

Keeping East King Moving: Options for Mass Transit

It's a fact: the Puget Sound region's population is expected to increase by 1.2 million in the next 25 years. In that same time, the vehicle miles traveled in East King County is projected to grow by 45 percent, with travel times likely doubling on I-90. The Eastside is a major economic engine in the Central Puget Sound area and is home to global leaders in technology, manufacturing, retail and finance.

That's why Sound Transit is looking at ways to connect Eastside communities to each other and to the rest of the region with high-capacity transit. That high-

capacity system could be either light rail or rail-convertible bus rapid transit. Both systems would operate free of congestion on I-90 across Lake Washington.



Both systems would run on exclusive right-of-way, providing a fast, reliable connection between the region's population and economic centers in Bellevue, Redmond and Seattle. And, each can expand to serve more riders in decades to come.

At the south end of downtown Seattle, the light rail option would tie into the Central Link initial segment currently under construction from Seattle to Sea-Tac Airport. It would continue north, providing a one-seat ride between King County's largest job centers.

Rail-convertible bus rapid transit would run on an exclusive roadway designed for future conversion to light rail operation. In the meantime, it would provide a transfer station connecting with Central Link at the south end of downtown Seattle.

The Sound Transit Board is expected to identify a preferred high capacity transit mode for I-90 this summer: either light rail or rail convertible bus-rapid transit.



The extension of high-capacity transit to the Eastside is one of the potential projects being considered for a package of regional mass transit investments to present to voters in November 2007. Combined with a companion set of regional road investments from the Regional Transportation Investment District (RTID), this package will give voters the opportunity to consider a balanced set of priority investments in both roads and transit.

Comparing the Options

| Issue |  <p>Light Rail</p> |  <p>Rail-Convertible Bus Rapid Transit</p> |
|------------------------|---|--|
| Vehicles | Vehicles consistent with Central Link light rail. | Custom BRT buses with doors on both sides to provide access to center or side platforms at stations. |
| Cost (In 2005 dollars) | <p>TOTAL: \$3.3-\$3.9B (w/Bellevue tunnel) \$3.0-3.4B (w/Bellevue elevated)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>\$1.7-\$2.0B to Bellevue with tunnel in Central Business District (CBD)</i> ▪ <i>\$1.4-\$1.6B to Bellevue/elevated route</i> ▪ <i>\$611-\$702M Bellevue-to-Overlake (tunnel)</i> ▪ <i>\$590-\$678M Bellevue-to-Overlake (elevated)</i> ▪ <i>\$650-\$747M Overlake-to-Redmond</i> ▪ <i>\$358-\$411M Maintenance base and vehicle cost</i> | <p>TOTAL: \$2.9-\$3.4B (w/Bellevue tunnel) \$2.5-\$2.9B (w/Bellevue elevated)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>\$1.5-\$1.8B to Bellevue (tunnel in CBD)</i> ▪ <i>\$1.2-\$1.4B to Bellevue (elevated)</i> ▪ <i>\$569M-\$654M Bellevue-to-Overlake (tunnel)</i> ▪ <i>\$539M-\$620M Bellevue-to-Overlake (elevated)</i> ▪ <i>\$614-\$706M Overlake-to-Redmond</i> ▪ <i>\$183-\$210M Maintenance base and vehicle cost</i> |
| Ridership (Weekday) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 35,000—Redmond-to-Seattle (International District Station) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 24,500—Redmond-to-Seattle (near the International District Station) |
| Travel time | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 18 minutes Seattle (International District) to Bellevue Transit Center (BTC) ▪ 16 minutes BTC to Redmond | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 21 minutes Seattle (International District) to Bellevue Transit Center (BTC) ▪ 19 minutes BTC to Redmond |
| Benefits | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Exclusive ROW transit connection from Eastside to Seattle and airport. ▪ Inter-lines w/Central Link; provides one-seat ride from Redmond to Northgate via Bellevue, Mercer Island, downtown Seattle, and UW. ▪ Supports long-range transportation and land use plans. ▪ Increases transit reliability, visibility, simplicity. ▪ Increases job accessibility from Eastside/Seattle. ▪ Increases access to special events. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Exclusive ROW transit connection from Eastside to Seattle and airport. ▪ Transfer station provides connections to Central Link in south Downtown Seattle. ▪ Supports long-range transportation and land use plans. ▪ Increases transit reliability and visibility. ▪ Increases job accessibility from Eastside/Seattle. ▪ Increases access to special events. |
| Conversion to LRT | No conversion necessary | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Requires closing the HCT guideway for a significant period of time for conversion. ▪ During conversion, BRT riders switch to buses using HOV and general-purpose lanes. ▪ Potential significant impacts to ridership. ▪ Conversion costs estimated \$773-892M (2005 dollars) |