

CITY COUNCIL AGENDA ITEM
CITY OF SHORELINE, WASHINGTON

AGENDA TITLE:	Sound Transit Light Rail Guiding Principles
DEPARTMENT:	Public Works
PRESENTED BY:	Mark Relph, Public Works Director Kirk McKinley, Transportation Services Manager Alicia McIntire, Senior Transportation Planner
ACTION:	<input type="checkbox"/> Ordinance <input type="checkbox"/> Resolution <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Motion <input type="checkbox"/> Discussion

PROBLEM/ISSUE STATEMENT:

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

Over the past year, Sound Transit has evaluated several alignment and mode alternatives for high capacity transit in the North Corridor. Two alignment alternatives remain for evaluation and the environmental scoping process is now underway. Scoping is the process to take public and agency input to determine the "scope" of the environmental analysis. Council is being asked to review draft guiding principles addressing alignment of light rail through Shoreline which will be used to provide input to Sound Transit's scoping process. A single Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) alignment may be an outcome from the Sound Transit scoping process.

On September 12 the City Council received a briefing from Sound Transit on the timeline and process they will follow on scoping and development of any preferred alternatives. Staff presented the first version of the draft guiding principles, along with a schedule for public outreach to Council on October 3. The public was invited to comment on the draft guiding principles at the October 17 City Council meeting. Tonight staff will present the final draft for adoption by Council.

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. Throughout the environmental review process, the City will need to participate in Sound Transit's process by continuing to provide technical and policy direction. This process is scheduled to be complete in 2014. In 2012 the City will begin engaging the community in policy development for Transit Oriented Communities as part of the 2012 Comprehensive Plan update. Staff will also be reviewing Sound Transit's Draft and Final


Environmental Impact Statements as they are released. This will require dedication of City staff resources.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff is requesting Council adopt the draft guiding principles for light rail alignment. Upon Council consensus on these principles, staff will return to Council on November 14 with a recommended position on the light rail alignment. The Council position on light rail alignment will be forwarded to the Sound Transit Board for consideration as they move through the environmental process.

Approved By:

City Manager



City Attorney



INTRODUCTION

Over the past several months of analysis and evaluation, Sound Transit has narrowed the alignment alternatives for the North Corridor Transit project down to two options. They include SR 99 and Interstate 5. Sound Transit has begun environmental scoping for these two alternatives in order to identify issues to address in the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The scoping process may also result in the determination of a Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) for the alignment.

BACKGROUND

The background description for the guiding principles was described in the October 3 staff report which can be found at <http://cosweb.ci.shoreline.wa.us/uploads/attachments/cck/Council/Staffreports/2011/Staffreport100311-8d.pdf>.

DISCUSSION

The extension of high capacity transit into Shoreline will greatly influence transit service in the City. It is assumed that this extension will come in the form of an extended light rail line north of Northgate and continuing to Lynnwood, as Sound Transit has eliminated all other mode alternatives from consideration. The alignment of the light rail line and station locations will greatly affect the future for surrounding neighborhoods, including land use patterns and traffic.

Sound Transit submitted the Alternatives Analysis (AA) to the Federal Transportation Administration (FTA) for review in late July. After receiving FTA and public comments, as well as the completion of environmental scoping, a LPA may be adopted by the Sound Transit Board by the end of 2011. If a LPA does not emerge, more than one alternative would then proceed into the EIS process. Sound Transit staff shared that an evaluation of the I-5 alignment in the EIS would likely include several crossing alternatives to get from the east side of I-5 (Northgate) to the west side (no later than Lynnwood). These options may include locating the NE 185th station on the west side of I-5, closer to Shoreline Center and stadium, and converting the Mountlake Terrace Freeway Station for light rail use.

The alignment options will serve different neighborhoods and, as a result, have differing impacts. Sound Transit has asked the jurisdictions affected by the light rail alignment (Seattle, Shoreline, Mountlake Terrace and Lynnwood) to provide input in response to the alternatives under review. The cities of Mountlake Terrace and Lynnwood have identified I-5 as the preferred alternative. The City of Seattle has not identified a preferred alternative at this time, nor has Shoreline.

In order to provide Sound Transit with feedback regarding the alignment determination, staff is recommending Council adopt guiding principles to help identify a preferred alignment for Shoreline. Attachment A provides the current draft of these principles for Council consideration and public comment. Staff is also recommending that Council identify a preferred alignment alternative once the guiding principles have been agreed to and staff can evaluate the alternatives with respect to those principles.

STAKEHOLDER OUTREACH

Until now, Sound Transit has managed the public outreach for the North Corridor Transit Project. Early AA scoping was undertaken in September through 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, are being held in October 2011 for the EIS scoping process. The first was held on October 11, 2011, at the Shoreline Conference Center and was attended by about 100 people. Shoreline staff was present at the October 11 Sound Transit meeting to inform the community about the guiding principles and receive comments. No comments on the guiding principles were submitted at the scoping meeting. One comment was received via email on October 13, 2011

As part of the scoping process, Sound Transit is requesting comments from the public identifying the issues they should address in the EIS process. Comments received at the October 11 scoping meeting generally identify a preferred alignment for light rail, the majority of which support the I-5 alignment. While these comments do not speak to the draft guiding principles, they provide some citizen feedback regarding the light rail alignment and concerns about issues that will be addressed in the scoping report. Once Sound Transit completes the scoping process, all comments will be part of the public record.

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 II plan to bring light rail through Shoreline.

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ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A: Draft North Corridor Project, Light Rail Guiding Principles for Shoreline

NORTH CORRIDOR PROJECT LIGHT RAIL GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR SHORELINE

The principles that will guide our future discussions and input to Sound Transit regarding the planning, construction, operation of light rail to directly serve Shoreline residents are as follows:

PERFORMANCE

TRAVEL TIME

We support a light rail system that provides the shortest travel times for riders traveling to and from Shoreline.

We support development of a complete light rail system that serves the Puget Sound region efficiently and minimizes travel times to destinations.

RIDERSHIP

We support the development of a light rail system that will serve the greatest number of riders traveling to and from Shoreline.

ACCESSIBILITY

We support the development of light rail stations that are easily accessed by foot, bike, bus or car. The stations should expand opportunities for convenient access to other forms of transit, such as Bus Rapid Transit and local bus service. Traffic impacts should also be minimized and mitigated in station areas.

MAXIMIZING FUNDS

COST

We want to ensure that as decisions are made, funding remains in the project budget to fund two light rail stations in Shoreline.

We support minimizing costs associated with right of way acquisition and capital investments as well as ongoing operation and maintenance costs while maximizing performance of the light rail system.

LOCAL OPPORTUNITIES AND IMPACTS

SOCIAL EQUITY

We support the location, alignment and operation of light rail that provides access to a socially, economically and geographically diverse ridership.

We believe Shoreline residents are best served by various modes of transit on multiple corridors within and through Shoreline.

LAND USES AND REDEVELOPMENT

We are concerned about the future of properties adjacent to prospective light rail stations. It is important to remember that station areas may take decades to transition from its present day use to a future use and plans should be made for how that transition can be accomplished.

We are committed to a robust community involvement process that develops tools and plans to create and enhance vibrant, livable and sustainable transit-oriented station areas.

Ensure impacts on residents and businesses are managed and individual property rights are protected; provide timely information so residents can plan for and respond to changes.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

We support a light rail system that will foster economic prosperity in Shoreline by encouraging existing businesses, enhancing property values, creating family-wage jobs, building sustainable housing stock, and attracting investment.

NOISE AND VISUAL IMPACTS

We support the development of a light rail system that minimizes noise and visual impacts to Shoreline residents and businesses.