

CITY OF BELLEVUE  
CITY COUNCIL

Summary Minutes of Study Session

October 17, 2011  
6:00 p.m.

Council Conference Room  
Bellevue, Washington

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

ABSENT: None.

1. Executive Session

Deputy Mayor Lee called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m., and declared recess to Executive Session for approximately one hour to discuss one item of potential litigation.

The meeting resumed at 7:37 p.m., with Mayor Davidson presiding.

2. Study Session

- (a) East Link: 112<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE Light Rail Concept Report

City Manager Steve Sarkozy opened discussion regarding the East Link light rail project.

Ric Ilgenfritz, Sound Transit, introduced staff's presentation of the concept design report for light rail alignment options along 112<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE. One provision of the Term Sheet entered into by the City and Sound Transit last summer was to identify additional 112<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE alternatives in response to concerns raised by the City and residents about noise, traffic, and visual impacts.

Don Billen, Project Manager, explained that Sound Transit is proposing additional modifications to the 112<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE alignment, with the intent of identifying a preferred design option in the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) currently being developed by the City and Sound Transit. If one of the new designs (Option B or C) is identified as the preferred option, Sound

Transit will need to conduct additional environmental review prior to any decision by the Sound Transit Board.

Mr. Billen reviewed the three B2M alternative options presented to the Council on September 26. Option A is the design described and studied in the East Link Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS). It involves an at-grade east to west crossing of 112<sup>th</sup> Avenue at SE 6<sup>th</sup> Street. Option B involves a flyover crossing at SE 15<sup>th</sup> Street to the west side of 112<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE, with light rail continuing north in a trench. Option C involves an at-grade crossing of 112<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE at SE 15<sup>th</sup> Street, continuing north on an at-grade alignment to a station at Main Street.

Mr. Billen compared the cost estimates for the three options. Option B reflects a cost increase of \$15 million to \$20 million over Option A. Option C reflects a cost decrease of \$25 million to \$30 million. Mr. Billen recalled the Council's interest in mixing elements of the options. He noted the potential combinations and their estimated costs.

Mr. Billen compared the three options based on traffic impacts, property acquisitions and displacements. He explained that Sound Transit acquires the property that is needed for project construction. Appraisals for partial property acquisitions will include an assessment of damages, if any, to the property.

Responding to Mayor Davidson, Mr. Billen said that the same acquisition policies are followed for residential and commercial properties.

Responding to Councilmember Wallace, Mr. Billen said the site at NE 2<sup>nd</sup> Street is needed to stage the construction of the tunnel.

James Irish reviewed the noise impacts associated with Options A, B and C. Options B and C have greater potential noise impacts before mitigation compared to Option A. Options B and C both move over to the west side of 112<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE farther south than Option A, which causes greater residential impacts.

Mr. Irish described a map showing the noise impacts for Option A, before and after mitigation. He described sections of sound walls along the west side of 112<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE. He described the noise impacts, before and after mitigation, for Options B and C.

Mr. Irish explained that it is difficult to mitigate noise impacts at SE 15<sup>th</sup> Street with Option C. He described a map of Option C, pointing out the sound wall locations and at-grade crossing.

Mr. Irish compared the vibration impacts for the three options. One to three homes at SE 15<sup>th</sup> Street would have vibration impacts that Sound Transit might not be able to fully mitigate.

Responding to Councilmember Wallace, Mr. Irish said that Sound Transit uses federal noise standards, which measure a 24-hour average of noise impacts. These criteria weight noise impacts at night more heavily than during the day, in an attempt to protect where people sleep. While noise levels are averaged over a 24-hour period, the maximum noise level of the train is

included in the calculation. In further response to Mr. Wallace, Mr. Irish stated his understanding that Bellevue's Noise Code does not regulate train noise.

Responding to Mayor Davidson, Mr. Billen returned to the slide describing property acquisitions and displacements for the three options. He noted that the property impacts occur between the Y at Bellevue Way/112<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE and the Downtown.

Councilmember Balducci noted the time and suggested continuing this item to the Regular Session.

Councilmember Robertson said she will not be present for the Regular Session. She would like to make a motion to direct the City Manager to send a letter to Sound Transit, to request an extension of the October 25 deadline. She noted that it will not be possible to obtain public comment before October 25.

→ Councilmember Robertson moved to direct the City Manager to send a letter to Sound Transit requesting an extension of the October 25 deadline for establishing the MOU. Councilmember Wallace seconded the motion.

Ms. Balducci questioned how the motion relates to an earlier consensus to bring back a draft letter next week for Council discussion.

Ms. Robertson said she is open to circulating a draft letter via email for Council review, but she believes the letter needs to go out this week.

As seconder to the motion, Councilmember Wallace said his understanding was that the letter would be reviewed by the Council the following Monday.

As a friendly amendment, Councilmember Robertson agreed to move to direct the City Manager to draft a letter to Sound Transit, for review and discussion during the next Council meeting.

→ The motion carried by a vote of 7-0.

Councilmember Chelminiak indicated that he was unaware that Councilmember Robertson would not be present for the Regular Session. Noting Sound Transit's interest in feedback from the Council, he questioned whether the Council wants to state a preference on the 112<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE option with Ms. Robertson absent.

Councilmember Balducci suggested that Sound Transit staff complete their presentation tonight, and that the Council take the issue up again next week with Councilmember Robertson present.

Sound Transit staff indicated to the Mayor that they had completed their presentation. They will stay for the Regular Session for additional questions and discussion.

October 17, 2011 Study Session

Page 4

At 8:05 p.m., Mayor Davidson declared recess to the Regular Session.

Michelle Murphy, CMC  
Deputy City Clerk

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