the key Bellevue-Redmond corridor design activities, including station and guideway design, third-party agreements, geotechnical studies, permit strategy development, construction contract packaging, and community outreach.

Mr. Lewis acknowledged the Council's interest in property acquisitions in the South Bellevue, Downtown Bellevue and Bel-Red areas. Offers have been made to all 41 condo owners on 112th Avenue SE, and seven purchases are moving toward closing. The Sound Transit Board has authorized acquisitions of property along Main Street and will address additional Downtown property acquisitions next year. Mr. Lewis said Sound Transit is working with businesses on relocation assistance.

Responding to Ms. Robertson, Mr. Lewis said Sound Transit will complete appraisals and develop offers for non-condo homeowners along 112th Avenue SE through the first quarter of 2014.

Councilmember Balducci expressed concern about potential complications and unintended consequences for properties to be acquired. One example is a business's difficulty in obtaining ongoing operating financing due to unresolved issues about access to their business during the construction of light rail.

Councilmember Wallace requested information on all of the affected properties and whether they are partial or full takings.

Continuing, Mr. Lewis summarized community outreach efforts and described upcoming construction management activities extending through 2014.

Mr. Lewis said City staff indicated the Council's interest in the federal Record of Decision (ROD). He said the ROD includes a list of required mitigation commitments. Sound Transit incorporates these into the project construction documents, agreements, and permits. Permits with the City will also incorporate applicable ROD mitigation requirements.

Responding to Councilmember Davidson, Mr. Lewis said he would confirm the applicability of the State Shoreline Management Act on the project.

Councilmember Stokes said it would be helpful to have a summary of the mitigation requirements. Mr. Lewis said Sound Transit staff is tracking these on a quarterly basis and can provide the information to the Council.

Mr. Lewis commented on a list of issues and challenges including maintaining design progress, fully addressing all of the IRT (Independent Review Team) issues, timely input from third parties including the Light Rail Permitting CAC, competitiveness in the construction market during the procurement of contracts, ROW acquisition costs in a market experiencing appreciation in property values, and maintaining the affordability of the project.

Councilmember Chelminiak thanked the City and Sound Transit for getting the extreme weather shelter up and running. Mr. Lewis said the Sound Transit CEO was supportive of that cooperation.

Councilmember Wallace questioned how mitigation identified in the MOU will be incorporated into the project. Mr. Lewis said one example is the setback and buffer requirements that have been incorporated into the final design documents. The property acquisitions assume those requirements as well.

Responding to Mr. Wallace about sound mitigation, Mr. Lewis said the 60-percent design documents reflect sound walls and other elements incorporated as mitigation. In further response, Mr. Lewis said Sound Transit will receive the civil design packages for the Bellevue light rail alignment by the end of this year.

Councilmember Wallace said it would be helpful to have a clear presentation of mitigation measures, preferably in the form of 3-D representations.

Barbara Lueke, Art Program Manager for Sound Transit, said she has been working with Mary Pat Byrne, Arts Specialist, and the Bellevue Arts Commission to develop art features for the East Link project through Bellevue. The goal is to provide artwork that fits into the specific neighborhood or commercial area while maintaining a feel of continuity throughout the entire alignment.

Ms. Lueke displayed photos of public art elements throughout Sound Transit's light rail network. She noted wayfinding pavement tiles leading to the train platforms.

Ms. Lueke said the art budget for the East Link project is approximately \$8.5 million, which is comparable to the budget for Central Link. She described the process to review and hire artists and noted that Ms. Byrne has been involved in that effort.

Ms. Lueke presented photos of artistic elements along Seattle's light rail alignment, including the stations.

Ms. Lueke presented artistic fencing treatments to be used along the multi-use path and train alignment on 112th Avenue in Bellevue. She said the East Main Station design is consistent with the mid-century homes of the Surrey Downs neighborhood. She displayed a conceptual graphic of the Downtown Station and described the potential for art elements including the walls, windscreens, and landscaping. Ms. Lueke briefly presented conceptual drawings of the Hospital and Bel-Red corridor stations.

Deputy Mayor Robertson observed that the high guideway between the Downtown Station and the Hospital Station provides a good opportunity for art. She would like to see a pedestrian bridge over NE 8th Street to the Hospital Station, which could provide art treatments as well.

Councilmember Balducci suggested a major public art focus between the Downtown Station portal and I-405. However, she cautioned against art over I-405 that would distract drivers.

Ms. Lueke said the 120th Avenue Station in the Bel-Red corridor is on the edge of the Arts District. The Arts Commission would like to see something fairly sophisticated at this location, for example, a large wall treatment visible from the trains. Ms. Lueke said she is working to convene a panel for the 130th Avenue Station. The art opportunity at that location will focus on the railing. Sound Transit will start working with artists to develop proposals that will be discussed with the Bellevue Arts Commission.

Councilmember Balducci thanked Ms. Lueke for the presentation. She likes the whimsical nature of much of the art, but she believes that giant office supply art has been done enough. She suggested continuing the story of the art at City Hall across the plaza and into the Downtown Station. She said it is important to bring neighbors into the process of designing elements in their neighborhood.

Councilmember Chelminiak said he likes the idea of incorporating artistic sense into the necessary infrastructure, such as providing artistic railings and lighting. He agreed with suggestions to utilize the I-405 overpass as an art opportunity, while not distracting drivers.

Councilmember Stokes commented on light rail in Denver, Colorado, which does a good job of integrating art into the infrastructure. He said the pedestrian bridges are a work of art on their own. He thanked Ms. Lueke for her work and said this is very encouraging.

Mayor Lee encouraged art elements that can be calming or otherwise balance the dynamics of the train and other hectic activity/elements of the surrounding environment.

Moving on, Nora Johnson, Director of the Civic Services Department, noted the involvement of Kate March, the City's East Link outreach coordinator, and Joseph Fry, landscape architect, in working on the City Hall Plaza redesign.

Ms. Johnson recalled her previous presentation to the Council regarding the City Hall plaza redesign related to the Downtown Station project. Ms. Johnson said staff will be requesting input on whether the Council supports extending the plaza over the visitor parking area to the east in the future.

Mr. Fry described the existing art elements in and around City Hall and reminded Council and the audience about the narratives reflected in the art. He described options for integrating the plaza with the light rail station. He described a proposed water feature leading to the front door of City Hall and noted that the Root sculpture would be moved to that water feature.

Mr. Fry described a grouping of ten trees called the Sister Cities Garden. He described a proposal to integrate pedestrian access into the landscaped mound southwest of the current front walkway and trellis.

Noting the need to move to the Regular Session, Deputy Mayor Robertson said she personally is in favor of expanding the plaza.

Mayor Lee suggested continuing the presentation in the Regular Session under Agenda Item 5, City Manager's Report.

At 7:59 p.m., Mayor Lee declared recess to the Regular Session.

Myrna L. Basich, MMC
City Clerk

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