



City of Bellevue/South Downtown I-405 Access Study

Stakeholder Forum #3 Summary

August 27, 2020 6-8 p.m. | Zoom

Panelists

Bellevue Transportation Department

- Shuming Yan, project manager
- Marie Jensen, public involvement manager

Washington Department of Transportation (WSDOT)

- Karl Westby, PhD traffic engineering manager
- Barrett Hanson, PE engineering manager

City of Bellevue staff

- Andrew Singelakis, City of Bellevue Transportation Department, Director
- Paula Stevens, City of Bellevue Transportation Department, Assistant Director

Facilitator and support

PRR, Engagement Consultant

- Laura LaBissoniere Miller, facilitator
- Nancy Thai, communications support
- Emma Dorazio, notetaker

Overview

Welcome

Laura LaBissoniere Miller, facilitator, welcomed 20 stakeholders and introduced the panelists.

Andrew Singelakis, City of Bellevue Transportation Department Director, welcomed the group to the third City of Bellevue South Downtown I-405 Access Study stakeholder forum and thanked everyone for their participation. He shared that stakeholder input will help shape staff's recommendation for the preferred alternative.

Laura gave an overview of the virtual meeting logistics, including the ability to share video, using the raise your hand function and the chat function.

Laura reviewed the forum objectives and agenda. The city’s objectives included reporting back on what we have heard from stakeholders and the community and providing an update and gathering input on the alternatives evaluation process and preliminary finding. Please see Appendix A for the presentation.

Stakeholder forum #2 feedback

Marie Jensen, public involvement manager, welcomed participants and thanked the seven stakeholders who completed the post forum #2 questionnaire. She reviewed the results of the post-forum #2 questionnaire. Please see Appendix A for the questionnaire results.

Shuming Yan, project manager, shared additional feedback from the open-ended questions. Respondents expressed concern about impacts to Northeast Second Street and 114th Avenue and providing increased access to and from I-405. Respondents asked the city to present a full analysis of benefits and costs of the alternatives and to update the alternative maps to show ramps. Shuming assured the stakeholders the study team will share the analysis of the benefits and costs with the stakeholders at the next forum. He confirmed we added ramps to the alternative maps.

Preliminary findings from conceptual design

Shuming next reviewed the fatal flaw screening process and explained that tonight the study team will share its findings related to constructability. The last stakeholder forum focused on the first two fatal flaw screening criteria: consistency with City of Bellevue plans and policies and consistency with federal and state policies including the I-405 Master Plan. Shuming introduced Barrett Hanson, WSDOT I-405 Program engineering manager, to speak more about the early design work and constructability of the alternatives.

#1 Northeast Second Street/Northeast Fourth Street One-Way Couplet

Barrett gave an overview of the Northeast Second Street/Northeast Fourth Street One-Way Couplet alternative. The city would convert Northeast Fourth Street to a one-way westbound street and extend Northeast Second Street over I-405 and connect to 116th Avenue Northeast in the eastbound direction. This alternative would reconstruct the northbound off-ramp from I-405 to intersect with Northeast Second Street and continue to Northeast Fourth Street into Bellevue. It would also reconstruct the southbound off-ramp from Northeast Fourth Street to intersect with Northeast Second Street and continue onto southbound I-405.

Barrett shared the study team’s preliminary findings:



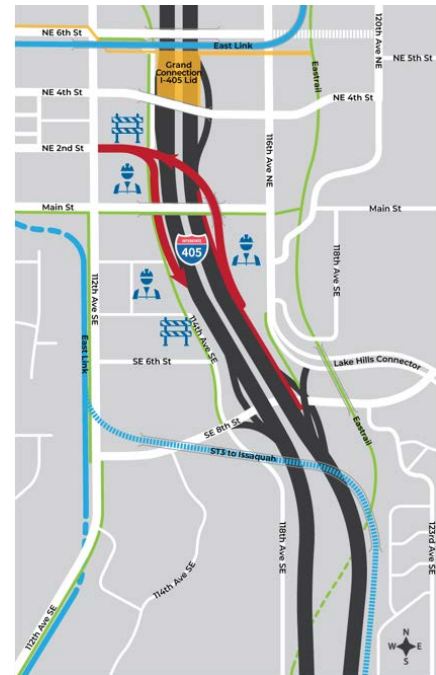
- On the southbound side, this alternative would reconstruct the Northeast Fourth Street on-ramp bridge to connect to the new Northeast Second Street.
- On the northbound side, this alternative would also reconstruct part of the off-ramp that extends to Northeast Eighth Street to widen it and shift it further east. We anticipate there may be some property acquisition on the east side of I-405.
- On the southbound side, we would need to realign a portion of 114th Avenue further west around Northeast Second Street to Southeast Second Street.
- This alternative would impact utilities on 114th Avenue Northeast and properties on both sides of I-405 and along 114th Avenue.
- Potential environmental impact with the Northeast Second Street extension east of I-405.
- Anticipate high relative cost compared to the other alternatives.
- Construction could take around three years.

One stakeholder asked the study team how much vehicle capacity each alternative provides. Shuming replied the study team will evaluate additional capacity using traffic modeling tools and we will share that information at the next stakeholder forum.

#2 Southbound on-ramp and northbound overpass at Northeast Second Street

Next, Barrett reviewed the Southbound on-ramp and northbound overpass at Northeast Second Street. This alternative would include constructing new on- and off-ramps to I-405 on Northeast Second Street. The southbound on-ramp would travel under the Main Street bridge while the northbound off-ramp would cross over the Main Street bridge to connect to Northeast Second Street. He shared the study team’s preliminary findings:

- Ramp connection to Northeast Second street would require closing 114th Avenue Northeast at Northeast Second Street.
- The city would need to realign 114th Avenue Northeast from Northeast Second Street to about Southeast Sixth Street further west. This roadway realignment and new northbound off-ramp would impact properties on both sides of I-405.
- Anticipated higher relative costs compared to the other alternatives.
- Construction could take around two to three years.



The study team paused for stakeholder input and the group did not provide any comments.

#3 Northeast Second Street extension to Wilburton

Barrett presented the Northeast Second Street extension to Wilburton. This alternative does not provide any new access to I-405 but extends Northeast Second Street over 114th Avenue and I-405 to 116th Avenue Northeast. He shared the study team’s preliminary findings:

- This alternative would impact properties on both sides of I-405.
- Property impacts are from widening and extending Northeast Second Street as well as the higher roadway elevation over 114th Avenue and I-405 that effects access on the westside of I-405.
- Potential environmental impacts to the east of I-405 and south of the Hampton Inns property.
- Anticipate lower relative cost compared to the other alternatives.
- Construction could take about one to two years.



The study team paused for stakeholder input and the group did not provide any comments.

#4 Express toll lane access to/from south at Southeast Sixth Street

Barrett presented the Express toll lane access to and from the south at Southeast Sixth Street alternative. This option would widen and extend Southeast Sixth Street from the west to east side of I-405 and connect with the Lake Hills Connector. From the Southeast Sixth Street extension, this alternative would build new direct access ramps to and from the south to the I-405 express toll lanes. The Southeast Sixth Street extension would climb over 114th Avenue and I-405 and connect to the Lake Hills Connector. The alternative would maintain the connection between 112th Avenue Southeast and 114th Avenue Southeast. We anticipate the bicycle and pedestrian paths along the outside of the roadway, connecting between 112th Avenue Southeast and 114th Avenue Southeast. They would not connect to Lake Hills Connector. If this alternative advances through the screening process the study team will consider another configuration of the Southeast Sixth Street extension. The alternate configuration would raise Southeast Sixth Street





over 114th Avenue Southeast, including connecting bikes and pedestrians to Lake Hills Connector. This alternative configuration would not connect to 114th Avenue from Southeast Sixth Street. Driveways on the eastern part of Southeast Sixth Street would still connect to 114th Avenue Southeast, but no longer to 112th Avenue Southeast.

Barrett shared the study team's preliminary findings:

- Requires bridge, interchange and roadway changes.
 - Rebuilds the north half of Southeast Eighth Street interchange.
 - Widen or potentially reconstruct I-405 bridges over Southeast Eighth Street.
 - Realign portions of 114th Avenue Southeast north of Southeast Sixth Street to account for I-405 realignment.
 - Requires rebuilding the non-motorized connection to Lake Hills Connector.
- Access modifications along Southeast Sixth Street.
 - This alternative would modify some driveways on the eastern side of 112th Avenue Southeast and 114th Avenue Southeast.
 - Type of modification will depend on the final configuration of Southeast Sixth Street.
 - Potentially convert some driveways to right-in, right-out.
 - Other configuration would change eastern driveways to only access 114th Avenue and western driveways to the new Southeast Sixth Street roadway and connect to 112th Avenue Southeast and Lake Hills Connector.
- Impacts size of Wilburton Park-and-Ride because this concept widens I-405 to accommodate the direct access ramps.
- Potential environmental impacts along Southeast Sixth Street on the west side of I-405 and near Southeast Eighth Street on the east side of I-405.
- Potential property impact along 114th Avenue Southeast around Southeast Sixth Street and 114th Avenue Southeast.
- Anticipate medium relative cost compared to the other alternatives.
- Construction could take about two to three years.

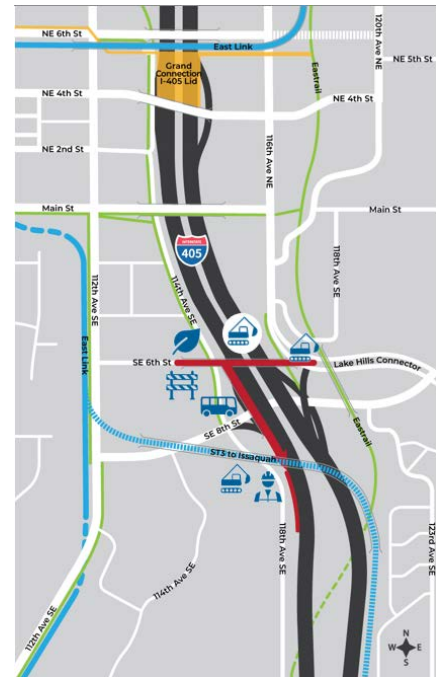
The study team paused for stakeholder input and the group did not provide any comments.

#5 Southeast Sixth Street overpass to 116th Avenue Southeast with southbound on-ramp

Barrett presented the next alternative, the Southeast Sixth Street overpass to 116th Avenue Southeast with a southbound on-ramp. This alternative is similar to the previous alternative in widening and extending Southeast Sixth Street from the west to east side of I-405 and connecting to Lake Hills Connector. Instead of providing direct access to the express toll lanes, a new southbound on-ramp would connect to the general-purpose lane on I-405. The new on-ramp would extend over the existing Southeast Eighth Street off-ramp and part of the park-and-ride and connect to I-405 along Southeast Eighth Street. It may also realign part of 118th Avenue Southeast slightly to the west.

He shared the study team’s preliminary findings:

- Requires bridge, interchange and roadway changes: impacts to Southeast Sixth Street would be similar as the previous alternative.
- New ramp includes long bridge above park-and-ride, over the Southeast Eighth Street off-ramp, and over Southeast Eighth Street.
- Access modifications along Southeast Sixth Street are the same as the previous alternative.
- Potential property impacts for the potential realignment of 118th Avenue Southeast and the Southeast Sixth Street work.
- Potential environmental impacts associated with Southeast Sixth Street extension.
- Building a new ramp bridge would temporarily impact the Wilburton Park-and-Ride and bus stop.
- Anticipate lower relative cost compared to the other alternatives.
- Construction could take about two years.



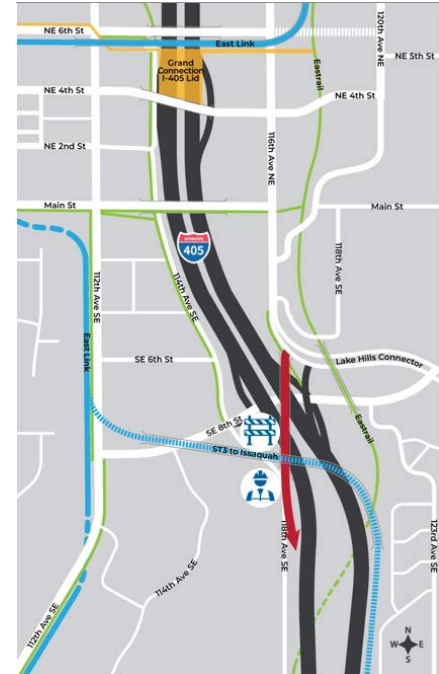
One of the stakeholders asked about King County’s long-term plans for the park-and-ride at Southeast Eighth Street. Shuming responded he would follow-up with the answer.

Another stakeholder asked whether the study team had any information about the station locations on Sound Transit 3 to Issaquah. Shuming responded the study team will coordinate with Sound Transit to confirm potential station locations.

6 Lake Hills Connector southbound on-ramp

The final alternative Barrett shared was the Lake Hills Connector southbound on-ramp. This alternative would construct a southbound on-ramp from Lake Hills Connector to the general-purpose lane on I-405. This on-ramp complements the existing northbound off-ramp. He shared the study team’s preliminary findings:

- Potential property impact on west side of 118th Avenue Southeast.
- Coordination with future Sound Transit light rail expansion. We anticipate enough space for the new ramp below the future elevated light rail track and will continue coordinating with Sound Transit.
- Anticipate lower relative cost compared to the other alternatives.
- Construction could take about one to two years.



The study team paused for stakeholder input and the group did not provide any comments.

Recommended alternatives to further study

Shuming reviewed the polling results from the last stakeholder forum. The majority of stakeholders expressed interest in the city continuing to study the Express toll lane access to/from south at Southeast Sixth Street, Southeast Sixth Street overpass to 116th Avenue Northeast with southbound on-ramp and Lake Hills Connector southbound on-ramp alternatives. The majority of stakeholders indicated the following alternatives were not suitable: Northeast Second Street/Northeast Fourth Street One-Way Couplet, Southbound on-ramp and northbound overpass at Northeast Second Street and Northeast Second Street extension. Karl Westby, WSDOT traffic engineering manager, clarified that the Federal Highway Administration will only consider approving new access to interstate facilities if state and/or local jurisdictions demonstrate the need cannot be met by improving local circulation only. Therefore, it is important that the study team carry forward the Northeast Second Street extension alternative. Shuming shared that this feedback helped to inform the five alternatives the study team recommends for further study:

- Baseline (no new interchange)
- Northeast Second Street extension to Wilburton
- Express toll lane access to/from south at Southeast Sixth Street
- Southeast Sixth Street overpass to 116th Avenue Northeast with southbound on-ramp



- Lake Hills Connector southbound on-ramp

Stakeholder questions

- How can we recommend alternatives without knowing if they will meet capacity requirements?
 - Reducing congestion and adding capacity is one of several criteria the study team will consider in evaluating alternatives. We are going to model these options to see how they will impact travel delay reduction at local streets and intersections. We will review this information at the next stakeholder forum. Narrowing down the options for modeling helps manage the workload.
- For the Northeast Second Street extension option, if there is only access to Wilburton and no new access to I-405, why not focus on lower cost options that do both?
 - We heard from stakeholders and the community to consider combining some of these alternatives, particularly if we have alternatives that address access in the south end. We can combine this alternative with another alternative to provide more access to I-405.
 - Additionally, we have a federal requirement when considering new or modified access to the interstate to fully consider whether no new ramps will still provide the transportation benefits. For example, can we accomplish our goals with just the Northeast Second Street extension without building new ramps.
- It appears that none of these alternatives help traffic going north.
 - Drivers may access northbound I-405 at the Northeast Tenth Street interchange. This will offer combined improvements with the ramps from SR 520 with braided interchanges. The I-405 Master Plan includes a corresponding southbound off-ramp to Northeast Tenth Street to provide access from the north that we will construct when funding is available. The long term I-405 vision includes new access to and from the north at Northeast Tenth Street and from the south. This study is evaluating access from south downtown Bellevue.
- Regarding traffic models and inputs to the model, can you quickly outline how the study team will consider changing modes of transportation in the models? For example, from car to Sound Transit or bike? Not “conflict reduction” or “effect on” but the demand for cars as an input to the model.
 - The study team is representing all the travel modes in the model. For example, we included the new East Link Light Rail and Lake to Lake Trails in the model. The model projects demand for each mode based on their availability, and congestion impact. The model tries to simulate travelers’



decision-making depending on cost, travel time and convenience. It also considers past data. The predications are imperfect, but as accurate as possible.

Evaluation criteria

Shuming presented an overview of each evaluation criteria and highlighted specific examples.

- **Travel time** considerations include modeled travel time between selected major designations, traffic operations on city roads and traffic operations on I-405.
- **Access and safety** considerations include access to 114th Avenue, connections between Downtown and Wilburton, potential conflicts for people walking and biking and ease of access for people walking or biking to the East Main Light Rail Station.
- **Property impact** considerations include complete and partial property impacts and property access restrictions.
- **Existing plans and urban design considerations** include consistency with existing plans and policies, like environmental stewardship and Vision Zero, compatibility with adjacent land use and meeting state and federal requirements for removing fish barriers and restoring stream connections
- **Cost** considerations include property impacts, construction, wetland/stream mitigation, utilities relocation and fish barrier removal and stream connections restoration.
- **Stakeholder input** considerations including what we hear at these forums, follow-up questionnaires and additional comments.
- **Community input** considerations include community feedback through online open houses.

Preliminary online open house feedback

Marie shared preliminary key themes the study team captured from the online open house. The study team heavily promoted the online open house through city communications. The online open house was open from Aug. 3-21. The study team will share a separate summary of the feedback from the open house.

- Concern that the city or WSDOT address traffic volume on I-405.
- Prioritize transportation improvements and access for people walking, biking and riding transit.
- Interest in east-west connection over I-405.
- Consider combining alternatives.



- Concern that a new interchange may encourage vehicle traffic, or “induce demand”, and contribute to climate change.
- Cost of constructing a new interchange.
- Integration/connection with other city initiatives (e.g. Grand Connection).
- Impact of traffic on local streets.
- Impact to planned Transit-Oriented Development (TOD).

Timeline and next steps

Shuming announced the upcoming City Council meeting planned for Sept. 28, the fourth stakeholder forum tentatively planned for Oct. 29 and a second online open house tentatively planned for Nov. 9-27. The study team plans to share the outcomes of their continued evaluation, including findings from traffic modeling and design work, at the fourth, and final stakeholder forum.

Attendees

Below is a list of stakeholders in attendance. Three attendees joined by phone and did not provide their names.

1. Mike Koehn, Bellecrest Neighborhood Association
2. Rebecca Bloom, Columbia Pacific Advisors
3. Julie Cairone, Downtown Bellevue Residents Association
4. Patrece Banks, Downtown Bellevue Residents Association
5. Mesha Averill, Legacy Commercial
6. Brian Franklin, PMF Investments LLC
7. Tim Jackson, PMF Investments LLC
8. Andy Swayne, Puget Sound Energy
9. David Slight, Surrey Downs Community Club
10. Ken Rosenow, Surrey Downs Community Club
11. Aaron Laing, Schwabe, Williamson & Wyatt
12. Mike Read, TENW
13. Mon Wig, Wig Properties LLC
14. LeeAnn Guidotti, Wilburton Neighborhood Association
15. Santiago Naranjo, Wilburton Neighborhood Association
16. César Caycedo, Woodridge Neighborhood Association



17. Alex Smith, 700 112 LLC

Additional City of Bellevue staff in attendance:

1. Molly Johnson, City of Bellevue Transportation Department, Development Review Manager
2. Gillian Hagstrom, City of Bellevue Transportation Department, Community Outreach Intern



Appendix A: Stakeholder Forum #3 Presentation