

CITY COUNCIL AGENDA ITEM
CITY OF SHORELINE, WASHINGTON

AGENDA TITLE: Sound Transit Update – North Corridor Transit Project
DEPARTMENT: Public Works
PRESENTED BY: Kirk McKinley, Transportation Services Manager Alicia McIntire, Senior Transportation Planner
ACTION: <input type="checkbox"/> Ordinance <input type="checkbox"/> Resolution <input type="checkbox"/> Motion <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Discussion

PROBLEM/ISSUE STATEMENT:

Sound Transit is currently in the process of evaluating alignment and station location alternatives to extend light rail north of Northgate. This extension is part of the 2008 voter approved Sound Transit 2 funding plan that will connect Shoreline to the light rail line. Currently under construction is the section from downtown Seattle to the University of Washington. The section from the University of Washington to Northgate will follow.

As part of the required process to be eligible for federal funding, Sound Transit must evaluate several alignment and mode alternatives for high capacity transit in the North Corridor. Beginning with a broad array of alignment options and various transit modes, Sound Transit has narrowed the alignment to I-5, with light rail as the mode choice. Through the environmental process, Sound Transit will evaluate the station location alternatives, as well as the alignment options along I-5. The process began in September 2010 and will continue through with the issuance of the final environmental impact statement (EIS) in 2014.

RESOURCE/FINANCIAL IMPACT:

At this time, there is no significant financial impact to the City associated with this process, as it is being managed and funded by Sound Transit. The City will need to participate throughout the EIS process by continuing to provide technical and policy direction. Staff will also be reviewing Sound Transit's Draft EIS (DEIS) and Final EIS (FEIS) as they are released. This will require dedication of City staff resources. Upon completion of the EIS process and determination of the final alignment and station locations in 2014, the City, along with Sound Transit, will need to engage the community in planning for the selected station locations and identify appropriate mitigation for the station areas.

RECOMMENDATION

No action is required at this time. However, Sound Transit is requesting Council input on the alignment options and station locations currently under consideration in the environmental process. Sound Transit staff will use Council's input, as well as feedback

received from other jurisdictions and the public, to develop a recommendation to the Sound Transit Board regarding the alternatives to evaluate in the DEIS.

Based upon the information provided to Council and staff by Sound Transit and the discussion by Council at their annual strategic planning and goal setting retreat, staff recommends Council identify a preference for the 145th and 185th stations and the alignment on the east side of I-5. Should Council agree with this recommendation, staff will prepare a letter to Sound Transit on behalf of the Mayor summarizing this preference.

Approved By: City Manager **JU** City Attorney ____

INTRODUCTION

Over the past several months of analysis and evaluation, Sound Transit has narrowed the mode and alignment alternatives for the North Corridor Transit project to an alignment along I-5, with light rail as the identified transit mode. Sound Transit is in the process of refining and screening the remaining station location and alignment options to finalize the recommended alternatives that will be analyzed in the DEIS. The Sound Transit board is scheduled to identify the DEIS alternatives at the end of April 2012. Staff from Sound Transit will be present at tonight's meeting to discuss what they have learned and heard from the public through the screening process, explain the next steps in the evaluation process and answer questions from Council. Sound Transit is also requesting Council's input regarding the alternatives to evaluate in the DEIS.

BACKGROUND

In September 2010, Sound Transit began the planning process to extend high capacity transit from Northgate to Lynnwood. This extension is part of the 2008 voter approved Sound Transit 2 (ST2) funding plan. The North Corridor Transit Project will connect Shoreline to Lynnwood in the north and to Northgate and points south and east by 2023. The existing light rail line that runs from Sea-Tac Airport to downtown Seattle is currently being extended to the University of Washington, with completion all the way to Northgate by 2021.

The electorate voted for and approved a light rail alignment on I-5, with potential stops at NE 145th and NE 185th Streets in Shoreline. However, in order to qualify for federal funding, Sound Transit is required to examine multiple high capacity transit modes, as well as corridor alignment alternatives, and potential station locations for the North Corridor. The Alternatives Analysis (AA) process began with a wide field of alignment alternatives and three different mode options (traditional bus, bus rapid transit and light rail). With each level of evaluation, the review of the alternatives became more technical and refined, resulting in the removal of different mode and alignment alternatives. Upon completion of the AA, two alignments remained for consideration: I-5 and SR 99.

Scoping for the federal environmental review was performed in fall 2011 and the Sound Transit Board selected I-5 as the sole alternative to be evaluated in the National Environmental Policy Act/State Environmental Policy Act (NEPA/SEPA) EIS in December 2011. Sound Transit is currently screening the potential station locations that will be carried into the DEIS. Potential Shoreline stations include NE 145th Street, NE 155th Street, both on the east side of I-5 and NE 185th Street, which could be located on either the west or east side of I-5.

Sound Transit will make a final alignment decision in 2014 following completion of the EIS and preliminary engineering.

DISCUSSION

The extension of light rail into Shoreline will greatly influence transit service in the City. The station locations have the potential to greatly affect the surrounding neighborhoods, including land use patterns and traffic.

During the scoping period, the City submitted a comment letter to Sound Transit requesting that they consider the following issues in the DEIS process:

- Cost
- Travel Time
- Ridership
- Traffic Impacts
- Accessibility
- Social Equity
- Transit Feeder Service
- Land Uses
- Business Impacts
- Visual Impacts
- Noise
- Development Potential

During the scoping process, Sound Transit was asked to evaluate station locations in King County at NE 125th Street, NE 130th Street and NE 155th Street, as well as 220th Street SW in Snohomish County. These are in addition to those already under consideration at NE 145th Street and NE 185th Street. With the exception of NE 185th Street and 220th Street SW, all of the stations would be located on the east side of I-5. Both the east and west sides of I-5 are still under consideration for NE 185th Street and the I-5 median and west side of I-5 are under consideration for the 220th Street SW station.

Through the screening process, Sound Transit will identify the station locations and the alignment options along I-5 to be evaluated in the DEIS. This will include how and where the light rail line crosses from the east side of I-5 to the west side. The location of the NE 185th Street station is a factor that will influence that decision. Similarly, the location of stations in Snohomish County will influence where and how many times the alignment crosses I-5.

With the inclusion of the four new potential station locations in the screening process, Sound Transit will be considering the possibility of adding two stations to the light rail line. Sound Transit has explained that they view NE 125th Street or NE 130th Street as a pairing with NE 155th Street which would replace the station at NE 145th Street. 220th Street SW would be an additional station, resulting in up to six stations north of Northgate. The voter approved ST2 funding plan included four stations (NE 145th Street, NE 185th Street, 236th Street SW and the Lynnwood Transit Center).

STAKEHOLDER OUTREACH

Sound Transit has managed the public outreach for the AA and EIS processes. Early AA scoping was undertaken in September – October 2010. Three public workshops were held in North Seattle, Shoreline and Lynnwood, as well as one agency scoping meeting, with over 200 people attending the workshops. More than 260 online surveys

were completed and over 90 comments were received via mail or email. Sound Transit has also briefed various business and community groups throughout the AA process.

Three public meetings, as well as one agency meeting, were held in October 2011 for the EIS scoping process, including one at the Shoreline Conference Center which was attended by about 100 people.

As part of the scoping process, Sound Transit requested comments from the public and agencies identifying the issues they should address in the EIS process. The City of Shoreline submitted a scoping comment letter identifying several issues that should be addressed in the EIS.

Throughout October 2011, the City went through a process to develop guiding principles to assist Council in identifying a preferred light rail alignment. Staff was present at the EIS scoping meeting in Shoreline as part of the public outreach associated with developing the guiding principles. These principles were approved on October 24 and the I-5 alignment was identified as the City's preferred alignment on November 14. The Sound Transit Board identified I-5 as the light rail alignment in December.

As part of the screening process, Sound Transit staff held a series of "drop in" sessions in March 2012, including three in the City of Shoreline. These meetings provided the public with an opportunity to learn where the light rail route could be located along I-5, see where stations are being considered and ask questions of project staff.

The Council discussed these alternatives with staff during their annual strategic planning and goal setting retreat on March 2-3, 2012. After thoughtful discussion, the Council expressed an interest in continuing to support stations at 145th and 185th, with an alignment that was east of I-5.

COUNCIL GOAL(S) ADDRESSED

This project addresses Council Goal 2: Provide safe, efficient and effective infrastructure to support our land use, transportation and surface water plans, as one of the major objectives of the Goal is to work with Sound Transit, neighboring cities, regional agencies and Shoreline neighborhoods to implement the Sound Transit 2 plan to bring light rail through Shoreline.

RESOURCE/FINANCIAL IMPACT

At this time, there is no significant financial impact to the City associated with this process, as it is being managed and funded by Sound Transit. The City will need to participate throughout the EIS process by continuing to provide technical and policy direction. Staff will also be reviewing Sound Transit's DEIS and FEIS as they are released. This will require dedication of City staff resources. Upon completion of the EIS process and determination of the final alignment and station locations in 2014, the City, along with Sound Transit will need to engage the community in planning for the selected station locations and identify appropriate mitigation for the station areas.

RECOMMENDATION

No action is required at this time. However, Sound Transit is requesting Council input on the alignment options and station locations currently under consideration in the environmental process. Sound Transit staff will use Council's input, as well as feedback received from other jurisdictions and the public, to develop a recommendation to the Sound Transit Board regarding the alternatives to evaluate in the Draft EIS (DEIS).

Based upon the information provided to Council and staff by Sound Transit and the discussion by Council at their annual strategic planning and goal setting retreat, staff recommends Council identify a preference for the 145th and 185th stations and the alignment on the east side of I-5. Should Council agree with this recommendation, staff will prepare a letter to Sound Transit on behalf of the Mayor summarizing this preference.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A: Sound Transit North Corridor Project Schedule

2010 - 2011: Alternatives Analysis

Develop, evaluate & narrow alternatives

Public comment: Early public scoping (Oct. 2010)

Public comment: Environmental scoping on narrowed alternatives (Oct. 2011)

ST Board identifies Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) alternatives



We are here

North Corridor Project schedule

2012 - 2014:

Environmental Review & Preliminary Engineering

Prepare draft EIS

Issue draft EIS for public comment

ST identifies preferred alternative

FTA grants permission to begin preliminary engineering

Prepare preliminary engineering & final EIS

Issue final EIS and ST selects project to be built & operated

FTA issues record of decision (ROD) and grants permission to begin final design

2015 - 2017: Final Design & Permitting

Obtain permits & acquire rights-of-way

Apply for FTA grant

Secure FTA grant

2017 - 2023:

Construction & Service Startup

Test systems & service

Build project

2023: Target Start of Service

FTA: Federal Transit Administration
ST: Sound Transit